

Lawmakers say funding is critical to ensuring radio equipment meets new standards

(Washington, DC) – Today, Congressman Tim Walz (D-Minn.) and Sens. Klobuchar and Franken (D-Minn.) announced the Worthington, Minnesota Fire Department will receive a \$551,741 grant to go towards the purchase of new communications equipment. Emergency responders across the country are upgrading equipment to ensure interoperability between departments and across broad geographic areas.

“This upgrade to emergency radio equipment is critical to public safety,” said Congressman Walz. “During the June tornados that struck Minnesota, some emergency responders told me that due to the weather their older radios went down for periods of time, causing them to respond more slowly to the damage caused by the storms. Those communities that had already upgraded were able to function without disruption because of the advancements in technology. This grant will help Worthington transition to the new system so that should the worst ever happen, emergency responders are able to get to folks as quickly as possible.”

“Fire departments and first responders are critical to the safety and security of our communities,” said Senator Klobuchar. “This grant will provide our emergency personnel with the tools and technology they need to ensure Minnesota families are safe.”

“At a time when local budgets can’t possibly get any tighter, it’s vitally important that we keep our focus on our first responders,” said Sen. Franken. “These funds will ensure that Minnesota’s firefighters have the technology they need to keep our communities safe.”

“The reason we needed the grant was to comply with the FCC Narrow Banding requirements. The equipment will be purchased for all ten Nobles County Fire Departments and will allow us to communicate throughout the entire state. With this notification we will be able to get the equipment immediately. We’re thrilled with this grant,” said Det. Dave Hoffman, a member of the Worthington Volunteer Fire Department and a Detective with the Worthington Police Department.

The grant is part of the Department of Homeland Security Assistance to Firefighters Grants program. A fact sheet about the program is attached.

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