

Muscatine Journal

\$260,000 grant will go toward training trailer for fire departments

By Cynthia Beaudette

MUSCATINE, Iowa — More than a quarter million dollars from the federal government will help area fire firefighters get some hands-on training.

The \$260,000 grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and Homeland Security, will go toward the purchase of a simulation training trailer. Previously, area fire departments scheduled time to borrow a trailer from the Fire Service Training Bureau.

Now, thanks to the grant money rolling in from Uncle Sam, the departments will have their own mobile training center.

The regional grant, for the \$335,000 trailer will go to the Conesville Fire Department and will be combined with a \$15,000 grant from the Roy J. Carver Charitable Trust. The tab for the remaining \$60,000 will be picked up by the 18 area fire stations who will use the trailer. Each department will pay based on the size of the population they serve.

The 53-foot-by-9-foot, two-story trailer is being custom-built in California and should arrive in Muscatine in February. The trailer will allow firefighters to hone their skills by putting them in a simulated home, complete with fire and smoke.

Muscatine firefighter Andy White, president of the local Muscatine Association of Firefighters, 608, credits a story that former KWPC reporter Charles Potter broadcast in August 2008 as one reason city officials were willing to come up with the \$60,000.

That story, about Potter's tour of the Fire Service Training Bureau's two-story Mobile Fire Training Trailer, helped city officials gain a better understanding of the importance of the trailer, said White, and probably influenced their decision to approve the funding for its purchase.

Potter's story also earned him a first-place 2009 media award from the International Association of Firefighters. The Muscatine Fire Department recognized Potter's achievement during a ceremony at the Muscatine Fire Department Wednesday.

"Your news truly does help people understand what we do," said White.

Potter, who resigned from KWPC in November and now writes for the Muscatine Journal, also received a plaque and \$400 from the Association.



Firefighter Andy White, right, president of the Muscatine Association of Firefighters local 608, presents Charles Potter with a plaque commemorating Potter's first-place 2009 media award from the International Association of Firefighters. Photo: Cynthia Beaudette/Muscatine Journal

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