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VALLEJO TO RECEIVE \$500,000 IN HOMELAND SECURITY GRANTS

VALLEJO – Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge announced Thursday that his department is releasing \$28 million in port security grants, with the City of Vallejo to receive \$500,000.

“We know that true maritime security demands that government and industry work together – which is why we are continually collaborating with industry, states and local authorities to secure our ports and waterways,” Secretary Ridge said.

The money most likely will be used to continue the patrolling of area waterways by the Vallejo Fireboat Neptune. The boat, which was added to the department in mid-2001 to add a level of protection for waterfront structures and buildings on Mare Island, was pressed into patrol service following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in New York City. The Coast Guard asked the City to provide patrols of area waterways, including the Carquinez and Benicia bridges.

The Neptune is the only fireboat in Solano County and the only firefighting vessel between Oakland and Solano County.

“We had applied for funds a couple of different times in the past,” said Vallejo Fire Chief Don Parker. “It’s a costly situation when you start doing patrols. But when we’re asked by the Coast Guard to help out, that’s what we do.”

The Port Security Grant Program funds security planning and projects to improve dockside and perimeter security. The latest round of grants will contribute to important security upgrades such as new patrol boats in area harbors, surveillance equipment at roads and bridges and other costs.

“This is the first time we’re seeing homeland security money after having been requested to go on alert many times since 9-11,” City Manager David Martinez said. “I hope this is the beginning of a trend, and that there will be more money to come for homeland security.

“Ensuring that the city maintains a high level of security in these uncertain times is definitely a priority for us. We’ve helped the Coast Guard in patrol duties in the past and believe this money will help us improve and enhance our patrol efforts along our waterways,” Martinez added.