



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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FIREMAN'S FUND INSURANCE PROVIDES GRANT TO VALLEJO FIRE DEPARTMENT

VALLEJO – Fireman's Fund Heritage, an arm of Fireman's Fund Insurance Company, has awarded a grant to the City of Vallejo Fire Department for the purchase of four Bullard T3 Max thermal imagers.

The hand-held, camera-like device measures infrared radiation to help the city's firefighters find victims, identify hot spots and follow the safest path out of a burning building.

"These devices accomplish a couple of things," said Fire Chief Don Parker. "They make finding and evacuating victims in a smoke-filled building easier, and they increase the level of safety for firefighters placed in dangerous situations."

The screen on the thermal imager shows a black-and-white image when focused on a person or an object. Hot things usually show up white, and cooler things are dark. Pointing the thermal imagery at a person, their body heat causes them to show up white.

The imager did not become used widespread until 1996. Its use began in the military in the 1960s and gradually spread.

Emergency Preparedness Manager William Tweedy prepared the grant for the fire department.

"The grant was submitted, and after a review by a panel of about 20 people, ours was selected out of the hundreds of applications they received," Tweedy said. "We asked for seven – one for each engine company – and based on the amount of the grant and what they felt they could spread out to other agencies, we were given four imagers, but we are still very happy to get those."

(More)

The thermal imagers cost between \$15,000 and \$20,000, Tweedy said, adding that they could not come at a better time for the City and the fire department.

“With our budget situation and the shortfall we had, we were unable to purchase items that are not necessities,” Tweedy said, adding that the devices provide a new level of firefighting and lifesaving to the department.

“If you walked into a completely smoke-filled room with the imager on, you could see like it was daytime,” Tweedy said. “Other applications include use in water rescues, when its pitch black at night or in the fog, people lost in fields or the forests. They are also able to pinpoint hot spots in a home after a fire that we can’t see but the camera can.”

Vallejo Mayor Tony Intintoli was pleased with the level of safety and protection the new devices will bring to Vallejo residents.

“I want to thank Fireman’s Fund for making these grants available to communities like ours,” Intintoli said. “By increasing the level of protection and safety in our community, it brings greater peace of mind to all of us.”

Fireman's Fund Heritage is a long-term program designed to support local firefighters in building safer communities. This is accomplished by awarding funds to buy needed equipment, fire prevention tools, and training for local fire departments, as well as community fire safety education programs.

Across the country, firefighters and fire departments are faced with ever-increasing demands and ever-tightening budgets. Fireman's Fund Heritage can make a difference at a community level. Although national in scope, the program is focused at the local community level. Fireman's Fund partners with local fire departments and non-profit groups to create programs that are customized to the specific fire safety and prevention needs of a local community.

The grant will be presented at a press conference to be held from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Tuesday, November 30, 2004 at the Fort Mason Center - Herbst Pavilion, San Francisco, Calif. Program/awards ceremony will run from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

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