



Racine Fire Department
810 Eighth St, Racine WI 53403

April 17, 2014

Honorable Mayor and
Common Council

Dear Honorable Mayor and Common Council,

The fire department is requesting permission to accept the 2013 FEMA Assistance to Fire Fighters (AFG) grant for purchasing radio hardware and upgrading our radio interoperability capabilities to the statewide VHF trunking system known as WISCOM.

Over the last five years the fire department has been very successful in upgrading our very old radios to the newer technology through a variety of grant mechanisms. All mobile and portable radios were acquired with the ability to upgrade to WISCOM VHF trunking capabilities however that trunking software was not initially installed in the radios. At the time the radios were acquired WISCOM was not up and running.

Today WISCOM is the statewide Mutual Aid Interoperability radio system that allows fire departments and emergency medical agencies to communicate across not only counties, but across regions and the state if necessary using either mobile or portable radios. In the event of a large scale disaster such as a weather event or significant fire event WISCOM allows the fire service to coordinate assets and resources across this system. The system also allows direct radio contact with the State of Wisconsin Emergency Operation Center in Madison when appropriate. There is no cost for the Racine Fire Department to participate in WISCOM.

Additionally many of the Region 7 hospitals in Southeast Wisconsin have installed WISCOM capable base stations. This allows for inter-hospital communications on a regional basis, however more importantly will allow field ambulances to communicate with hospitals on WISCOM over an encryption enabled WISCOM connection to insure patient privacy.

This project will software upgrade Fire Department P-25 mobile and portable radios to trunking capabilities, and thus insuring an extended longevity for all our radios along with significantly improved radio interoperability with other Fire and EMS agencies throughout Southeast Wisconsin. Additionally this project will allow the acquisition of new cache portable and mobile radios for emergency operations.

Fiscal Note: The grant request is for \$210,500 of which the City's hard match is 10% or \$21,050. AFG will provide \$189,450 with the city's match covering the balance of the project. Funds are available in account 944.300.5030 to cover this request.

Respectfully submitted,

Steve Hansen, Fire Chief