

# Brookfield FD wins \$103,000 grant from federal government

By **BOB UPHUES**

Christmas came early for the Brookfield Fire Department last week, when the federal government came through with a \$103,516 grant for station improvements, equipment and training for the village. Congressman Dan Lipinski (D-3rd) announced the grant from the Department of Homeland Security's Assistance to Firefighters Grants Program on Sept. 6.

The Brookfield Fire Department applied for the grant last April, according to Lt. Jon Hultman, who wrote the grant application. The village will have to match 5 percent of the total grant award, or just under \$5,200.

The bulk of the grant will go toward installing automatic sprinkler systems at both of the village's fire stations, built in 1961 and 1979. Fire Chief Patrick Lenzi said that the village currently does not have an ordinance requiring sprinklers for any structures, and his department would like to look into crafting an ordinance that would require sprinklers.

"But we thought if we ever wanted to get a sprinkler ordinance, it'd be hypocrisy if we didn't do ours first," Lenzi said.

According to Hultman, the department "wants to be a role model for the community as far as fire safety goes."

The grant will also allow the village to provide new helmets, coats, pants and boots for every one of the department's 25 full-time firefighters. The paid-on-call firefighters will receive the best of the existing equipment, according to Hultman.

Finally, the grant will allow the department to offer a 12-hour emergency vehicle driver training program to all of its firefighters.

While this is the largest grant the department has received, it isn't the only one Brookfield has taken advantage of in recent years. In 2004, the department received an \$80,000 grant for firefighter breathing apparatuses and another \$35,000 grant for a compressor system to operate the new equipment.

In the past two years, Brookfield has also received a \$60,000 grant to fund a program where the department visited every school in the village to hand out smoke detectors to all school children. The department also visited civic organizations to get the detectors into the hands of senior citizens.