

By Jan Rahn

Managing Editor

Thanks to federal funds received in January, the Grant Volunteer Fire Department has been able to purchase seven sets of new protective gear for firefighters, which is beginning to arrive.

An assistance-to-firefighters grant in the amount of \$10,840 was awarded to the department from FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency). The fire department contributed \$570 in a 5 percent match.

The original grant application back in 2009 was for the purchase of 25 sets of new protective gear, which FEMA cut to seven in awarding the grant.

“We’ll still take \$10,800!” said GVFD Assistant Chief Fred Reichert.

The funding came from the same source as other grants over the years. Reichert said in 2003 new air packs and compressors were purchased with a grant of \$110,000. Funding of \$17,000 received in 2004 went toward new fire hose, and in 2005 a new Jaws of Life system was bought with a \$35,000 grant.

During the years of 2006-08 no funds were received from FEMA, but the department received money from the forestry service for new pagers/phone system. Also in the past, new defibrillators were purchased for location throughout the county from Emergency Medical Service funding.

Members of the fire department apply for grants on a regular basis, said Reichert. He credited Sheriff Jim Brueggeman who applied for funding that went toward updating radio equipment to

enhance communication for first responders.

“We’re aggressive on going after grant money,” said Reichert, “because we’d eventually have to buy the equipment, and it prevents us from spending local money.”