

McKownville Fire Department receives grant

By STEPHEN PAUSE

pauses@spotlightnews.com

The McKownville Fire Department was recently awarded a national grant by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which the department will use to upgrade its air systems.

The Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program awarded the department a total of \$96,648, 5 percent of which the department will pay for. McKownville was one of thousands of fire departments across the country to apply for the grant, and the dollar amount was

based on the specific amount for the new equipment. The grant will allow the department to purchase new self-contained breathing apparatus and the necessary equipment need to refill air bottles.

Don Csaposs, development director for the town of Guilderland, helped the department put the application together and explained the need for the grant.

"There were two factors," he said. "The first was, the equipment was old and some of the equipment was showing signs of wear and tear. The other was that

the McKownville Fire Department equipment was not compatible with that of neighboring departments."

The upgrade to the air system will allow the department to be more efficient in responding to calls, especially those which require mutual assistance between departments. McKownville fireman responding to an emergency will now be able to exchange tanks with other departments, which has the potential to save valuable time.

Don Reeb, president of the McKownville Improvement

association, said he was grateful for the improvements.

"We're overjoyed with this," he said. "We're always interested in making sure the firemen, who are our neighbors, are safe. There are all kinds of ties that bond us. There are firemen that live on my

street and that I know, and I think everyone in McKownville knows a fireman. They certainly would like to see them safe if possible."

Reeb said that the McKownville improvement association was actually created by the fire department.