

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Hailey Receives \$665,000 Grant for Firefighters

SAFER Grant to Train and Recruit 19 New Firefighters

(Hailey, Idaho) – The City of Hailey received notice of award for \$664,516 in the highly competitive nationwide **Staffing For Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER)** grant.

SAFER grants are administered through the FEMA Department of Homeland Security. Hailey’s grant will recruit and train up to 19 new firefighters, and will increase the training and benefits for new and existing firefighters for four years. No match is required.

The recruitment and training grant will pay for:

- Marketing for new recruits;
- Training and education;
- Equipment for new recruits.
- PPE and NFPA-compliant physicals;
- Health-related benefits;

Both Hailey Fire Department (HFD) and Wood River Fire & Rescue (WRFR) will benefit from all activities proposed within the grant. Currently, both departments operate under a Joint Powers Agreement implemented by the City and WRFD over a year ago. Both departments rely heavily on volunteer firefighters, with many volunteers on both rosters. Both units experience similar difficulties in recruiting new volunteers and retaining current volunteers.

The Hailey City Council approved the grant application in March, 2018. “Tracy Anderson, our grant writer, worked with Chief Aberbach to put together a 32-page grant application in the brief lull between snow and fire seasons,” said Mayor Haemmerle. “Hailey City staff took initiative. This successful endeavor deserves gratitude from both Hailey and south County.”

This grant allows the departments to work together towards a common goal: recruiting and retaining Paid on Call Firefighters (Volunteers). The National Volunteer Fire Council’s 2017 fact sheet documents that the cost to train and equip a firefighter can exceed \$20,000. The average starting wage for a career firefighter in our departments is \$45,000 per year, plus full benefits, which nearly doubles that cost. Through strategic investment in volunteer firefighters, it is safe to say that our community saves \$50,000 per year, per volunteer that remains on the roster. The grant will increase the value of the volunteer benefits, making the departments more attractive to both new recruits and current members. It will also pay for \$2,000 toward new gear needed by each firefighter, covering up to \$50,000 in turn-out gear and other equipment.

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