

National Fire Plan

Community Assistance

Colorado

2003



When the National Fire Plan was implemented one of the key elements was community assistance. Many rural volunteer fire departments struggle to supply their departments with the necessary equipment and training required to provide the highest level of fire protection possible for the public. Local fire departments are first responders to fires that involve sagebrush and wooded areas as well as structures in many instances. They routinely assist federal wildland firefighters on or near Department of Interior public lands administered by Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, and Bureau of Indian Affairs, and United States Forest Service public lands under the Department of Agriculture.

Safety to firefighters and the public is always the top priority in any wildland fire. To support that effort The Rural Fire Assistance program was developed under the National Fire Plan with money allocated by Congress divided among the four agencies for distribution. This program awards grants to enable volunteer fire departments to enhance their fire protection capabilities. Eligible departments can use the grants for training, equipment, and prevention work. Gear related to wildland fire such as fire shelters, nomex fire resistant clothing and hose fittings, are items often seen on grant proposals. The U.S. Forest Service also has a longstanding program to assist fire departments. In Colorado both programs are administered through the Colorado State Forest Service to provide a single point of contact for the application and award process.

One example of 2003 Rural Fire Assistance awards are laptop computers provided to the Moffat County Sheriff's Department. The laptops will enable the Sheriff's Department to implement the "Moffat County Fire Plan" upon its completion. The department is a cooperator with the Craig Interagency Fire Dispatch Center and maintains fire engines available to respond to fire calls. Deputies will be able to access site specific data while in the field. This is the information gathered from land owners over the past two years who wish to participate in the Moffat County Fire Plan.