



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pete Harckham

## Harckham Inspects New Vista Fire Dept. Radios Secured with \$100K State Senate Grant

PETE HARCKHAM January 4, 2024

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State Sen. Harckham at the Vista Volunteer Fire Department with (l-r) Lead Foreman Eleanor Hersam, Commissioner Tom LoBosco and Chief Jeffrey Peck

Vista, NY – New York State Senator Pete Harckham visited the Vista Volunteer Fire Department recently to see the installation of new two-way radio equipment purchased with \$100,000 of State Senate grant funding he secured for the department. The new radios meet safety standards for interior structural firefighting and give firefighters the ability to

communicate with other departments during emergencies.

“One of the abiding lessons learned during the 9/11 terrorist attacks is that firefighters and first responders require state-of-the-art communications equipment that gives them access to other emergency response agencies,” said Harckham. “This funding for the Vista Fire Department to facilitate communications upgrades is an investment that helps safeguard our residents, local businesses and also the brave volunteers, like those in Vista, who serve and protect us.”

The Vista Volunteer Fire Department, which serves Vista Fire District No. 1 in the Town of Lewisboro, had been using end-of-life radio equipment when responding to calls and operating at the scene of fires and other emergencies. The new Motorola APX6000XE portable radios were put into service on December 11, 2023, and include remote speaker microphones, carry cases, chargers and spare batteries. Vista firefighters and first responders who enter immediately dangerous to life and health (“IDLH”) environments can now maintain clear communication with incident commanders and other units operating on scene.

Additionally, the new radios have multiple features that make communicating during an emergency significantly easier—there are larger controls for easier manipulation with gloved hands; extreme environment and extreme temperature features and construction engineered specifically for firefighting; redundant controls to help the first responder transmit messages even when the radio or its user are compromised; and large top displays for easier viewing of the radio’s status.

Most importantly, the portable radios have a “mayday” button to get the attention of incident commanders and other units on scene when a first responder finds themselves in an adverse or dangerous situation requiring immediate help.

Two-way radios are state-of-the-art tools necessary for volunteer firefighters and emergency personnel. The ability to provide quick and reliable alerts that an emergency has occurred is essential, and reliable communication at the scene can literally mean life or death.

Fire and EMS personnel carry a radio constantly, and since communications are needed over large areas, a powerful radio that can integrate with a repeater system is usually needed. Radios also need to be durable and waterproof. Because volunteer firefighters are alerted via a pager, upgrades to newer two-way radios that integrate paging and message playback functionality eliminate the need to carry two devices.

Finally, making newer radios necessary is the fact that older radios are susceptible to interference from vehicle ignitions, electric motors, high-voltage transmission lines and computers, as well light sources, including LEDs, fluorescent lights and energy-efficient bulbs.

“The addition of these radios is a real benefit to our department because of their many safety features,” said Vista Volunteer Fire Department Chief Jeffrey Peck. “It’s vital that we have communications equipment that operates at a sizable distance and incorporates newer technology. Radio communications are key to coordinating each response to an emergency response, and we thank Senator Harckham for his support in this much-needed improvement.”

The Vista Volunteer Fire Department responds to an average of 250 calls a year, Chief Peck noted. Through the first several days of December, however, the department has answered more than 350 calls in 2023.

Harckham has secured more than \$2 million in State Senate funding to make critical vehicle and equipment investments in support of firefighters and first responders since taking office in 2019. The grant funding for the Vista Volunteers Fire Department’s new radios,

awarded in March 2022, was secured within the State and Municipal Facilities program (SAM), which is administered by the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York (DASNY).