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Wisconsin DSPS Distributes Nearly \$23,000 to Volunteer Fire Department
Southern Door Volunteer FD among those benefiting from the state's 2% Dues Program

Forestville, WI -- Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS) Secretary-designee Dan Hereth presented a ceremonial check for nearly \$23,000 to Southern Door Volunteer Fire Department Chief Richard Olson Wednesday morning in Forestville, one of multiple communities the fully-volunteer department serves.

“The funding is a great help to our department,” Chief Olson said while standing in front of a table that displayed examples of the protective gear and educational materials the fire department has purchased in the past with help from the Fire Dues funding.

This year, Wisconsin fire departments [received \\$28.3 million](#) through the program.

“We’re proud of the part we play in this program,” Secretary-designee Hereth said. “A large number of the fire departments in Wisconsin are volunteer, and this funding goes a long way towards keeping Wisconsin firefighters well-equipped and safe, and also keeping the communities they serve safe.”

The Fire Dues Program is a significant source of funding for state fire departments, which use the money to buy and replace equipment, operate fire prevention programming, train crews and more. At the check presentation, Chief Olson shared a story about a recent fire, emphasizing the importance of how the funding helps his department’s education and prevention efforts.

“You always wonder, ‘Do our (prevention) efforts pay off?’ Well, I can tell you they do. In June of this year, two blocks from our station, a young boy was awakened by the sound of breaking glass, and he smelled smoke. He checked to make sure his sister and her friend got out of their house, and he got out of the house. He called 911. They got to their mailbox, which was their meeting place. They did not go inside for their pets or belongings,” Chief Olson said, explaining that the family’s decision to follow protocol likely prevented loss of life.

The Fire Dues program requires insurers to pay 2% of premiums collected for insurance against loss from fires. The Wisconsin Office of the Commissioner of Insurance collects the dues, and DSPS distributes the dues to cities, towns and villages across the state according to a prescribed formula.

In addition to protective gear, fire departments in Wisconsin have used the funding on things like engines, ladder trucks and fire suppression equipment.

In addition to administering the 2% Dues Program, DSPS regulates firefighter health and safety, and manages Wisconsin's [fire prevention program](#). DSPS also launched a youth firefighter training grant program in 2022 to help address recruitment and retention challenges in the fire service. Grants were awarded to local fire departments in [2022](#) and again in [2023](#).

“Fire departments are invaluable community safety partners and provide vital services and support, from extinguishing and preventing fires to providing education about fire and other safety risks,” Hereth said. “Wisconsin communities continue rely on this this critical annual funding to support their operations, and ensure local departments are well-equipped when called upon.”

About DSPS: DSPS issues more than 240 unique licenses, administers dozens of boards and councils that regulate professions, enforces state building codes, and maintains the Wisconsin Enhanced Prescription Drug Monitoring Program, which is a key tool in the multi-faceted public health campaign to stem excessive opioid prescribing. A fee-based agency, DSPS is self-sustaining and receives no general fund tax dollars for its day-to-day operations. With five offices and 250 employees throughout Wisconsin, DSPS collaborates with constituents and stakeholders across a wide range of industries to promote safety and advance the economy.

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