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Press Release

IFRM Ships Donated Life-Saving Gear to Papua New Guinea

In late June, the International Fire Relief Mission sent one pallet of donated fire and EMS equipment to the Ukarumpa Fire Department in Papua New Guinea. Later this year, IFRM will send a team of fire and EMS professionals to train members of the fire department on the safe and proper use of the equipment. IFRM is a nonprofit organization based in Lindstrom, Minn., that collects used fire and EMS equipment and delivers it to needy fire departments in developing nations.

The equipment was generously donated by fire departments across the United States, with most of it coming from fire departments in Minnesota and the U.S. Air Force base in Duluth, Iowa. The majority of the equipment shipped was turnout gear, aircraft rescue and firefighting gear, and SCBA air packs and masks. IFRM also sent first-responder equipment such as AED units and CPR training dummies.

"In their letter to us, Ukarumpa's fire chief said the department was operating without any SCBA, boots, helmets or gloves," said Ron Gruening, IFRM president. Gruening is a retired paramedic and an active volunteer firefighter. "When a department asks us for help, we assess its greatest needs and fill those to the best of our ability. We sometimes take for granted how good we have it here in the United States. But often, fire and EMS equipment that no longer meets U.S. regulatory requirements is a profound upgrade to what many firefighters in developing nations are using today. This equipment immediately makes the firefighters' jobs safer and improves their chances of saving civilian lives. What may seem like a simple act of recycling to us dramatically changes their lives."

Later this year, Gruening and his team will spend two weeks in Papua New Guinea teaching the Ukarumpa firefighters how to safely and effectively use the newly donated gear. IFRM is preparing other shipments to Roatan, Peru, and Bolivia. Those shipments also will be accompanied by on-the-ground training.

"This global recession has made the need for fire and EMS gear greater than ever," Gruening said. "But through the generous support of American fire departments and our corporate partners like Rosenbauer, FRC, Lion Apparel and GearGrid, we've been able to help those who risk their lives helping others."

About the International Fire Relief Mission

IFRM is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization whose mission is to collect donated new and used fire and EMS equipment, deliver it to fire departments in developing nations and educate members of those fire departments on the equipment's safe and proper use. IFRM is a nonreligious, nonpolitical group dedicated to saving firefighter and civilian lives. IFRM members do not draw a salary and all of the money raised is used to fulfilling the group's mission. IFRM was formed in 2007 by retired emergency-response professionals. For more information, visit its website at www.ifrm2007.com.