

Readout of Secretary Napolitano's Remarks at the 2009 Fire-Rescue International Conference



Release Date: August 27, 2009

For Immediate Release
Office of the Press Secretary
Contact: 202-282-8010

Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Janet Napolitano delivered remarks today to 2,500 first responders and emergency managers at the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) 2009 Fire-Rescue International Conference in Dallas, Texas, stressing preparedness as a shared responsibility between all levels of government, the private sector, communities and individuals.

Following her remarks, Secretary Napolitano joined Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Administrator Craig Fugate to swear in Kelvin Cochran as U.S. Fire Administrator—the nation's top fire service position.

“America's first responders stand at the front lines of all emergencies,” said Secretary Napolitano. “I applaud the addition of Chief Cochran to the talented leadership team at FEMA, which supports these brave men and women serving communities across the country as we prepare and respond.”

In her remarks, Secretary Napolitano discussed actions the Department is taking to support firefighters across the country—including distributing \$210 million in Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grants this year that help fire departments increase the number of trained, front-line firefighters in their communities and, with new flexibility added this year, rehire laid-off firefighters.

Since 2001, more than \$4 billion in Assistance to Firefighters Grants has been awarded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for equipment, protective gear and emergency vehicles. In addition, more than \$200 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding has been made available this year for the construction of new fire stations.

Secretary Napolitano also emphasized the unique role firefighters play in community preparedness through programs such as FEMA's Citizen Corps Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training—particularly in preparation for the upcoming flu season.

###

This page was last reviewed/modified on August 27, 2009.