



PRESS release

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**Mayor in DC to Lobby for Safety Services Grants
*Meetings held on "SAFER" and "COPS" Funding***

Akron Mayor Don Plusquellic is in Washington D.C meeting with federal officials in an effort to save and expand funding for police officers and firefighters.

In 2010, the City received a federal grant that allowed the return of 37 firefighters to the job under a "Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response" (SAFER) grant; and in 2009, Akron was awarded \$5.7 million under the Community Oriented Policing Services Program,(COPS) which is paying the salaries of 23 patrol officers.

"Akron firefighters and police officers put their lives on the line every day to keep our community and families safe," said Mayor Plusquellic. "I will meet with whoever it takes to fight for these programs that represent a relatively modest amount in the

federal budget to allow the federal government to contribute towards the safety and security of our cities.”

Plusquellic met Tuesday with representatives from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, which included four FEMA officials, to discuss Akron’s needs and the SAFER grant. The SAFER grant provides funding to fire departments to help them increase the number of trained front-line firefighters. Last year, the Akron Fire Department was awarded a grant of \$6,017,559 that allowed the return to duty of 37 previously laid off firefighters. The Mayor said he is lobbying not only to retain the grant, but he is also seeking to increase the funding for additional hiring and training. “I have several ideas how the SAFER grants can be improved to include new training initiatives and the FEMA officials seem to be receptive to my ideas,” said Plusquellic.

Today, Mayor Plusquellic met with the Director of COPS, Bernard Melekian, to lobby for the COPS grant. The Mayor is seeking to keep the current grant and increase it to include the hiring and training of more police officers. The COPS grant provides funds directly to law enforcement agencies to hire new and/or rehire career law enforcement officers, and to increase their community policing capacity and crime prevention efforts. “I want to make sure we are doing everything we can to secure these federal funds for our safety forces, and I have ideas about how COPS funding can be used to dramatically assist our police department in additional ways,” said Plusquellic.

Prior to being sworn in, Akron Police Chief Jim Nice, on his own, met with Melekian and had already scheduled a meeting for the end of June to pursue ideas on

working with, and making the best use of, the COPS program in order to continue to improve Akron Police Department.

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