

HAVELOCK NEWS

Havelock receives grant to hire firefighters

By [Drew C. Wilson](#)

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Havelock is scheduled to open its new first station next week, and now a federal grant will make sure there are firefighters to work in it.

The Department of Homeland Security has awarded Havelock a \$332,641 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant. The money will be used to pay salaries and benefits for two years for three new city firefighter/EMS positions.

"What that does is allows us to have around the clock coverage with the minimum number of qualified members to man engines according to fire standards," said Diane Miller, the city's grant writer and spokeswoman.

The three new positions will allow the city to staff the new West End Station at Tucker Creek to meet response requirements.

"Evaluation of response data indicated that there were six firefighters per call in 2008," Miller said. "This suggests that command staff were directly involved in ground operation, delaying critical command functions and jeopardizing overall safety.

"These additional members will tremendously strengthen the safety and impact the public we serve while enhancing and improving service to our response district."

The added personnel will also help the city respond to mutual-aid calls outside city limits. Miller said those calls have increased by 22 to 128 percent.

"The additional personnel will provide us the ability and resources to respond to mutual aid calls with our civil service counterparts aboard MCAS (Cherry Point) and in the surrounding communities that have limited resources," she said.

The city had applied for a similar grant in 2008 but was turned down. Miller said the city applied again on Jan. 15, and the city's lobbying firm, Marlowe and Company, took the executive summary of the grant to area legislators in Washington so that they could lend their support.

Miller said that she consulted with the chiefs of fire departments in Jacksonville, Fayetteville, Apex and Mooresville who had been successful in obtaining SAFER grants in the past.

Havelock Fire Capt. Tom Dorn assembled all statistics backing up the city's fire responses and activities over the last few years that were part of the grant application.

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