



OFFICE OF CITY MANAGER

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FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:
Deputy Fire Chief Kevin Bersche
248-871-2800

Farmington Hills Fire Department Creates Medical Supply Purchasing Consortium

Saving lives and saving money - it's a winning combination. Thanks to the efforts of several local fire departments and the City of Farmington Hills purchasing department, a Michigan-based medical supply company has been awarded a purchasing contract that has the potential to serve fire departments nationwide - something that's never been done before.

The decision by the Farmington Hills City Council to award a three-year renewable contract for emergency medical supplies and equipment to Wixom-based J & B Medical Supply represents the City's continued commitment to cost-effective purchasing and regional cooperation. The contract will be officially launched with a press conference at J & B Medical's Wixom headquarters on February 28 at 4 p.m.

The purchasing consortium currently allows fire departments to buy emergency medical supplies used all the time, such as bandages and IV tubing, in a combined effort with more than 80 other departments. In a time when saving money is the focus for local governments, Farmington Hills has taken the lead. Cooperative purchasing agreements have been used by governments for many items from office supplies to auto parts, but never for emergency medical supplies and equipment.

"This is an example of everything that's right with local government in a restricted economy," said Farmington Hills Deputy Fire Chief Kevin Bersche, who was instrumental in creating the consortium along with Kelly Monico, Senior Buyer in the City's purchasing department. "This is an example of the best way to use tax payer dollars."

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Both Bersche and Monico agree that purchasing fire department medical supplies through a consortium equals both better prices and less time spent seeking vendor quotes. For the past six years, the Farmington Hills Fire Department has been banding together to purchase supplies with other local governments. Extending the agreement nationwide, however, means even more cost-savings due to economies of scale. "We have fire departments in both Tucson and San Diego that are ready to sign on when this goes nationwide," said Monico.

For J & B Medical, currently undergoing an expansion, being awarded the purchasing consortium contract means more jobs and a major economic boost. "One of the great things about this particular contract is that a local company will benefit from the national purchasing. That means that an Oakland County-based business will grow even in this difficult economy," Bersche said.

The Farmington Hills Fire Department, which previously purchased supplies through a company based in California, is happy that the contract is now going to a Michigan-based business. "Many of the cooperative purchasing agreements in use in Michigan originated here in Farmington Hills and now the potential for national cooperation is very exciting," said Bersche.

For information about the launch of the cooperative emergency medical supply contract, call Julian Shaya, Executive Vice President, J & B Medical, at 248-896-6205. For information about City of Farmington Hills involvement, call Deputy Fire Chief Kevin Bersche at 248-871-2805 or Senior Buyer Kelly Monico at 248-871-2435.

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