



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

NEWS

ROD R. BLAGOJEVICH – GOVERNOR

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(OSFM)

Governor Blagojevich signs law to help communities purchase new ambulances

Zero-interest loan program will help fire departments, fire protection districts and non-profit ambulance services purchase new ambulances

SPRINGFIELD – Governor Rod R. Blagojevich today signed legislation that will help communities purchase new life-saving ambulances through zero-interest loans provided by the Illinois Finance Authority. **Senate Bill 623**, sponsored by state Senator John Sullivan (D-Rushville) and state Representative Michael Smith (D-Canton), creates a revolving loan program to provide the loans for new ambulances.

“Small fire departments and non-profit ambulance services often struggle with tight budgets and can’t always afford large purchases like an ambulance,” said Gov. Blagojevich. “But the people in their communities depend on them for life-saving services. That’s why it’s important to help those communities with zero interest loans so they can buy the ambulances they need.”

Senate Bill 623 creates the Ambulance Revolving Fund Program to provide zero-interest loans to fire departments, fire protection districts or non-profit ambulance services for the purchase of ambulances. The loans are available for amounts up to \$100,000 and can be repaid over a 10-year period. Once established, the program will be administered by the Office of the State Fire Marshal and the Illinois Finance Authority.

"This legislation provides a financial mechanism to ensure that rural areas will receive access to emergency care," said Sen. Sullivan. "Ambulatory service is critical downstate to safely transport the injured and sick to our region's hospitals. I'm happy to have worked with Representative Smith on this issue."

"I have great hopes that this program will be as successful as the first truck revolving loan fund which we set up a couple of years ago," said Rep. Smith. "There is no doubt for the need of assistance, which is very great in our rural communities."

In 2003, Gov. Blagojevich created a similar program to help fire departments purchase fire trucks. Under the Fire Truck Revolving Loan Program, more than 60 fire departments have received new fire trucks or have fire trucks on order. Loan payments are returned to the revolving fund and will be used for future fire truck loans.