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Help America's Farmers Grow Communities Support Local Firefighters during Fire Prevention Month

Monsanto Fund-sponsored program gives back to Iowa fire departments

ST. LOUIS, Mo. (Oct. 7, 2012) – Rural communities have a fire death rate twice the national average, according to the U.S. Fire Administration and National Fire Protection Association. Firefighters in these communities are also often less likely to have the necessary firefighting equipment and training. To help combat these challenges, the Monsanto Fund is investing in rural fire departments and helping to keep farming communities safer through America's Farmers Grow Communities^{SM}.

Grow Communities gives eligible farmers the chance to win a $2,500 donation for their favorite local nonprofit organization. Last year, the largest percentage of Grow Communities funding was directed to local fire departments. The Monsanto Fund invested a total of $612,500 in 245 rural fire departments across the country.

Mark Schoening, Oak Township fire chief in Mills County, Iowa, knows firsthand how impactful being selected as the winning recipient for Grow Communities for the county can be.

"This donation allowed us to buy six air tanks, which gives us triple the amount of time we can be fighting fires indoors," Schoening said.

For the third consecutive year, Grow Communities is gearing up to distribute $2,500 donations in 1,271 eligible counties across the country. Now through Nov. 30, 2012, farmers can apply online at www.growcommunities.com or call 1-877-267-3332 to apply by phone. To date, more than $7 million has been invested in rural America through Grow Communities.

"Supporting rural America is our priority," said Deborah Patterson, Monsanto Fund president. "We understand that the safety of these rural communities depends so much on the strength of its local fire department. We are proud and honored to give back to firefighters, and I am delighted to see so many farmers directing donations this way."

New this year, community members can suggest a fire department or other nonprofit organization that is in need of funding on the Grow Communities website. Farmers can review "planted ideas" and consider them in their application. To submit a nonprofit project idea that needs funding in your community, visit www.growcommunities.com by Nov. 30.

As a result of the worst drought in 50 years, more than 700 of the 1,271 Grow Communities counties have been declared natural disaster areas by the USDA. Winning farmers from these counties will have the opportunity to direct an additional $2,500 donation to a second nonprofit of their choosing to assist with community needs that have surfaced due to the drought. The Monsanto Fund will select one winner at random from each of the eligible counties and announce winning farmers and recipient nonprofits in January 2013.

America's Farmers Grow Communities highlights the important contributions farmers make every day to our society and helps them positively impact their communities. This program is part of the Monsanto Fund's overall effort to support rural America.
For more information about this program and to view the official rules, visit www.growcommunities.com .

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SIDEBAR

26 Iowa fire departments received a total of $65,000 from America's Farmers Grow Communities in 2012, including:

- Griswold (Cass County)
- Tipton (Cedar County)
- Quimby (Cherokee County)
- Woodburn (Clarke County)
- Webb (Clay County)
- Welton (Clinton County)
- Weldon (Decatur County)
- Terrill (Dickinson County)
- Worthington (Dubuque County)
- Rockford (Floyd County)

- Stratford (Hamilton County)
- Holstein (Ida County)
- Packwood (Jefferson County)
- Olin (Jones County)
- Des Moines Township (Lee County)
- Martelle (Linn County)
- Melbourne (Marshall County)
- St. Ansgar Rescue (Mitchell County)
- Sanborn (O’Brien County)
- May City (Osceola County)
- Deep River (Poweshiek County)

- Eldridge (Scott County)

- Panama (Shelby County)

- Cambridge (Story County)

- Gladbrook (Tama County)

- Sharpsburg (Taylor County)

About the Monsanto Fund

The Monsanto Fund, the philanthropic arm of the Monsanto Company, is a nonprofit organization dedicated to strengthening the farm communities where farmers and Monsanto Company employees live and work. Visit the Monsanto Fund at www.monsantofund.org

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