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City releases details of \$50 million federal grant

Grant funds will be used to cover convention-related security costs

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SAINT PAUL, MINN. – The City of Saint Paul has officially received a \$50 million grant from the U.S. Department of Justice to help cover security costs associated with hosting the Republican National Convention this September. The grant, which requires formal approval from the Saint Paul City Council, will pay for law enforcement overtime pay, training, equipment, and other essentials related to convention security. The City Council will review the grant and take final action to receive the grant funds at its August 6 meeting.

“Local taxpayers will not be responsible for any of the security costs of the Republican National Convention coming to town,” said Saint Paul Mayor Chris Coleman. “The grant represents federal dollars coming back to Minnesota. As Minnesotans, we will reap the long-term benefits of a major investment in public safety readiness and infrastructure not only for the convention, but for well into the future.”

“The \$50 million grant represents one more very big step in making sure we are ready for the convention,” said Saint Paul Police Chief John Harrington. “Minnesota has a strong public safety community and partnerships that work well in all types of situations. This grant ensures that these partnerships are backed by the resources to support and prepare officers for the convention.”

The grant will cover all the added security costs associated with Saint Paul hosting the convention. The most significant expense category – estimated at \$34 million – is payment of overtime salary-related personnel costs for more than 3,500 law enforcement officials from the various partnering jurisdictions.

The approximately \$16 million remaining will be used to:

- train officers for working in large crowds and for specific situations that could occur during events of this size and nature
- purchase equipment such as motorcycles, bicycles, and radios
- purchase supplies such as fuel, helmets, first aid kits, firefighter/emergency management supplies
- cover travel expenses related to training and planning
- enter into contracts to fulfill needs such as lighting, satellite and cellular phones, etc.

- more -

The grant guidelines are very specific in how funds can and cannot be used. Chief Harrington said that the department has made sure all of its uses fit these guidelines. The allocation of grant funds may change slightly, but the categories will remain the same.

The grant application was submitted earlier this year. To secure the grant, the City of Saint Paul and the Saint Paul Police Department worked closely with Minnesota's Congressional delegation.

"This is an enormous opportunity to showcase our state to the world, and it's important that we help provide our law enforcement officials the tools they need to keep Minnesotans safe," said U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar.

"With tens of thousands ready to descend upon the greater metro area for the 2008 Republican National Convention, Minnesotans will have the unique opportunity to showcase all that our great state has to offer," said Senator Norm Coleman. "This significant influx of people and attention will present the greater metro area with a number of security concerns and this funding will help mitigate these challenges. As a former Mayor, I know how important these federal dollars are to ensuring our state and local law enforcement agencies can work together seamlessly in securing this event."

Law enforcement officials have spent more than a year and a half planning and preparing for the convention. Part of the planning process has involved identifying the collective resources and equipment of the partnering agencies, and finding ways to supplement what they already have.

"The items purchased through grant monies will remain with Minnesota law enforcement agencies. Our preparations for the RNC will have continuing benefits," Chief Harrington said.

Saint Paul became eligible for the grant because the convention is designated as a National Special Security Event with specific needs. Denver, the host of this year's Democratic National Convention, also received a \$50 million grant.

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