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## **MORE THAN \$132,000 WORTH OF LIFE-SAVING EQUIPMENT AWARDED TO PENSACOLA AREA PUBLIC SAFETY**

PENSACOLA, Fla. – Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation is supporting the ongoing recovery of a community devastated by a tornado in 2016 with \$132,032 worth of life-saving equipment grants awarded to eight public safety organizations. A press event will take place at **10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, March 29** at the Firehouse Subs restaurant located at **6869 N. 9<sup>th</sup> Ave. Pensacola, Fla. 32504**.

Just over a year ago, Northwest Florida and Southwest Alabama were shook by an EF-3 tornado that ripped through the community, leaving more than 300 homes destroyed and three dead in its path. Naturally, as an organization founded upon principles of public service, 18 Firehouse Subs restaurants banded together to support relief efforts in the area, raising more than \$42,000 for the cause. Several equipment grants celebrated at the March 29 event are a direct result of the fundraiser, and will be used to aid first responders and public safety organizations during future weather emergencies. The remaining money was raised through year-round fundraising efforts at the 1,050 Firehouse Subs restaurants across the nation.

“It’s remarkable to watch Firehouse Subs restaurants spring into action so quickly after a natural disaster,” said Jackie Gubbins, Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation senior manager of foundation programs. “Firehouse Subs is made up of wonderful people with big hearts, and thanks to our Foundation, we’re in a fortunate position to help those in need by providing assistance and resources that might not be available

otherwise.”

The following first responder and public safety organizations are receiving equipment, which will be on display and demonstrated at the press conference. Residents and Firehouse Subs guests are invited to join the celebration and see firsthand how their generous contributions have come full circle to provide much-needed equipment in their own community. Additional attendees include local first responders and city officials, Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation Senior Manager of Foundation Programs Jackie Gubbins, Firehouse Subs Area Representative Jim Broschious and the following Firehouse Subs franchisees: Tony Pietsch, Betty Arrant, Scott Allday, Jennifer Allday, Chris Broschious, Jean Eytchison Klein, Robin Henson and Scott Esty.

- **Be Ready Alliance for Coordinating Emergencies (BRACE)** received \$15,101 in disaster relief support to assist tornado survivors in their recovery. The funding will be used to purchase a variety of construction materials, including lumber and sheetrock, helping rebuild and repair damaged homes.
- **Escambia County Sheriff's Office** received 30 ballistic shooter shields worth \$35,366. The awarded shields will protect sheriff deputies in the line of duty during hostile emergency situations. This becomes increasingly important as a 2016 report from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) revealed the number of “active shooter” incidents has risen in the U.S.
- **Region 1 Hillcrest Disaster Relief Team** received a variety of disaster relief equipment worth \$10,000, from chainsaws to dust respirators. The awarded equipment will be used during cleanup and construction efforts after future weather emergencies. The organization currently responds to between 250 and 300 calls per year.
- **Elsanor Volunteer Fire Department** received new fire hose worth \$7,600. The awarded hose will replace the existing, which has several damaged sections in need of repair, helping ensure the department is prepared to deliver safe and efficient services to the community.

- **Robertsdale Volunteer Fire Department and Midway Fire district** received three thermal imaging cameras worth a combined \$15,794. The awarded cameras will be used to detect body heat and hot spots in burning buildings, as well as during search and rescue missions in area waterways, allowing firefighters to quickly locate victims and provide life-saving assistance.
- **Gulf Breeze Volunteer Fire Department** received a utility terrain vehicle (UTV) and medical skid unit worth \$20,133. The awarded equipment will allow firefighters to provide medical support in areas impassable by traditional emergency vehicles.
- **Spanish Fort Fire Rescue** received \$28,038 worth of extrication equipment, replacing the current tools that are nearly 25 years old and improving the department's rescue capabilities for victims in motor vehicle accidents.

"We are pleased to announce that the Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation grant to BRACE has been fully expended in the effort to address housing needs," said BRACE Executive Director Greg Strader. "Although much work remains to be done, it is gratifying that seven families are now back on their feet. This has been made possible through the generosity of the Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation and our volunteer partners."

Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation was founded in 2005 in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, when Firehouse Subs co-founders, Chris Sorensen and Robin Sorensen, traveled to Mississippi where they provided food to first responders and survivors. As they traveled back to Florida, they knew they could do more and Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation was born with the mission of providing funding, life-saving equipment and educational opportunities to first responders and public safety organizations. Since its inception, the non-profit organization has given more than \$24 million to hometown heroes in 46 states, Puerto Rico and Canada, including more than \$4.2 million in Florida and \$1.4 million in Alabama.

Firehouse Subs restaurants participate in a number of fundraising efforts, including the sale of recycled pickle buckets for \$2. Donation canisters on register

counters collect spare change, while the Round Up Program allows guests to “round up” their bill to the nearest dollar. Grant allocations are made possible thanks to the overwhelming support of Firehouse Subs restaurants and generous donors.

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