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U.S. Sens. Lautenberg, Menendez announce grants for Orange, Newark fire squads

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By **Eunice Lee/The Star-Ledger**

ESSEX COUNTY — Five cash-strapped fire departments received \$2 million in federal grants to bolster manpower and buy new equipment, with the lion's share going to Orange and Newark, Sens. Frank R. Lautenberg and Robert Menendez announced today.

Orange Fire Department was awarded \$1,238,623, the largest of the five grants, through the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grant. The Newark Fire Department was awarded \$399,994 for new radios through the Assistance to Firefighters Grant.

Three departments received grants for recruitment: Forked River Fire Department received \$48,600; Princeton Fire Department got \$361,500; and West Cape May Volunteer Fire Company received \$8,900.

In January, the Orange department laid off 12 firefighters while it was already stretched thin.

The firefighters union is talking with city officials about whether the funds will be used to restore layoffs or for new hires, Chief Robert Manganelli said today. A decision will be made by the end of the week, he said.

The Newark department last replaced firefighters' radios six years ago and will use the grant to replace handheld broadband radios with digital ones, said Director Fateen Ziyad.

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