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For Immediate Release

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Johnstown, PA - U.S. Rep. John Murtha announced today that nearly \$2 million he obtained for police and sheriffs departments in the 12th Congressional District is being released by the U.S. Department of Justice.

The Southwestern Pennsylvania Law Enforcement Technology grants will be used to address the departments' critical needs such as officer training and equipment purchases.

"Municipalities in our area struggle to afford even the basic equipment and training they need," Murtha said. "These grants enable them to do a better job and be safer in protecting our communities. They often share these limited resources and coordinate their requirements with state agencies to determine if the state can provide any additional assistance. These grants are becoming a tremendous force multiplier for law enforcement agencies in our district."

The departments use the funds for essential items such as mobile radios, digital cameras, fingerprint sets, upgrades to the radio system, in-car video cameras and more.

For example, the use of an in-car video enables a police department to have a "silent partner" to the officer who is alone on duty. The video protects the officer from false misconduct charges while also protecting the public from possible officer misconduct. Because officers can play the video showing their behavior, video cameras reduce prosecution costs and serve as a deterrent to future offenders.

Video also can be used to enhance and improve training by showing officers the correct and incorrect ways of handling a given situation. In short, in-car video systems improve the public's confidence in their police force.

Local communities have used prior police grants in a variety of ways. The Borough of Donora used its \$13,950 to replace a WWII era siren to be used for public safety.

The Borough of Lily used part of the funding to purchase a Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) which was installed in its police cruiser. With this technology, the police officers are on the street longer creating a stronger presence. The amount of time normally spent completing daily logs and other administrative tasks has been reduced by more than 70 percent.

"None of these improvements would have been possible without the assistance from Congressman Murtha," said Fred Vornbrock, Vice President of Business Development for Johnstown-based MountainTop Technologies, which administers the grant. "Communities constantly express their sincere gratitude to the Congressman for his assistance in making this funding possible."

Each police department will receive a letter from the Congressman explaining how to apply for assistance.