



**Ahmeek Village Volunteer Fire & Rescue Department, Inc.**  
**P. O. Box 155**  
**Ahmeek, Michigan 49901**  
*Serving Since 1909*



The Ahmeek Village Volunteer Fire & Rescue Department was fortunate enough to be selected by the Portage Health Foundation to participate in their annual Giving Tuesday fundraiser. Held on December 1<sup>st</sup>, Giving Tuesday is a global day of giving that harnesses the collective power of individuals, communities and organizations to encourage philanthropy and to celebrate generosity worldwide. This opportunity allows people to donate to their favorite non-profit organizations for the betterment of the community.

The Ahmeek Village Volunteer Fire & Rescue Department has been serving the citizens of rural Keweenaw County, Michigan continuously and faithfully since 1909. We provide first due fire protection to Ahmeek Village and the Village of Copper City. We also assist neighboring fire departments when needed. Additionally, we provide off road rescue service throughout Keweenaw County which consists of 5966 miles, making it the largest county in Michigan.

We may be the only fire department in the Copper Country that does not benefit from a dedicated annual tax millage. We also serve a financially depressed area with high unemployment and poverty rates and low median household incomes. Our operational expenses are funded through donations, grants and our annual fundraisers. Because of these economic factors, we are typically unable to replace most broken and non-compliant equipment and we are unable to add equipment required for our mission and to improve firefighter safety and reduce community risk and loss. We do the best we can with antiquated and dilapidated equipment, but the community deserves better.

We recently received a federal grant to purchase a rescue truck. While this is monumental to our organization, our grant request for \$90,000 to equip this vehicle was not approved. In addition, we are \$65,000 short of the cost of the new vehicle. These are two examples of our greatest and highest priority needs.

Several times each year, we are requested to be pall bearers for regional fire department members and community members that have passed. Most recently, we provided this service for a Calumet Village firefighter in September. We pride ourselves in being able to perform this service for the community with professionalism, honor, dignity and respect. Alternately, our pride is diminished when it comes to our appearance. We have no dress uniforms and several members have no uniforms at all. Those who do have uniforms are utilizing decades old parade uniforms that are worn and do not properly fit the majority of our personnel. Members without uniforms wear clothing ranging from business casual to informal attire. Quite frankly, it is an embarrassment to appear at these events in such an assorted and "non-uniform" fashion. Our membership consists of everyday blue collar workers that sometimes struggle to make ends meet and purchasing uniforms out of our own pockets is not an option.

The complete ensemble consists of pants, shirt, jacket, badge, name tag, collar pins, belt and buckle, tie, white gloves and shoes. The cost is \$624.00 per member. Without donations, we are unable to accomplish our goal of being a professionally attired volunteer emergency services organization, while we continue to provide stellar services to the community, beyond those of fire and rescue assistance. While this is a low priority need as compared to equipping our rescue truck, it serves as yet another example of our needs.

We would be extremely grateful if you donated to our organization with any amount. The Portage Health Foundation will match the first \$200,000 of donations received. There is no cost to participate and we will receive 100% of the amount you donate. You can donate by mailing a check to the Portage Health Foundation at the address below or you can donate online by visiting [www.phfgive.org](http://www.phfgive.org). Donations are being collected now and must be received by December 1<sup>st</sup>. Please specify that you want your donation to benefit the Ahmeek Village Volunteer Fire & Rescue Department. If you have any questions, please contact Michael Defina at [AhmeekFireRescue@gmail.com](mailto:AhmeekFireRescue@gmail.com). Thank you for your consideration!

---

Michael Defina  
Grants Administrator  
Ahmeek Village Volunteer Fire & Rescue Department

Portage Health Foundation  
P O Box 299  
Hancock, Michigan 49930  
(906-523-5920)