

\$1 million grant for Allen County fire departments to enhance safety, service

By David Mamaril Horowitz
The Daily News

A nearly \$1 million federal grant is supplying most Allen County fire departments new air packs anticipated to upgrade service and safety for firefighters and the residents they serve.

"It's unbelievable, what these are going to mean to us," Scottsville Fire Department Assistant Chief Rickey Cooksey said. "It's kind of unheard of to get that kind of money in this small, little place here — large places usually get the huge grants, and it's kind of unbelievable that we got it."

The Federal Emergency Management Agency approved the firefighters assistance grant in November, and last week, the departments acquired 90 packs, which allow firefighters to breathe during fires and when hazardous materials are in the air, said Scottsville Fire Department

Lieutenant Jeff Young, who's also a deputy state fire marshal. The grant, which the departments were denied twice in the previous two years, additionally covers some extra cylinders and equipment.

Young has used the departments' previous, low-pressure tanks over his roughly 38 years fighting fires, during which he's tackled nearly 1,500 structure fires. Still, the newer, more costly packs come with

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Jeff Young

Scottsville Fire Department

numerous benefits, he said: They allow firefighters to equip themselves quicker and amplify their voices in emergencies while standardizing a single type of air pack for firefighters to use, Young said. They also comply with national regulations and last longer than the previous ones, he added.

The grant, for all but three departments, provided packs for the Adolphus Fire Department Station 2, Cedar Springs Fire Department Station 1, East Allen Fire Department, Halifax Volunteer Fire Department, the three Scottsville fire department stations, South Allen Fire Department and Trammel Volunteer Fire Department.

When they're called to action, the firefighters — professionals who work as volunteers — drive their personal vehicles to the scene while one member drives to the fire department to pick up a fire engine, Young said. Then, the firefighters put on their gear and once the truck pulls in, they'll retrieve the air pack if needed and tackle the fire.

Previously, the firefighters would also work with three different brands of air packs, which firefighters must connect differently. And, with practice, firefighters

can change out the new packs' cylinders in about 15 seconds, whereas doing so with the previous packs could take experienced firefighters a minute, Young said.

"You might think that's not a lot, but it depends on the fire you're fighting — if it's growing in size, if someone's trapped in it," Young said. "Seconds matter in what we do."

The voice amplification is particularly helpful due to the difficulty fighting fires can present for communication and sight. Sometimes, Young said, the smoke is so black, a firefighter can put their hand against their mask and still be unable to see their own fingers — which makes being able to communicate through voice all the more helpful.

The fact the packs comply with National Fire Protection Association regulations is helpful for insurance and death benefits, Young added. If a firefighter were injured, then equipment would be checked to ensure it's up to date, and if it wasn't, an insurance or death benefit could potentially be denied, he added.

"It's going to make it a lot safer for us as firefighters," Young said.

Man accused in Gilgo Beach serial killings is expected to plead guilty, sources say

NEW YORK (AP) — The man accused in Long Island's infamous Gilgo Beach serial killings intends to plead guilty in the case next month, according to two people familiar with his decision.

Rex Heuermann, a former architect charged with murdering seven women over 17 years, is set to change his plea from not guilty at his next scheduled court hearing on April 8, they said.

The two people, who have both been involved in the case, spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the plea has yet to be entered in court. One of the people said the victims' families and Heuermann's own family have already been notified of the decision.

Lawyers for Heuermann didn't immediately respond to emails seeking comment.

Still, much can happen before the court date. Heuermann simply can change his mind, and any guilty plea would also have to be accepted by a judge.

Heuermann, 62, had been scheduled to go on trial in September. He has



JAMES CARBONE / AP

Rex Heuermann, charged in a string of deaths known as the Gilgo Beach killings, appears at Suffolk County Court in Riverhead, N.Y., for a status conference on Feb. 25.

been in custody since his arrest in July 2023 and had previously told the court he wasn't guilty. His plan to change his plea was first reported by Newsday.

Prosecutors have said DNA evidence, cellphone data and evidence found in a search of Heuermann's Massapequa, New York, home connect him to the victims, who were all young women involved in sex work.

Remains of several victims were found on an isolated stretch of shoreline parkway, though some remains were scattered in other remote areas.

The victims include Melissa Barthelemy,

Maureen Brainard-Barnes, Amber Lynn Costello, Sandra Costilla, Valerie Mack, Jessica Taylor and Megan Waterman.

Suffolk County District Attorney Ray Tierney declined to comment when reached late Thursday, as did Gloria Allred, a prominent California lawyer representing some of the families of the victims.

The investigation of a potential Long Island serial killer spilled into public view in 2010, when police searching for a missing woman discovered numerous sets of human remains not far from Gilgo Beach.

MOVIE REVIEW

'They Will Kill You' a bit of overkill

By Micheal Compton
The Daily News

Another week, another heroine gets hunted down by rich devil worshippers film — this time the not so subtly titled "They Will Kill You."

A week after the "Ready or Not" sequel debuted in theaters, here is a film with a similar theme, but definitely not similar results. Despite a very game lead performance from Zazie Beetz and some creative visuals from writer-director Kirill Sokolov, this is a film that plays its full hand early and leaves little suspense after the reveal.

It's a blood-soaked rinse and repeat that grows tiresome rather quickly.

In "Kill" Beetz plays Asia Reaves, just out of prison trying to find her missing kid sister. The trail leads her to a New York high rise with very selective residents known as the Virgil. Asia is there posing as the newest employee and once inside she discovers the building is the home for a group of rich satanists (including Heather Graham and Tom Felton from "Harry Potter" fame) who have brought her in as their



GRAHAM BARTHOLOMEV

This image released by Warner Bros. Pictures shows Zazie Beetz in a scene from "They Will Kill You."

next sacrifice.

But Asia can more than take care of herself, learning to fight while in prison, thus the power struggle begins — with the young woman trying to fight her way through this wave of villains to find and save her sister.

"They Will Kill You" doesn't just borrow from "Ready or Not," it's a film with some creative visual flare at times — with Sokolov borrowing from the "Kill Bill" movies, "The Raid" and any of a number of Blaxploitation films.

The fight sequences are fun at first, but eventually it starts to be the same fight with maybe one or two tweaks to the staging. You can only see blood splatter so many times before it loses its impact, especially when

it is played for laughs most of the time.

The humorous stuff only creates a film that suffers from tonal balance, with some serious undertones of abuse and class struggle wedged in between the Looney Tunes-style fight sequences.

While Beetz does everything she can to keep it interesting, the rest of the supporting cast is mostly wasted with Graham and Felton basically afterthoughts.

Only Patricia Arquette as the building manager gets anything of substance, but even that wears out its welcome way too soon.

It all adds up to a whole lot of nothing with "They Will Kill You" just a bloody mess of a horror comedy.

GRADE: C



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