

# Brookhaven Town Receives Federal Grant to Upgrade Traffic Signals to Decrease Emergency Vehicle Response Time

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**Farmingville, NY** - At the June 28 Town Board meeting, a resolution was approved to utilize a Federal Highway Administration grant to upgrade traffic signal preemption technology for emergency vehicles.

The grant will be used to upgrade traffic signal preemption from infrared technology to a Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) Opticom Signal Preemption System. The GPS Opticom Signal Preemption System is designed to help reduce response times and enhance traffic safety.

The major advantage of the new GPS Opticom Preemption system over the older infrared systems is that it can "see" around corners by using satellite triangulation instead of infrared "line of sight" technology, which requires a straight line view from transmitter to receiver. It also has more than double the emergency vehicle detection zones, allowing traffic signal preemption from up 1/2 mile away and it requires less annual maintenance costs than the infrared system. Installation of the new system is scheduled to begin in late July of 2011. The project cost of \$1.8 million will be entirely covered by the grant.

"This new traffic preemption technology will greatly improve the response time for emergency vehicles and certainly help save lives," said Supervisor Lesko, "I thank Congressman Bishop for securing federal funds to help our first responders do their jobs. Brookhaven's first responders do such vital and, at times, dangerous work and with the new GPS Preemption system, they will be safer and can do their jobs more efficiently."

"For first responders, a few minutes can mean the difference between life and death for those they are trying to assist," said Congressman Tim Bishop, "These GPS devices will help our dedicated fire truck and ambulance drivers to respond safer, reduce response time and save lives. That is why my office has been working so hard with the Town of Brookhaven to secure these federal funds."

Congressman Bishop first discussed using these funds for GPS preemption with the late-Councilman Keith Romaine (CD 6), and has worked with Town officials to move this project forward.

"The GPS Opticom system was something that former Councilman Keith Romaine worked on that will offer dramatic improvement in allowing emergency service vehicles safer passage on our roads," commented Brookhaven Town Councilman Dan Panico.

Deputy Supervisor/Councilwoman Kathleen Walsh said, "As Brookhaven grows, the need for improved safety measures is a must for our residents, and our emergency workers."

Councilwoman Jane Bonner said, "We can never do enough for our firefighters and EMS workers who work so hard and risk their lives in order to save lives. The new GPS preemption technology is far and away superior to the old technology and it will make our streets safer when emergency vehicles are answering a call."

"I am pleased that the funding is going to help our first responders do their job," said Councilman Tim Mazzei, "If they are delayed by traffic, the results could mean the difference between life and death, so this new system is a necessity that we cannot afford to live without."

The Town Board also approved a resolution to award the bid to install the GPS Opticom Preemption system to Bohemia-based Hinck Electric, who came in as the lowest responsible bidder.

**Division of Public Information \* Office of the Supervisor**

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