

NEWS RELEASE

Alabama Department of Public Safety

courtesy • service • protection since 1935

Alabama State Troopers Add Search-and-Rescue Helicopter to Fleet *Department of Justice Grant Funds New Law Enforcement Aircraft*

MONTGOMERY — The Department of Public Safety rolled out Alabama’s latest aerial law enforcement asset on Tuesday, a Bell 407 helicopter which significantly expands state trooper emergency air rescue and response capabilities.

The aircraft, purchased with a \$3 million U.S. Department of Justice grant, will allow state troopers to “arrive on scene faster, remain on scene longer, and provide needed versatility in emergency response,” said Public Safety Director Col. J. Christopher Murphy. “This moves our capacity from ‘search’ to ‘search and rescue.’”

Murphy said U.S. Sens. Richard Shelby and Jeff Sessions, with the support of Gov. Bob Riley, were instrumental in securing the Department of Justice grant, which DPS received as a direct earmark in the 2007 Emergency Supplemental Appropriations bill. “These three leaders for our state recognized the importance of this added law enforcement capability and worked to acquire it for Alabama,” he said.

Murphy said aerial law enforcement is a “mission that is duplicated nowhere else. Our State Trooper Aviation Unit fulfills the singular law enforcement function that combines aviation assets with pilots who are sworn officers of the law.”

He said the new helicopter provides greater speed and power, expanding Trooper Aviation services to long-line rescues, multiple extractions, stretcher-based evacuation, tactical operation insertions, and on-site delivery of emergency supplies and equipment. “In addition, the 407 is equipped with fire-suppression equipment, ‘called a Bambi Bucket,’ that allows us to assist in inaccessible areas and those of urgent threat to life and property,” Murphy said.

In Alabama, State Trooper Aviation provides aerial law enforcement support for state, federal and local law enforcement agencies. The unit’s eight pilots are all Alabama state troopers whose missions include rescues and tactical support, surveillance, and searches for fugitive and missing persons (children, hunters, Alzheimer’s patients, and others).

Murphy said Trooper Aviation hangars are strategically located in north, central and south Alabama. “We base trooper pilots and aircraft in Cullman, Montgomery and Fairhope for the simple reason that it cuts our response time and increases our success rate,” he said. “That’s a critical factor in aerial law enforcement.”

Unit pilots fly an average of 3,500 hours annually. The trooper fleet consists of five fixed-wing aircraft and eight helicopters, in addition to the 407.

for more information contact:

Public Information/Education • P.O. Box 1511 • Montgomery AL 36102-1511

(334) 242-4445 • <http://www.dps.state.al.us/>

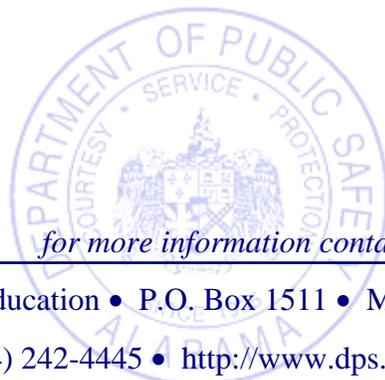
NEWS RELEASE

Alabama Department of Public Safety

courtesy • service • protection since 1935

The Bell 407 is used extensively in law enforcement and emergency medical services. The 407 purchased by DPS is a 2000 model used for law enforcement demonstration purposes. It carries a “like-new” warranty and approximately 1,000 airframe hours.

March 25, 2008



for more information contact:

Public Information/Education • P.O. Box 1511 • Montgomery AL 36102-1511

(334) 242-4445 • <http://www.dps.state.al.us/>