

Money will be used to purchase new digital fingerprinting and database equipment

Washington, DC - 12th District Georgia Congressman John Barrow today announced that the Athens-Clarke County Police Department has been awarded a \$35,255 grant from the Department of Justice's Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program (Byrne JAG).

The money will be used to purchase and implement a "Live Scan" system that digitizes fingerprints collected by the Athens-Clarke County Police Department (ACCPD). Under Georgia Law, ACCPD is required to fingerprint any individual it arrests, as well as investigate any crimes committed in its jurisdiction.

As part of any criminal investigation, officers collect fingerprints from crime scenes to help identify offenders.

The collected fingerprints are then transmitted to both the State of Georgia Crime Information Center and the FBI.

"Digitizing fingerprints will help ACCPD increase the speed and efficiency of its criminal investigations - and that saves money and man hours," Barrow said. "This program will also help build a database to assist other local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies."

“Byrne JAG grants were specifically designed to respond to the needs of local law enforcement,” Barrow continued. “And in this case, the Athens-Clarke County Police Department will now have the equipment it needs to stay up to speed with today's modern crime fighting technology.”

Byrne JAG grants help state and local law enforcement agencies pay for a broad range of crime fighting programs. Grants are awarded on a competitive basis and can be used by state and local law enforcement agencies to promote local crime control initiatives, provide technical assistance and training, or pay for additional personnel, equipment, and supplies.

In the 2007 federal budget that President Bush submitted to Congress earlier this year, he proposed eliminating all future funding for the Byrne JAG program. Congressman Barrow opposes efforts to reduce funding for local crime control initiatives, specifically Byrne JAG.

It is still unclear if funding for Byrne JAG will be available in 2007, as the final version of the budget proposal is still being debated in the House of Representatives and the Senate.

“As a former county commissioner, I know how important these grants are for local law enforcement,” Barrow said. “The last thing Congress should do is cut programs like Byrne JAG. We need to give our local police more tools

to fight crime - not take them away."

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Contact: Harper Lawson, (202) 225-2823

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