

Search and Rescue and Law Enforcement Helicopter**FY2013 Request: \$3,000,000****Reference No: 54510****AP/AL:** Appropriation**Project Type:** Life / Health / Safety**Category:** Law and Justice**Location:** Statewide**House District:** Statewide (HD 1-40)**Impact House District:** Statewide (HD 1-40)**Contact:** Danial Spencer**Estimated Project Dates:** 07/01/2012 - 06/30/2017**Contact Phone:** (907)465-5488**Brief Summary and Statement of Need:**

This capital request is for the purchase of a turbine helicopter for search and rescue missions and law enforcement activity, primarily in interior Alaska.

Funding:	<u>FY2013</u>	<u>FY2014</u>	<u>FY2015</u>	<u>FY2016</u>	<u>FY2017</u>	<u>FY2018</u>	<u>Total</u>
Gen Fund	\$3,000,000						\$3,000,000
Total:	\$3,000,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$3,000,000

<input type="checkbox"/> State Match Required	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> One-Time Project	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - new	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - underway	<input type="checkbox"/> On-Going
0% = Minimum State Match % Required		<input type="checkbox"/> Amendment	<input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Bill	

Operating & Maintenance Costs:

	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Staff</u>
Project Development:	0	0
Ongoing Operating:	296,800	1
<u>One-Time Startup:</u>	<u>6,700</u>	
Totals:	303,500	1

Additional Information / Prior Funding History:

No prior funding history.

Project Description/Justification:

This project will purchase a new turbine helicopter to meet the search and rescue and mission-critical operational needs in the Interior of Alaska. The Department of Public Safety is statutorily responsible to provide law enforcement to the citizens of Alaska. This duty includes search and rescue (SAR), emergency law enforcement response, crime detection and prevention, surveillance, narcotics interdiction, traffic management, and civil disorders/public events.

Interior and Northern Alaska's geography and extreme weather conditions create enormous challenges for the Alaska State Troopers (AST) to quickly and effectively respond to emergencies and a lack of suitable equipment can put Alaskans living in this region at dire risk. It is critical for AST to have the capability to quickly access remote areas during adverse weather conditions with a helicopter that is adequately equipped and has the payload to fulfill its mission.

Historical Information

The department purchased a turbine Bell Jet Ranger helicopter that was based in Fairbanks from 1982 to 1995. This first helicopter was used extensively but was destroyed by fire after a fuel line separated in flight. It was subsequently replaced by a used helicopter which was removed from service due to airframe fatigue.

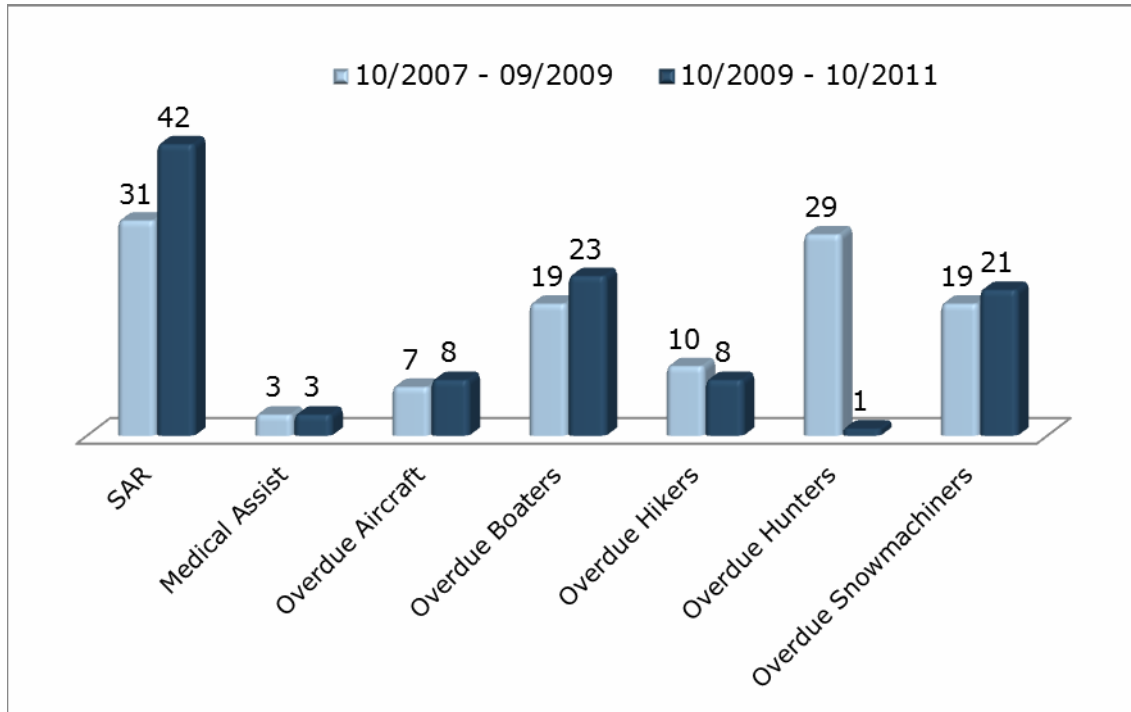
In 2001, the Department based a piston driven helicopter (R-44) in Fairbanks. This helicopter is meant to conduct wildlife patrols in Interior Alaska and is neither equipped nor performance-capable

as a SAR platform. However, being the only Department helicopter available in the region, it is frequently utilized in SAR and routine law enforcement missions. As an example, the R-44 was used to transport the Specialized Emergency Reaction Team (SERT) personnel to the scene of a shooting of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline in October 2001 which required multiple round trips to ultimately get all team members on-scene. Following this incident, the R-44 flew almost daily missions guarding the Trans-Alaska Pipeline; a nationally designated critical infrastructure. The R-44 has also conducted numerous searches for missing people, recovered bodies, and provided medical transport. There have been cases where the R-44 couldn't conduct missions because of its limitations; it was never meant to do these types of missions.

Background of Search and Rescue Operations

SAR operations continue to be one of AST's highest-risk, regularly performed missions. These activities account for a significant amount of time, money and man hours spent by detachment personnel and the consequence of failure could be life threatening. With the increasing use and availability of cell phones, SPOT locator beacons and satellite phones, troopers are receiving more and more calls for assistance from people who might not have been considered lost or in need of assistance in the past. Unfortunately, the critical nature of these calls is difficult to assess until after the fact. This means that all SAR's must be treated as an emergency. Some of these calls for help do resolve themselves when the missing person finds their way out or is contacted by others in the area, but virtually every report of a missing person starts a process in motion whereby troopers begin to gather information, identify resources and start to organize volunteer searchers. Oftentimes, a quick aerial search of the area is the fastest, least expensive and most effective way to locate the missing person. For this reason, a significant number of the SAR or missing persons cases AST/AWT receives each year result in at least a preliminary aerial search by helicopter or fixed-wing aircraft.

The following chart represents the number of SAR and related cases undertaken by "D" Detachment (see *Figure 1 on page 6*) during the period from October 2007 through September 2009 in comparison with SAR and related cases during the period from October 2009 through October 2011.



AST was able to fly out to a location to search for and/or rescue someone in some of these cases, but in many others AST was not able to utilize the R-44 helicopter because of its limited range, payload, speed, or its inability to operate at high altitudes or in cold temperatures.

The lack of an adequately equipped turbine engine helicopter stationed in Fairbanks for SAR and emergency law enforcement response means that the assistance of the Alaska Air National Guard's 210th Rescue Squadron based at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in Anchorage is often required to undertake search or rescue missions in Interior Alaska. Missions flown by the 210th Air National Guard routinely involve the use of HH-60 Pave Hawk helicopters or a C-130 aircraft, which requires expensive in-flight refueling. A turbine engine helicopter based in Fairbanks would provide a faster and less expensive alternative for most non-medical emergency rescues. The costs for a C-130 and Pave Hawk helicopter assigned to the Air National Guard are estimated at \$15,000 per hour - dramatically more than the comparable cost per hour for the current AST SAR helicopter located in Anchorage (approximately \$1,130 per hour).

A common question is, "Can't you charter?" Public safety operations are dramatically different from standard air charter duties. There are also significant limitations to a civilian pilot's ability to fly with Night Vision Goggles (NVGs) and to operate in a tactical environment as required with deployment of SERT personnel. This is often further exacerbated by a civilian pilot's lack of training and experience in flying rescue missions. With the downturn of the economy, the number of air transport vendors have decreased and the availability of those vendors to provide services to the Department become increasingly difficult. A pilot that flies an emergency mission for the Department at night will not be available to the vendor for their use the following day causing disruption and loss of income to those vendors.

State Troopers make efficient use of many of DPS's existing aviation assets during search and rescue operations. The most effective asset in particular is AST's sole day-and-night (IFR) capable

helicopter based in Anchorage; a turbine ASTAR 350 acquired in 2002. This aircraft has more than fulfilled our mission requirements in Southcentral Alaska with saves and critical missions being performed on a near weekly basis. However, due to its flight range limits, it is unavailable in most other areas of the state. A helicopter with similar capabilities is desperately needed in the Interior.

Advantages of a Turbine Helicopter:

A helicopter that can operate in cold temperatures, at moderate/high altitude and that can haul a load of up to seven personnel on missions is needed. The helicopter should be large/wide enough to accommodate at least a litter (basket for carrying patients in during a search and rescue mission) and patient. The advantages of a turbine engine helicopter include:

1. Increased payload
2. Ability to carry a litter
3. High altitude operations
4. Better night flight capabilities
5. Ability to install equipment such as search light, FLIR and hoist, and still have payload to carry passengers
6. Cold weather operations
7. Turbine engine reliability
8. Faster response times
9. Increased public safety
10. Enhanced officer safety
11. Improved pursuit management and a reduction in the number of dangerous high-speed pursuits