

Anti-terrorism grants have communities going shopping

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It is America's shopping list for Armageddon.

Chemical-detection kits starting at \$182. Decontamination shelters as low as \$599. Body bags for \$75 to \$100 apiece.

The federal government's catalog of merchandise for terrorism readiness has communities in Wisconsin and elsewhere going on shopping sprees, under a grant program about to surpass \$300 million a year.

Across the country, vendors dealing in the tools of self-defense have been bombarded by new customers anxious to buy up inventories of oxygen masks, rubber suits and the like. As salesman Mike Brockway of Houston-based Vallen Safety Supply Co. said, the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks have "opened up the government purse."

In Wisconsin, the program has boosted anti-terrorism arsenals by more than \$2 million this year for police and fire departments and other local agencies. Next year, those same agencies could be sharing nearly \$6 million more.

With the horrors of Sept. 11 still fresh in their minds, officials from Green Bay to Kenosha are stockpiling supplies as basic as blankets and Ivory soap, while also venturing into such exotic hardware as radiation detectors and decontamination systems.

For many, it has been an eye-opening exercise.

Please see **EQUIPMENT, 10A**