

FIRE LINK

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A New President's Perspective

by Jack Taylor, President

I want to begin this article by giving credit where credit is due. First, to our immediate Past President, Mark Wessel, who guided us through this last year. Thank you for your leadership and all that you continue to do for the Division and its membership. Second, a big thanks to Chief Bryan Dehner and all of

easy target "Travel and Training." Firefighter safety will be even tougher as we struggle with smaller crews and closed stations. The safety of our firefighters and the public we serve, the efficiency with which we operate and the positive outcome of an incident is linked directly to our training programs. We will

Firefighter Survival" that may provide us some assistance. The intent of this document is to provide a set of model procedures to be made available by the IAFC to fire departments as a guide for their own standard operating procedures development. The draft documents are currently open for public comment until the FRI conference in Dallas. It is believed that a concept of designing rules of engagement for the fire service, similar
(continued on page 5)

The IAFC is working on over 200 projects at this time on behalf of the fire service. The Missouri Valley Division is fortunate to have several members working on some of these projects. Your membership counts and has a huge impact on our ability to do that work.

those in the Overland Park Fire Department, the City of Overland Park, Overland Park Visitors and Conventions Bureau, the University of Kansas Fire and Rescue Training Institute and all of the vendors who combined to deliver a great annual conference for the Missouri Valley Division. Thank you to the Board who drives the Division to fulfilling the mission set forth. Finally, thanks to the membership of the Division for keeping us strong and supporting the mission and goals. You are truly the strength of our organization.

The year ahead is fraught with challenges and opportunities. First and foremost with most of us is the looming economic crisis facing our nation. Many of us are enduring budget cuts which may include loss of positions and equipment. Some are so severe that some services may have to be cut along with the always

need to re-educate our troops as to how we respond in a safe manner for everyone with reduced staffing. Gordon Graham would tell us that we need to focus on those high-risk, low-frequency incidents in our training programs to keep us prepared to respond appropriately to them. Finally, the H1N1 flu pandemic, wrongly referred to by the media as swine flu, has the potential to temporarily reduce our staffing due to the illness of firefighters and their families.

The IAFC is working hard to assist with all of these issues. Several webcasts have been conducted to provide information on how to access grants and recover costs in response to the economic struggle. The IAFC Safety, Health and Survival Section is in the process of completing a guidance document called "Rules of Engagement for Structural Firefighting; Increasing



Calendar of Events

- Wyoming Fire Chiefs Meetings**
Sept. 25, 2009 • Newcastle, WY
January 8, 2010 • Riverton, WY
- Kansas State Chief Conference**
Manhattan, KS
October 8-11, 2009
- Iowa State Chiefs Conference**
October 13 to 15, 2009
- Colorado State Chiefs Meeting**
December 3, 4, 5, 2009
Keystone, CO
- North Dakota Fire Chiefs Meeting**
February 25, 2010
Bismark, ND
- Missouri State Chief Meeting**
Big Cedar Lodge
February 26, 27, 28, 2010

Wyoming Fire Chiefs Assn. receives 2009 Assistance to Firefighters SAFER Grant

by Mark Young

The Wyoming Fire Chiefs Association was awarded a 2009 Assistance to Firefighters SAFER Grant in the amount of \$998,730. Application for the grant was made because the State of Wyoming's volunteer firefighting force is dropping dramatically. When fully staffed, the volunteer fire service in Wyoming consists of approximately 4,200 volunteer personnel among the state's fire departments. These dedicated, professional men and women respond to an average of 32,000 calls for service per year. It is estimated that there is only 62 percent of that firefighting force in place today and that percentage is dropping almost daily.

This grant has the specific goal of increasing the number of appropriately trained volunteer firefighters throughout the state, thus improving response times, and improving the number of personnel arriving on first due apparatus. It is the hope of the

Wyoming Fire Chiefs Association that the programs within the grant will add almost 800 or more volunteer firefighters throughout the State. Programs within the grant are recruitment and retention based and include the following elements:

- Partnering with Wyoming Community Colleges to develop a public awareness campaign which will air on TV and radio stations throughout the state.
- Assistance to departments that are trying to establish new cadet/explorer programs and bringing in experts to train departments in their proper coordination.
- Implement a new program entitled "Volunteer and be Healthier for it." This program will help offset the cost of firefighter physicals and immuniza-

tions for new volunteers. This program will also aid departments in providing counseling services to firefighters.

- Distributing a series of clothing articles to volunteers. These articles of clothing will not only identify the wearer as being a volunteer, but encourage others to ask them how to join.
- Assistance to departments in deter-

mining staffing needs. Wyoming's Volunteer Firefighter Pension Fund. It will also pay for their first year of inclusion in supplemental life and disability insurance programs (departments wishing to enroll their volunteers in this program will be encouraged to continue these programs well beyond the initial start up period of the grant).

A college scholarship program will be established for current volunteer firefighters who are working toward or have obtained a FFI or FFII certification. This program will be supported for a total of two years. A firefighter must remain in active service with his/her department to be eligible for scholarship funds. Volunteer firefighters must also meet the meeting and response criteria established in the rules of the State of Wyoming's Volunteer Firefighter Pension Fund Program. In addition volunteers will be encouraged to attend

on-line college classes, at accredited institutions, so they may stay in their local communities and continue to help their individual departments.

In order to ensure proper administration of the grant, the Wyoming Fire Chiefs Association has partnered with the Wyoming State Fire Marshal's Office. A program coordinator has been assigned by the State Fire Marshal and a part-time staff person, supported by funding in the grant, will ensure the day to day management of the program.

The Wyoming Fire Chief's Association and the Wyoming State Fire Marshal's Office are extremely excited about the grant award and look forward to making a positive difference in the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters within the state. ■

When fully staffed, the volunteer fire service in Wyoming consists of approximately 4,200 volunteer personnel among the state's fire departments. These dedicated, professional men and women respond to an average of 32,000 calls for service per year. It is estimated that there is only 62 percent of that firefighting force in place today and that percentage is dropping almost daily.

mining staffing needs.

- Partner with the State Fire Marshal's Office to ensure volunteers get the ability to train. The intent is to help support volunteer firefighters by reimbursing them for travel, and their time spent going to attend basic firefighter training at the Wyoming Fire Academy. This will be focused on ensuring that he volunteer can become certified to a Firefighter I and II level.
- Volunteer's receiving their FFI and FFII certification will be given special recognition in their local media, thereby encouraging others to volunteer and get trained.

As an incentive for volunteers to stay with their departments, the grant will also pay for the first two years of a volunteer's membership in the State of

News from Colorado

by Chief John Bales

Chiefs! If you all the money you can use and everyone in your department is getting double digit percentage raises for 2010 **DO NOT** read this article. In fact you need to be writing articles for us to read during what will be a challenging time in navigating the fiscal crisis. Let's begin with some simple facts:

- **This economic crisis is deeper and more severe than what the fire service has experienced in the past 50 years.**
- **Local Fire Chiefs can turn crisis into opportunity, if your organization is well managed and takes the long view**
- **There are local strategies out there that will contribute to economic recovery and will avoid doing more damage**

All municipal fire departments and fire protection districts face uncertainties and risks in the current recession, and many will experience severe chal-

lenges with local government finances because of the slowdowns among major economic drivers. The downturn in the economy mixed with rising unemployment reduces revenues and increases the demands for emergency services.

Your organization, the International Association of Fire Chiefs, has published a document that found personally helpful during this time. *Weathering the Economic Storm: Fiscal Challenges in Fire and Emergency Medical Services* is a document that should be in every Fire Chief's budget file. We have all read and heard the stories of many fire departments cutting large dollar amounts from their budgets, laying off firefighters and closing fire stations. The report from the IAFC states it could take as long as 3-5 years for the housing markets to stabilize and for the economy to revive.

So just how do we thrive in tough times? We can start by utilizing the services of the IAFC and Missouri Valley Fire

Chiefs Association. The document by the IAFC contains many ideas that have been received from Chiefs just like you from all parts of the country. None of us are in this alone. As stated in the report, "As the fire/EMS chief, your challenge is to cut expenditures while attempting to maintain your core services and mission critical programs."

The IAFC has developed the guide to support us as Fire Chiefs and Chief Officers. We are all in the leadership game within our departments and our communities in which we serve. The IAFC and Missouri Valley is here to assist you. The Missouri Valley Google group is a tremendous tools that is being utilized on a daily basis for discussion and the sharing of ideas on many topic in our business. Utilize the many resources offered by your professional affiliations in "**Weathering the Economic Storm.**" Please take time to visit the IAFC for more information at www.iafc.org/economy. ■

Residential Sprinklers & Home Builders Assn.

By Greg A. Pottberg, 2nd Vice President

The State of Missouri was no different than many states across the Midwest during the previous legislative session in reference to enacting residential sprinkler codes and the concern with the Home Builders Association.

What the fire service was able to accomplish within the state may have been sufficiently different and we would like to share this with others.

In general we (Fire Service Alliance, HBA, National Fire Sprinkler Alliance, Fire Marshals Association of Missouri, Home Fire Sprinkler Collation, State Fire Marshal's Office) have made an agreement with some of the homebuilders associations to not enact the residential sprinkler portion of the 09 code and in exchange the homebuilders agree that they will not seek an extension to the moratorium regarding residential sprinkler ordinances, other than what they can get each local political subdivision to agree to when adopting the code locally.

The legislation is as follows;

A builder of single family dwellings or residences or multi-unit dwellings of four or fewer units shall offer to any purchaser on or before the time of entering into the purchase contract the option, at the purchaser's cost, to install or equip fire sprinklers in the dwelling, residence, or unit. Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, no purchaser of such a single family dwelling, residence, or multi-unit dwelling shall be denied the right to choose or decline to install a fire sprinkler system in such dwelling or residence being purchased by any code, ordinance, rule, regulation, order, or resolution by any county or other political subdivision. Any county or other political subdivision shall provide in any such code, ordinance, rule, regulation, order, or resolution the mandatory option for purchasers to

have the right to choose and the requirement that builders offer to purchasers the option to purchase fire sprinklers in connection with the purchase of any single family dwelling, residence, or multi-unit dwelling of four or fewer units. The provisions of this section shall expire on December 31, 2011.

While this is not a permanent fix it offers some relief at the state level and holds this agreement until December 31, 2011 as enacted by the 2009 legislation.

Now the work has been on the informational and educational portion to inform the home purchaser on the pro's and con's and expense associated with installing residential sprinklers. As of right now the committee is working on narrowing down what literature is to be utilized that is part of the Home Fire Sprinkler Collation. ■

What Do You Know About the 16 Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives?

That was the question posed to fire departments in the Missouri Valley Division in a June survey. The Strategic Plan (http://www.mvafc.org/strategic_plan.htm) for the Division calls for the MVD Board of Directors to help improve awareness of Firefighter Safety. The survey is one of the first steps in

determining what members know and think about safety. The 16 Life Safety Initiatives are widely considered to be the cornerstone of the cultural change necessary to improve knowledge, attitudes, and practices in the fire service.

There were 140 responses to the survey, which provided a good represen-

tative sampling of the Division. The survey was designed with many open-ended questions. This allowed respondents to provide their own thoughts and ideas on many of the initiatives. You are encouraged to read the full report of the survey results at *MVD web site. Go to www.mvdiafc.org.* ■

1. Please check your type of department:

	Response Percent	Response Count
Volunteer (no pay involved)	10.0%	14
Paid-on-call	2.1%	3
Part-time	0.0%	0
Combination (career and volunteer)	30.7%	43
Combination (career and paid-on-call, part-time, or reserve)	12.1%	17
Career	45.0%	63

6. Do you support the development and implementation of national standards for fire service training, qualifications, and certifications?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	97.0%	129
No	3.0%	4

7. Do you support the development and implementation of national medical and physical fitness standards for firefighters?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	91.9%	125
No	8.1%	11

8. What do you know about a "16 Life Safety Initiatives national research agenda and data collection system?"

	Response Percent	Response Count
Is there one?	31.8%	41
There is such a thing	68.2%	88

10. Please check any/all of the following resources you use for training or personal safety/awareness:

	Response Percent	Response Count
www.firefighternearmiss.com	68.1%	92
www.firefighterclosecalls.com	78.5%	106
The Secret List	62.2%	84
NIOSH reports	81.5%	110
www.everyonegoeshome.com	57.0%	77
www.usfa.dhs.gov	54.8%	74
www.firehero.org	7.4%	10

11. Should grants require recipients to follow and document safe practices?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	84.6%	115
No	15.4%	21

12. Are you aware of the development of national standards for emergency response policies and procedures?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	42.6%	58
No	57.4%	78

13. Are you familiar enough with the National Response Framework that you could explain it to someone?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	37.2%	51
No	62.8%	86

15. In the workings of your department, where would you list the importance of public education?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Very important (dedicated resources and finances)	51.4%	71
Somewhat important (some dedication, some finances)	38.4%	53
Somewhat unimportant (we do what we can with what we have)	7.2%	10
Not important at all (no desire, no interest)	2.9%	4

16. Home fire sprinkler installation has been a hot topic lately. Where do the elected officials of your city, town, district stand on the issue?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Fully support (ordinances in or planned)	7.5%	10
Some support (they seem to be favorable to the concept)	27.1%	36
Neutral (won't take a stand)	40.6%	54
Some opposition (say one thing, do another)	17.3%	23
Completely against (outspoken against, refuse to discuss)	7.5%	10

17. Would you agree that safety considerations in apparatus and equipment design has improved in the last eight years?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes, wholeheartedly	57.8%	78
Yes, but more work needs to be done	37.0%	50
Yes, but we're a long ways from getting where we need to be	5.2%	7
No	0.0%	0

Test, Inspect, and Expect

by Dr. John Leslie, Research and Development Division, and Gary Curmode, Fire Chief/Sedgwick County Fire District #1, Kansas

An old adage states that “knowledge is power.” There is absolutely no question that this is eminently true for the fire service as it rushes headlong into the 21st century. The myriad of advances in technology, the threat of terrorist attack, the rapid expansion of the use/transportation of hazardous materials, and the political/economic pressures of the external environment, among others, make it imperative that fire service leadership stress education and training.

The senior leadership of Sedgwick County Fire District #1 (SCFD #1), recognizing this fact, developed a 50-question, open-book test to educate and impart knowledge to its division Chief (DC) candidate during an Assessment Center during the spring of 2009. The exam covered the following topics:

- (a) The CFAI Self Assessment Manual, 7th Edition
- (b) SCFD #1's Standards of Cover Document
- (c) SCFD#1's Risk/Hazard Analysis Document
- (d) The paper KPI's (Key Performance

Indicators), what are they?

- (e) The District's continuity of Operations Planning (COOP) document
- (f) Strategic/specific recommendations resulting from CFAI's peer inspection visit in 2008

The test consisted of 23 (46 percent) questions directly related to CFAI's Self-Assessment manual, 12 (24 percent) of the questions were indirectly associated with accreditation, i.e., Standards of Cover, Risk/Hazard Analysis. Therefore, 70 percent of the test covered the topic of accreditation. The remainder (30 percent) dealt the COOP and KPI concepts.

The exam was so well received, that it was decided to administer it to all operations and fire prevention personnel. The prior DC candidates were exempted from taking the test. On or about the last week of July 2009, copies of the exams, plus study materials, were distributed to the Captains of all stations, all shifts. Subsequently, ALL District personnel took the test in a roundtable, “help each other” format. Upon notification of the completion of the exam process, answer

keys were sent to the Captains for scoring.

The corrected tests were returned to participants in order to educate them on what they had missed and reinforce the learning process. The exams were theirs to keep, they were NOT to be included in any HR file, BUT were a personal record of an educational exercise to acquaint them with state-of-the-art concepts currently practiced by the District. Feedback, up to now, has, with a few exceptions, been positive.

Another old adage, train, train, and then train some more. Reinforcement of all of these facets of the Fire Service is imperative to change the culture of the fire service to be more professional, a true partner in Local/State/Federal government(s), and give the best “bang for the buck” to our constituents that we serve. I am asking all fire department leadership to continue on the path of excellence, and to “Walk the Talk” in our own department's jurisdictions. continue to raise the bar in leadership, safety, and the delivery of Fire/EMS services! ■

President's Perspective (continued from page 1)

to the rules of engagement regarding the use of deadly force for law enforcement and the military, would prevent firefighter fatalities. By the time you are reading this, the process should be complete, and we can put the information to use to improve the safety of our firefighters. Other projects are in the works. The IAFC is working on over 200 projects at this time on behalf of the fire service. The Missouri Valley Division is fortunate to have several members working on some of these projects. Your membership counts and has a huge impact on our ability to do that work. Keep contact with your associations and peers. Use each other for ideas and support as we work through this next year. We all know that better times are ahead if we just keep our heads up and our attitudes strong and positive.

A final word about firefighter safety. Approximately one-third of firefighter fatalities occur in motor vehicle crashes. We can take measures to drastically reduce those fatalities with absolutely no cost to anyone. By following three simple rules, we can reduce the number of motor vehicle crashes and certainly the impact of any crashes that do occur. First, BUCKLE UP! Time after time we read about a firefighter falling from or being ejected from an apparatus during a crash. Your survivability is better if you are secured in the apparatus. Take a second and buckle up. Make sure everyone is buckled up before the apparatus moves. Second, slow down. You have all heard it before; you do no good for anyone if you don't arrive. Many departments have taken red lights and sirens off their tenders or, at minimum, restricted their use. Many have also restricted second and lower due apparatus to non-emergency on fire alarm

responses unless a true emergency has been confirmed. Slow down and arrive safely for the benefit of everyone. Third, come to a complete stop at all controlled intersections when you have the red light or stop sign in your direction of travel. Proceed only when other traffic has granted you the right of way “requested” by your red lights and sirens. If you still have the unfortunate occasion to have an intersection accident, it should be low speed impact, reducing the likelihood of injury or death.

I look forward to the opportunity to visit each state in the Division this year as you have conferences or other appropriate gatherings. So far, I have Kansas, Colorado, Missouri, Iowa and a tentative date for South Dakota on my calendar. In the meantime, if you have questions or concerns, please contact an officer of the Division any time. We will be glad to visit with you. ■

OVERLAND PARK 2009 CONFERENCE

Chief Bryan Dehner & Chief Gary Wilson and the staff of OPFD hosted an incredible Conference with outstanding educational programs, great entertainment, and the opportunity to relax and network with fellow Chief Officers.

The Conference featured over 70 vendors who displayed their newest apparatus and latest technology for attendees. All 174 attendees left invigorated and ready to challenge the fire service world with their new knowledge.

The Conference kicked off Wednesday

evening with a MVD new member orientation and BBQ at the OPFD Training Center. Networking, socialization, and a tour of the Training Facility, 911 Center and media center left all attendees envious of the outstanding facilities and capabilities that the OPFD possesses. The Training Center is every Chief's dream.

Thursday and Friday attendees heard outstanding speakers on leadership, health and ethics, and visited the vendors. A highlight on Friday was the pre-

sentation of Chief Dehner on the OPFD Strategic Web Site and the operations and technology used by the OPFD. Randolph Mantooth, TV star of the '70s series *Emergency*, brought back many '70s memories as he presented the history and development of EMS.

The Conference concluded with the banquet and installation of new 2010 Officers: President Jack Taylor, 1st VP John Mullin, and 2nd VP Greg Pottberg. The MVD THANKS the OPFD for putting on a great Conference. ■



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New Members

A BIG WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST MEMBERS

AC Gordon Alexander – Fort Lupton, CO
 BC Dan Stolinski – Omaha, NE
 Sr. Associate Michael Ragone – Platte City, MO
 Fire Chief Dick Goodrum – Mayfield, KS
 Chief Tim White – St. Louis, MO
 BC Joseph Hutson – Wentzville, MO
 AC Maynard Howell – Hazelwood, MO
 Chief Paul Ballou – Fort Scott, KS
 Chief Gary Schott – Omaha, NE
 Fire Chief Don Chapman – Alamosa, CO
 Fire Chief Bryan Bowen – Parker, CO
 Chief William Dolan – Conifer, CO
 Fire Chief Bette Blinde – Laporte, CO
 Director Robin Harris – Chesterfield, MO
 BC Mike Ramos – Denver, CO
 BC Thomas Collins – Independence, MO
 Deputy Director Thersea Staples – Centennial, CO
 Division Chief Richard Fagan – Lenexa, KS
 BC Wayne Harder – Leawood, KS
 Chief Max Sielert – New Century, KS
 Chief Kurt Vogel – Sterling, CO
 Chief of Training David Fisher – Whiteman AFB, MO
 EMS Chief Joseph Williams – de Soto, MO
 AC Mark English – Cedar Rapids, IA
 Chief Mike Steinfort – Junction City, KS
 BC Tony Exum – Colorado Springs, CO
 Chief Darrell Wright – Chillicothe, MO
 BC Brian Austerman – Lee's Summit, MO
 BC Jay Titus – Sioux Falls, SD
 BC Kevin McCaw – Lee's Summit, MO
 Fire Chief Mike Zanolini – Aguilar, CO

Note from Paul Powell VP Sales, Global Traffic Technologies

First, let me say what a pleasure it was to be able to join you in Dallas for the Missouri Valley Division luncheon at the Fire & Rescue Show. It has been a tradition for a number of years, and we hope to maintain our support in the coming years.

We were excited to be able to announce the introduction of some new products for our Opticom™ System. The LED infrared emitter is an industry first and will offer you great performance with some added benefits. In addition, a remote coding unit was developed to work with the new emitter and allows making changes to the configuration or vehicle codes without having to access the unit directly. I hope you were able to stop by the booth for a demonstration. For more information visit our web site at www.gtt.com

Again, thank you for the opportunity to be part of your event, and we at GTT look forward to working with you in providing the most advanced technologies for emergency vehicle preemption. ■

Fire Service Research Survey on Tattoos and Body Piercings

by Jerry Rhodes

Be careful what you ask for when you ask firefighters for their opinion. The Missouri Valley Division has approximately 1,100 fire departments. To date we have received 471 responses to this survey. Another 488 curious onlookers opened the survey but did not complete it.

We received so much information that we are looking for college student support to process the data, so we can complete a useful report for you. Until the report is available, the raw data will be posted on the MVD website.

What have we learned so far? This should have been two companion surveys, tattoos and body piercings, not a combined survey. There is passion around this

subject matter. Our respondent's age ranged from 19 to 71 years. The majority was mid 30's to mid 50's and mostly fire service personnel. We have a good mix of people with tattoos and those without tattoos. The mix of those respondents with body piercings and those without piercings was not as good.

Most agencies do not have policies or SOP's referencing tattoos and body piercings. It will take us some time to answer the more important question, why is that. The individuals that took the survey gave us a lot of information to dig into and data to crunch.

Where the survey addressed safety, there was not a lot of concern over tat-

toos. There were numerous comments on body piercings. This is another area that will take work to clarify the information we received.

Please describe the type of person/groups that typically get tattoos and/or body piercings? I cannot summarize the answers to this question yet, but the responses are worth your time to review them.

More to come as we dig into this information. Thank you to all of you who took the time to respond to this survey. Go to the MVD website and view the initial spreadsheet. www.mvdiafc.com ■

Schiess – Candidate for 2010 MVD 2nd VP



Schiess

Sandy Schiess currently serves as the Fire Chief for the Independence, MO Fire Department and was recently appointed to the IAFC's Emergency Management Com-

mittee. At the 2009 Missouri Valley Conference she announced her candidacy for second vice president for Missouri Valley Division. Says Schiess: "Thirty-one years ago my career began on the back of a red Mack truck, belted in and hanging on for dear life. So many things have changed since then, yet so many have not. Over the years I have served two communities, promoted up through the ranks and held myself accountable for participating fully in everything from fire attack to public life safety education, from emergency medical services to code enforcement, from improving safety to best practices in recruitment and hiring. I am a life long learner. I consider receiving a master's degree in teaching, earning my Executive Fire Officer certificate, attending the Harvard J. F. K. School of Government's Senior Executives in State and Local Government program as a Fire Service Fellowship and earning my Chief Fire Officer's designation as milestones in this continuing effort. As member of IAFC it is time for me to "walk the walk" and request the opportunity to fully participate in the work of this organization and our division. If elected I will hold myself fully accountable for promoting our professional development through educational, leadership and networking opportunities and will listen and act in a manner that will serve to facilitate a rec-

iprocal flow of information between the various state chief's organizations and the International Association of Fire Chiefs." ■



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News From Missouri

by John VanGorkom

The Missouri Legislators this past session approved a bill for Fire Safe Cigarettes in the State of Missouri as well as a Line of Duty Death benefit. The State Chiefs organization as well as the other Fire organizations in Missouri has been pursuing this legislation for the past few years and are pleased that they finally passed.

Missouri Fire Chiefs would like to congratulate and thank, Overland Park, Kansas F.D. for hosting the Missouri Valley Conference in July. There were many Chiefs from Missouri that attended the conference and the Officers and Staff as well as the city of Overland Park did a fantastic job presenting this conference.

The Missouri Association of Fire Chiefs will be hosting our annual winter seminar at Big Cedar Lodge in Ridgedale, Missouri on February 26 and 27, 2010. The registration forms will be on our web page starting in mid-September at mofirechiefs.org. If you have questions please contact Chief John VanGorkom at snchief1@comcast.net.

The Missouri Fire Service alliance are putting their list of items to take to the Missouri Legislature for 2010. If any Missouri Chiefs would like to have their ideas considered please send them to Richard Lehmann Executive Director at rllehmann@kc.rr.com. ■

Tough Times in the Fire Service!

by Gary Curmode, President, Kansas Professional Fire Chiefs Association

I do not think there is any fire service entity that has not been financially affected either directly or indirectly by the downturn in the economy the past 12 months. I did not receive any cuts for the year 2010, but, I did have to rearrange long-term strategic planning on fire stations and new fire apparatus purchases. Due to fiscal restraint and good financial practices, Sedgwick County Fire District #1, Kansas, was able to get through the arduous process of budget preparation, public hearings, and final adoption. But, we are affected in 2010 through the year 2013, in the following areas:

1. a new station to start in 2010, has now been put off till the Year 2013; savings \$1.5 million. (but, there will be a higher price to build in three years from now, six percent increases per year minimum.

2. a remodel of an approximately 30-year-old station, in the Year 2010, moved back to the Year 2013; savings \$1.1 million. (but, there will be a higher price to build and remodel in three years from now, not counting higher preventive maintenance costs, again, about three to six percent increases in materials to remodel.

3. moving back two engines (pumpers) to the Year 2013; savings of \$1 million. (but, fire apparatus are going up in price six to twelve percent depending on the manufacturer.)

4. this combined savings of \$3.6 million, was the SCFD #1's part in holding the line in immediate costs.

We are doing it as pain-free as possi-

ble, but the costs down the road in three years will be very hard on our budget at that time. We will have to look at lease purchase, bonds, a combination of both, and any types of grants that may be out there to assist us in purchasing this for our citizens. But, it is better than fur-

easy, especially during a recession of severe downturn(s), but, these were proven tools that help the Fire Chief, the Manager and his/her staff, and the Elected Officials look at decision-making, and how it affects the citizens and safety.

Our department was able to address these issues easier because we have been through the Accreditation Process. We had to address how this would affect the Standards of Coverage, if there were any changes in our Hazard Risk Plan, and review our Strategic Plan carefully. We do a five-year Strategic Plan, and we had a place to start on the "drawing board," and we adjusted it to make our 2010 budget, and follow up with a potential two additional years of static or declining growth.

I would encourage all the departments in the Missouri Valley Fire Chief's Association to take the first step: buy the Self-Assessment Manual from the Center for Professional Excellence. Then, use this as a template for how your fire service does business in the 21st Century. Even if you never have a site team into your department to validate "what you say you are doing, you are doing," this template is for professional career, professional volunteer, and professional combination departments. It gives you a blueprint to make your department the best it can be. If your department will try to emulate and accomplish compliance with 77 core competencies and over 250

loughs, layoffs, and closing fire stations. As part of the County family, we had to do our part, also.

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specific indicators, the citizens and elected officials will be the beneficiaries of your hard work. The public will see that you are doing "best practices" and they are getting the best bang for the buck!

Please contact the Sedgwick County Fire District #1, Kansas, (accredited in 2003 and 2008), if you have questions or need help. We stand ready to help our brothers and sisters in the fire service of the Missouri Valley! ■

MVD Mentoring

by Gary Curmode

July, 2009, marks two years since we have embarked on the topic of Mentoring in the Missouri Valley, and how it can benefit our ranks of all firefighters as one grows in experience and rank as they rise up the echelon ladder of increased responsibility, safety, experience, and education. The Mentoring Survey has been in existence for about nine months, and I am going to share with you the results so far. I will delineate the important facts and comments (see box at right):

I realize only ten comments on the survey are not a "lion's share" of our membership in our eight states of the region, but, at least the fire officers that responded, saw a benefit, and, hopefully, by word of mouth, will encourage others to make mentoring part of their job, either as a mentee or a mentor. This is a way to improve the fire service by using role models that can help each of us form an opinion/career path in search of excellence in our job[s].

I challenge all the membership in our eight states of the Missouri Valley region, to go onto the website and review the section on Mentoring. By using Mentoring, we can raise the bar each year in our development of personnel and the improvement of the fire/ems delivery system.

1. Firefighters and Fire Officers used it only about ten times in the nine months, but, their comments were all positive to some degree.
2. All of the fire officers that used the link, said it was easy to understand, and navigate to and through.
3. They also said they realized it was an added link in the past year, so, their interest made them click on it and go through the questions.
4. All agreed to some degree, that the format was easy to read, understand, and use, if they so desired.
5. The most anyone used it was four times, the least was one time.
6. All found it had some value.
7. All had heard about Mentoring prior to seeing it as a link on the MV website.
8. Comments were all positive in question #6, that the website stirred more interest (of varying degrees), to look into it deeper.

News from Iowa

by Bob Platts

The last six months in Iowa issues in the fire service have dealt mainly with budget issues and the impacts departments are dealing with. There have been some small staffing issues but we look to a tightening of the budget for the next fiscal year.

We have received information that the Residential Fire Sprinkler issue is already being challenged by the Home Builders Association of Iowa. The Iowa Association of Professional Fire Chiefs has already started to move in the direction of educating our members and legislators to gather support for this issue. We have members following this issue and advising our members on any movement. The following is an excerpt from

material from the HBA:

In the best interest of maintaining affordable housing, the HBA of Iowa will actively propose legislation to the Iowa Legislature that would prohibit mandatory installation of fire sprinklers in new one- and two-family dwellings. It is further moved that the State Board of Directors will proceed with this legislative initiative under the leadership of our State Lobbyist, State Board of Directors and the Home Builder members in the State of Iowa, to be presented to the 2010 Legislative Session.

Our membership will be discussing this and other legislation we might encounter at our next IAPFC meeting on

October 14 and 15 this fall.

On a personal note, Mason City, Iowa hosted the annual Pyrotechnics Guild International (PGI) Convention August 8th through the 14th. This event is held annually around the United States and brought in 2500 PGI members as well as thousands more to watch the evening displays. I believe last year it was held in Gillette, Wyoming and will be back in our division in North Fargo, ND in 2011 and Mason City, IA in 2015. I would highly recommend attending the evening displays with this event billed as the second to third largest show of its kind across the nation during the year. ■

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The Missouri Valley Division of Fire Chiefs is dedicated to supporting professional development of its members through educational, leadership, and networking opportunities, while serving as a liaison between State Chiefs' organizations and the International Association of Fire Chiefs.

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