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FEMA

USFA

News in Review

An Electronic Newsletter for First Responders and Allied Professionals

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U.S. Fire Administrator Addresses Firefighter Life Safety Summit

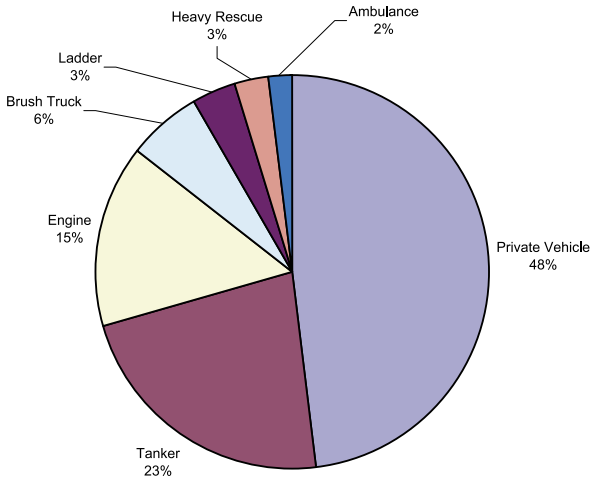
On March 11th, U.S. Fire Administrator R. David Paulison addressed more than 200 attendees at the Firefighter Life Safety Summit in Tampa, Fl. The event was sponsored by the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation.

In speaking to this first-of-a-kind gathering, Chief Paulison was frank about his feelings.

"I would be preaching to the choir to tell you in this room, 111 firefighter deaths in 2003 is unacceptable and a disgusting statistic," he said. "I, as well as the entire national fire service, look forward to the outcomes you have created over the past days and stand ready to assist and join the effort to ensure all children, spouses, family members, fellow firefighters and Americans not suffer another loss of just one firefighter."

Efforts are underway to provide reports from the two-day summit. The USFA will be assisting in getting the information to all firefighters and fire service leadership.

Firefighter Life Safety: Vehicle Collisions
1990-Present



From 1990 through the present, 200 American firefighters have been killed in vehicle collisions. This represents 14% of the 1,428 firefighters killed while on-duty during the period (not including the firefighters who died in the collapse of the World Trade Center). Excluding heart attacks, 161 of these 200 firefighters died as the result of crashes that occurred while they were responding to an emergency or returning from the emergency. Forty-eight percent of the firefighter fatalities that occurred due to crashes while the firefighter was responding to or returning from an emergency involved the firefighter's personal vehicle. The second most common vehicle type was fire department tankers, which involved 23% of the fatalities.

Executive Fire Officer Program Graduates Set to Meet in April During the 2004 Symposium

On April 16, 17, and 18, 190 graduates of the U.S. Fire Administration's (USFA) Executive Fire Officer Program (EFOP) will come together for a weekend of learning. The 2004 program includes highlights such as a review of the fire service and first responder response to the Columbia shuttle accident, a presentation of the outstanding research awards, and a presentation of the Broadway play, *Guys*, written by a New York Fire Department Captain during the weeks immediately following the World Trade Center (WTC) terrorism attacks. A full schedule is planned for the attendees. For further information, please visit www.usfa.fema.gov/fire-service/nfa/courses/oncampus/nfa-on2g.shtm.

Homeland Security Launches Expansion of Information Exchange System to States and Major Cities

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is expanding computer-based counterterrorism communications systems to all 50 States, five territories, Washington, DC, and 50 major urban areas as a way to strengthen the flow of threat information.

This communications capability will deliver to States and major urban areas a real-time interactive connection with the DHS Homeland Security Operations Center through the Joint Regional Information Exchange System (JRIES). This secure system will strengthen the flow of real-time threat information significantly at the sensitive-but-unclassified level to all users immediately, and provides the platform for future classified secret communications to the State level. This collaborative communications environment, developed by State and local authorities, will allow all States and major urban areas to collect and disseminate information among Federal, State, and local agencies involved in combating terrorism.

Each State and major urban area's Homeland Security Advisor will receive software licenses, technology, and training to participate in this Homeland Security Information Network for information sharing and situational awareness. Under the leadership of State and local Homeland Security advisors, the broadened JRIES community of users will include National Guard; State Emergency Operations Centers (EOC's); and local emergency services providers including firefighters, law enforcement, and others. Future program expansion will include the county level, communication at the classified secret level, and the involvement of the private sector.

JRIES is a counterterrorism communications program founded and managed in conjunction with State and local governments, counterterrorism authorities, and law enforcement agencies. At the request of State and local partners, this platform has been adopted by Homeland Security as the system of choice for information sharing among DHS partners as part of the Homeland Security Information Network.

Already in use in the 24-7 DHS watch of the Homeland Security Operations Center, JRIES is an integrated component of the wider DHS information sharing and collaboration architecture that will help provide situational awareness, information sharing, and collaboration across the Nation.

Emergency Management Higher Education: A Year in Review and in Context

Emergency management higher education is virtually unnoticed and insufficiently appreciated in its potential for reshaping the profession. In 2003, 31 new collegiate hazard, disaster, crisis, and emergency management programs (hereafter simplified as emergency management) went into operation in U.S. colleges and universities. That averages two and one-half new operational programs (a degree, concentration, or certificate) per month! Programs include

- 1 Doctorate in emergency management;
- 3 Masters-level emergency management programs;
- 1 Bachelor degree in emergency management;
- 8 Associate degrees in emergency management; and
- 18 Certificates, concentrations, diplomas, and/or minors in emergency management--most of them associate degree level.

Two thousand and three also crossed the 100 programs threshold--the total for collegiate programs at the end of the year was 106. As of February 2004, there are 108 programs. In addition, at FEMA's Emergency Management Higher Education Project, officials track schools that are investigating, proposing, or developing a new emergency

management program.

It's important to note that in 1995, when the FEMA Emergency Management Higher Education Project started, there were only four collegiate programs.

Anecdotal evidence from academics who manage existing emergency management programs suggest the trend is toward continued program growth--semester after semester those studying in these programs include traditional college students thinking that they would like to try to enter the profession upon graduation, emergency management practitioners seeking professional development and advancement, and practitioners from a wide range of other professions seeking a broader perspective as well as professional development and advancement.

Descriptions and points of contact for all 108 emergency management collegiate programs, 22 Homeland Security programs, and 9 international disaster management and humanitarian assistance programs are available on "The College List" on the FEMA Emergency Management Higher Education Project Web page at www.training.fema.gov/emiweb/edu/.

Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge Approves National Incident Management System

Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge has approved the National Incident Management System (NIMS), the Nation's first standardized management plan that creates a unified structure for Federal, State, and local lines of government for incident response.

"NIMS gives all of our nation's responders the same framework for incident management and fully puts into practice the concept of one mission, one team, one fight," Ridge said. "I recognize the efforts of the dedicated professionals from State and local governments, law enforcement, the fire and emergency management communities, emergency medical services, tribal associations, public health, the private sector, public works, and nongovernmental organizations across America who teamed together in a collaborative effort to create NIMS."

NIMS identifies and integrates core elements and best practices for all responders and incident managers. Through a balance between flexibility and standardization, and use of common doctrine, terminology, concepts, principles, and processes, use of NIMS during an incident will be consistent and seamless. Key elements and features of NIMS include

- **Incident Command System (ICS)**. NIMS outlines a standard incident management organization called ICS that establishes five functional areas--Command, Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administration--for management of all major incidents. To ensure further coordination, and during incidents involving multiple jurisdictions or agencies, the principle of Unified Command has been universally incorporated into NIMS. This Unified command not only coordinates the efforts of many jurisdictions, but provides for and ensures joint decisions on objectives, strategies, plans, priorities, and public communications.

- **Preparedness.** NIMS defines advance preparedness measures such as planning, training, exercises, qualification and certification, equipment acquisition and certification, and publication management. Preparedness also incorporates mitigation activities such as public education, enforcement of building standards and codes, and preventive measures to prevent or reduce loss of life or property.

- **Communications and Information Management.** NIMS prescribes interoperable communications systems for both incident and information management. Responders and managers across all agencies and jurisdictions must have a common operating picture for a more efficient and effective incident response.

- **Joint Information System (JIS).** NIMS organizational measures enhance public communication. A JIS provides the public with timely and accurate incident information and unified public messages. This system employs Joint Information Centers and brings incident communicators together during an incident to develop, coordinate, and deliver a unified message. This will ensure that Federal, State, tribal, and local levels of government are releasing the same information during an incident.

- **NIMS Integration Center (NIC).** To ensure that NIMS remains an accurate and effective management tool, the NIMS NIC will be established by the Secretary of Homeland Security to assess proposed changes to NIMS, capture and evaluate lessons learned, and employ best practices. The NIC will provide strategic

direction and oversight, supporting both routine maintenance and continuous refinement of the system and its components.

The completion of NIMS follows the October 2003 nationwide deployment of the Initial National Response Plan (INRP), which represented the first step in aligning incident management response and actions between all Federal, State, tribal, local, and private communities. A final National Response Plan is under development and eventually will replace the INRP, while NIMS will continue to provide the Nation doctrinal guidance for incident management for acts of terrorism, natural disasters, and other emergencies.

Personal Protective Equipment Standards Adopted

The Department of Homeland Security's Science and Technology division has adopted its first standards regarding personal protective equipment (PPE) developed to protect first responders against chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear incidents. These standards are intended to provide emergency personnel with the best available protective gear.

Homeland Security is adopting these standards, developed in partnership with the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). These guidelines also have been adopted by the Interagency Board for Equipment Standardization and Interoperability.

"President Bush, Secretary Ridge, and I are committed to our Nation's first responders and the communities they serve," said Michael D. Brown, Under Secretary of Homeland Security for Emergency Preparedness and Response. "Developing these standards in equipment used by our first responders will enable them to better prepare our Nation against natural and manmade disasters and protect them as they respond to any hazard."

Homeland Security's standards are designed to assist State and local officials in procurement decisions related to first responder equipment. In addition, these guidelines will assist manufacturers by providing performance standards and test methods. This provides the manufacturing community with minimum performance requirements for equipment, and the test methods to confirm that the required performance levels are achieved.

February 26 - Deputy U.S. Fire Administrator Charlie Dickinson (center) joined national and local emergency response officials to announce the Department of Homeland Security's adoption of its first set of standards for protective equipment used by firefighters, police officers and other first responders. The eight standards, announced at Fire Station #3 in Washington, DC, set minimum requirements for design, performance, testing and certification for self-contained breathing equipment, respirators and protective clothing. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) developed five of the standards and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health developed three.

Joining Deputy Administrator Dickinson at the announcement were (l to r): James Shannon, NFPA President; Under Secretary of Homeland Security for Emergency Preparedness and Response Mike Brown; Chief Michael Neuhard, Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department; Adrian Thompson, Washington, DC Fire Chief; and Under Secretary of Homeland Security for Science and Technology, Dr. Charles McQueary.

Independent Study Course to Boost Environmental/ Historic Preservation Activities is Unveiled

A new, online, independent study course is now available to help State, local, Federal, and tribal officials navigate environmental and historic preservations compliance regulations that affect FEMA's disaster recovery programs.

The course, one of the largest and most complex ever put on the online Virtual Campus, took some 2 years to convert from a paper-based curriculum.

Specialists at FEMA's Emergency Management Institute developed the online course, IS 253: *Coordinating Environmental and Historical Preservation Compliance*. The online course not only presents how compliance issues should be addressed, but also emphasizes that environmental/historical preservation issues should be considered early in the recovery process in order for projects to be funded as quickly as possible.

The course takes a minimum of 10 hours to complete, and those who successfully complete it will receive a certificate. The course can be accessed at www.training.fema.gov. From there, interested students should click on National Emergency Training Center (NETC) Virtual Campus to enroll.

Homeland Security Issues First Radiological and Nuclear Detectors Standards

The Department of Homeland Security's Science and Technology division has adopted its first radiological and nuclear detectors standards, designed to assist Federal agencies, State and local officials, and manufacturers in procurement decisions related to radiological and nuclear detection equipment. These guidelines provide performance standards and test methods, as well as minimum characteristics for four classes of radiation detection equipment ranging from hand-held alarming detectors to radiation portal monitors for cargo containers. The guidelines are expected to be helpful to Homeland Security officials and first responders using technology to protect themselves and residents from potential threats.

The standards were developed in partnership with the Department of Commerce's National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), the Department of Energy's National Laboratories, and the Institute for Electrical and Electronics Engineers. Homeland Security and its partners will convene on a regular basis to revise these standards as detection technology evolves.

Interagency Agreement Brings Customers and Border Protection Officials to the Emergency Management Institute

Thanks to an interagency agreement between FEMA and Customs and Border Protection (CBP), 56 CBP officials now hold the title of Master Exercise Practitioner after completing a 3-week series of courses conducted by FEMA's Emergency Management Institute. The CBP participants ranged from border patrol agents to port officials and came from locales ranging from North Dakota to Puerto Rico. Another 48 officials completed the training on March 19th.

In order to receive the title, participants had to complete the three courses and eight exercise proficiency demonstrations, which included such challenges as developing, coordinating, and evaluating a tabletop exercise and serving as a controller, simulator, or evaluator in a functional exercise.

While EMI has been offering exercise design courses since the 1980's, the emphasis on exercises has grown since September 11, 2001. The ability to design, develop, evaluate, and manage exercises ranging from tabletop to full-scale exercises complete with mock victims and deployed equipment now is considered vital throughout emergency management and Homeland Security communities.

"Exercises are the end of the planning-training-exercises loop," said Lowell Ezersky, the Master Exercise Practitioner Program Manager. "Exercises validate policy, planning, procedures, and essential functions. It also validates people and performance, testing to see if people can perform the way they have been trained to perform."

It's vital, according to Ezersky, that those carrying out the exercises are trained properly themselves.

"The better the exercise, the better the reality and the better you are able to test what you want to test," he said. "It's also important that the exercise is evaluated correctly so that shortfalls are identified and outcomes can be moved into correction actions."

In addition to the special courses for the CPB, local and State officials are taking advantage of the program through several offerings in 2004.

Terrorism Course for National Capital-Area Officials Emphasizes Partnership

Hospital administrators, State and local emergency management, law enforcement officers, college security personnel, Army officers, Secret Service officials, and staff from such Federal offices as the State Department, Environmental Protection Agency, and the Department of Energy came together this week to increase their awareness about terrorism.

The 150 participants who attended the 1-day course at FEMA's NETC in Emmitsburg, Maryland, also networked and discussed how their respective organizations can work together to strengthen overall terrorism preparedness and response in Washington, DC, Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Delaware.

The course helped officials who are not necessarily first responders, but nevertheless have important roles in overall terrorism preparedness and response, to identify suspicious circumstances, understand how to protect their critical assets, and know what to expect during a Federal response to such an event.

The course brought home to many of the participants the severity of the threat situation and how they may be affected by a response--even if they are not directly involved, such as in hospitals in areas somewhat removed from where an actual event might occur.

The NETC, which includes both the Emergency Management Institute and the National Fire Academy, offers a variety of terrorism-related courses each year and holds regular networking meetings for National Capital-area emergency services personnel as part of an overall Homeland Security mission to enhance terrorism response capabilities.

FEMA Review of Tire Recycling Facility Fire Shows Smoke Towers Can Respond Effectively to Major Incidents

A technical review of a fire at a Nebraska tire recycling plant--which took 11 days to extinguish and posed an environmental threat to the Missouri River--has been released. According to the report, the facility recycling tires was not designed for that use and adequate safeguards were not in place. The report urged fire departments facing such situations to be proactive in the permit and zoning process whenever possible.

"The report illustrated how well mutual aid and cooperation worked in this incident, but underscored that stricter zoning and building codes are necessary to prohibit certain operations within city limits and in facilities not designed for that use," said Michael D. Brown, Under Secretary of Homeland Security for Emergency Preparedness and Response.

USFA develops reports on selected major fires and emergencies, usually involving multiple deaths or a large loss of property. The objective reviews are intended to uncover significant "lessons learned" or new knowledge about firefighting or to underscore ongoing issues in fire service.

"This was a complex situation with wide-ranging impacts. Rail traffic was halted, residents evacuated and more than a dozen firefighters injured, all occurring in freezing temperatures," said U.S. Fire Administrator R. David Paulison. "Yet this technical review found that small towns can indeed muster the resources necessary to handle a major incident."

Wreckers were used to pull steel debris from the fire.

The Nebraska City Fire Department was dispatched to the fire January 23, 2002. The facility, which recycled old tires into reusable rubber, had four 64-feet high silos that could each hold 100,000 shredded tires; all four silos were burning. Firefighters eventually used nitrogen in an attempt to extinguish the fire. While the nitrogen was being used, one of the silos exploded, injuring firefighters. Firefighters from surrounding communities assisted in the incident while local law enforcement handled traffic around the area and State and Federal agencies monitored air and water quality. In the end, a private contractor renowned for extinguishing oil well fires extinguished the blaze. At one point in the response, a microphone stuck in an open position disrupted communication between responders. All told, 390,000 gallons of contaminated water and 3.3 tons of tire crumb material had to be removed from the site.

A copy of the full report can be downloaded by going to www.usfa.fema.gov/fire-service/techreports/tr145.shtm.

Community Fire Prevention Course Offered by the National Fire Academy in June

A course ideally suited to small towns interested in boosting their community's fire prevention efforts is being held June 6 to 11, 2004, at the National Fire Academy, in Emmitsburg, Maryland.

The course, *Leading Community Fire Prevention* (R-823), is especially suited to emergency responders in communities with populations of 25,000 or fewer, and covers risk identification, tools and techniques, community coalitions, marketing, and development of individual community prevention plans. Students completing the course will be better able to develop and implement their own community prevention plans.

There is no tuition charge for this course. Lodging also is free and transportation costs are reimbursed. Students pay only a small fee for meals. Information on how to apply can be found at www.usfa.fema.gov/fire-service/nfa/nfa-abt1c.shtm#75-5.

Review of 11-Alarm San Jose, California, Fire Underscores Challenges Posed by Extremely Large-Scale Incidents

A technical review of the worst fire loss in San Jose, California, history--damages of more than $90 million--has been released by FEMA. According to the report, San Jose fire officials identified county-wide radio/data interoperability, the need for additional radio frequencies, and reviewing the mutual-aid plan as priorities to be addressed based on lessons learned in the October 2002 fire.

"This was an extremely large fire that spread beyond the initial construction site to engulf nearby housing, putting many firefighters at risk and leaving many families homeless," said Michael D. Brown, Under Secretary of Homeland Security for Emergency Preparedness and Response. "While the San Jose Fire Department was able to manage the incident without any fatalities and only minor injuries, there is much to be learned from the fire."

USFA develops reports on selected major fires and emergencies, usually involving multiple deaths or a large loss of property. The objective reviews are intended to share significant "lessons learned" or new knowledge about firefighting or to underscore ongoing issues in the fire service. USFA, which has no regulatory authority, sends an experienced fire investigator to the community after a major incident only after conferring with local fire authorities.

Fully involved corner at intersection of Winchester Street.

"It's widely recognized that communication systems were quickly overloaded during this extraordinarily large event," said U.S. Fire Administrator R. David Paulison. "The call volume pushed the fire department's system to the brink, even with police department assistance, and the amount of radio traffic also exceeded the capabilities of the fire department's system. These issues have been recognized by senior fire officials and included in a formal postincident evaluation done locally."

The fire began at the 42-acre Santana Row construction site and was reported to the 911 operator by a caller located in a nearby highrise building. Less than 10 minutes after the initial call, there was a second call reporting roof fires about half a mile from the initial fire site. Eventually, 119 firefighters and 31 pieces of apparatus would respond to the construction site fire and 102 firefighters and 34 pieces of apparatus would respond to the secondary fire that burned through nearby residential units. A total of 11 alarms would eventually be dispatched to the fires.

A copy of the full report can be found at www.usfa.fema.gov/fire-service/techreports/tr153.shtm.

National Volunteer Week

April means its time to shower volunteers with praise. National Volunteer Week 2004 is April 18-24, 2004, and this year's theme is "Volunteers Inspire by Example". The annual celebration of volunteer service began in 1974. As part of the week's celebration, the Presidential

Volunteer Service Awards and the Make A Difference Day Awards will be announced. A toolkit with items to help recognize and promote volunteerism is available at www.pointsoflight.org/NVW/nvw.cfm.

Join USFA's Higher Education Listserv--Virtual LAMP-Post

The U. S. Fire Administration has launched the Virtual LAMP-Post listserv on its Fire and Emergency Services Higher Education (FESHE) Web site. LAMP stands for Learning-Academic Materials and Programs and is an electronic version of the LAMP Post offered at the annual FESHE conference. Periodically, we will send to your e-mail address information deemed of interest to the professional development community, including new USFA research studies, technical programs and press releases that may have relevance to fire-related training and degree programs and FESHE-related announcements including upcoming conference information, updates on the model curriculum, and new activities.

We are now accepting postings from the professional development community. If you would like to post an announcement, please e-mail it to Lori.Welch@dhs.gov. The following types of announcements are welcomed:

- Fire-related professional development activities in the areas of training, education, or certification, e.g., results of State professional development summits, articulation agreements, successful American Council of Education (ACE) review of courses, etc.
- Job vacancy announcements of interest to training and education communities, including faculty, staff, and students.
- Published fire-related academic research.
- Significant institutional grant awards.
- Requests for information, assistance, or input (consider TRADENET, as well).

Commercial announcements about products or services are not permitted. All submitted postings are reviewed and approved by the FESHE program office.

To register for the Virtual LAMP-Post, please visit http://www.usfa.fema.gov/applications/listserv/usfamail.cfm.

For more information about fire-related professional development, visit the FESHE Web page at http://www.usfa.fema.gov/fire-service/nfa/higher-ed/he.shtm.