

Fire Corps Announces Official Launch



The Fire Corps partners announced the official launch of the Fire Corps program on December 9, 2004. The program was created to support fire departments across the country by leveraging community volunteer efforts to handle non-emergency activities. Actively involving citizens in a non-emergency role will enable highly trained fire service personnel to focus more fully on acute emergency tasks.

What's more, citizen advocates will help expand educational outreach to all residents about ways in which they can help protect themselves, their families, and their communities from fire hazards. Fire Corps will also educate fire departments and fire service organizations on how to involve citizens in these non-emergency activities.

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Members of Fire Corps and Citizen Corps met U.S. Department of Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge at the Fire Corps National Advisory Committee. Front (l-r): Erika Rose, Citizen Corps; Michele Shaffer, IAFF; Back (l-r): Shawn P. Stokes, Fire Corps; Karen Marsh, Citizen Corps; Secretary Ridge; Liz DiGregorio, Citizen Corps; Heather Schaffer, and Philip C. Stittleburg, NVFC.

Fireman's Fund Contributes \$175,000 to NVFC's Heart-Healthy Firefighter Program

The NVFC has announced it has received a major donation from the Fireman's Fund Insurance Company in support of the NVFC's Heart-Healthy Firefighter program. The \$175,000 donation was formally presented at the NVFC's recent board meeting held in Asheville, North Carolina on October 16, 2004.

Accepting the donation on behalf of the NVFC was Chairman Philip C. Stittleburg.

"We're delighted to receive such a

significant contribution in support of our efforts to educate firefighters about the risks of heart disease," Stittleburg said. "The size of the Fireman's Fund donation reflects not only their own commitment to firefighter health, but also the faith they've placed in the importance and value of our program. The number of firefighters we lose to heart attacks each year in the line of duty is unacceptable. We're confident our program is making a positive impact," he emphasized.

The \$175,000 contribution from the

Fireman's Fund will be used to support various activities of the NVFC's Heart-Healthy Firefighter program. The program has an aggressive goal of reducing heart-related on-duty firefighter deaths by 25% by the year 2008. Now in its second year, the program educates firefighters and the communities they serve about the risks of heart attacks and other heart-related dangers inherent in firefighting.

During the first year of the program, a Heart-Healthy Firefighter Kit was

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developed and cholesterol screening was performed at major fire service trade shows. The Kit has provided thousands of firefighters across the United States with valuable information on fighting cholesterol and heart disease, as well as promoting better nutrition and overall physical fitness. The Heart-Healthy Firefighter Kit is available by visiting www.healthy-firefighter.org. The web site also offers other heart-healthy tools, including a medical history form that firefighters can print out and provide to their doctor.

Heather Schafer, the NVFC's executive director, expressed satisfaction with the effectiveness of the Heart-Healthy Firefighter program to date.

"We've been quite successful in educating firefighters about cardiac-related health issues. Not only have we put information into the hands of over 5,000 firefighters, we've also provided free cholesterol screenings for more than 4,000 people at several of the major fire service conferences this past year. But obviously, much work remains to be done, which makes us so grateful for the support of the Fireman's Fund."

The \$175,000 donation from Fireman's Fund Insurance was presented to NVFC by Gil Roeder, National Director of Communications. According to

Roeder, the funds were contributed under the company's Heritage Program. Founded in 1863, Fireman's Fund Insurance has participated actively over the years in local, regional and national initiatives to improve the health of firefighters. The mission of the Heritage Program is to support local firefighters in building safer communities. Previous donations have gone toward the purchase of equipment and fire prevention tools, as well as training for local fire departments and community education.

For more information on the Heart-Healthy Firefighter Program, contact Maggie Wilson, Director of Health & Safety, at 202-887-5700 or email maggie@nvfc.org.

For more information about Fireman's Fund Heritage, visit www.firemansfund.com. ★



A \$175,000 donation to the NVFC's Heart-Healthy Firefighter Program was presented by the Fireman's Fund Insurance. Pictured (l to r) are: Philip C. Stittleburg, NVFC Chairman; Jim Monihan, NVFC Delaware Director/Past Chairman; Maggie Wilson, Director of Health & Safety, NVFC; Heather Schafer, Executive Director, NVFC; Gil Roeder, National Director of Communications, Fireman's Fund Insurance Company.

USFA Initiates Emergency Vehicle Safety Partnerships

The Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has initiated partnerships with three leading fire service membership organizations to reduce the number of firefighters killed while responding to or returning from the emergency scene. The partnerships, through the United States Fire Administration (USFA), have been established with the NVFC, the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) and the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF).

"Vehicle crashes represent the second leading cause of on-duty firefighter deaths," said Michael D. Brown, Homeland Security Under Secretary for Emergency Preparedness and Response. "FEMA and USFA are

looking forward to our partnership with the NVFC, IAFC and IAFF in a unified effort to reduce the cause of approximately 25 percent of firefighter fatalities."

The Fire Service Emergency Vehicle Safety Initiative, which was jointly sponsored by the USFA and Department of Transportation (DOT) Federal Highway Administration, will serve as a basis for all three education efforts. Each organization will develop materials that directly target their membership.

"I am pleased to have USFA working with the IAFC, IAFF, and NVFC in this unified effort to reduce the number of firefighters killed while responding to or returning from incident," said R. David

NVFC

DISPATCH

Dispatch is published quarterly by the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) as a service to its members. The NVFC is an organization of various state firefighters associations which represent and pursue the interests of volunteer firefighters and volunteer departments. Joining together in council, they formulate unified positions in the interests of all.

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As a Program Partner of Citizen Corps, Fire Corps will work through local Citizen Corps Councils across the country to offer citizens education, training, and volunteer opportunities. Fire Corps is a partnership between the NVFC, the International Association of Fire Chiefs' Volunteer Combination Officers Section (IAFC/VCOS), the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF), and the Department of Homeland Security's U.S. Fire Administration and Office of State and Local Government Preparedness and Coordination.

"By partnering with the fire community to create Fire Corps, we will offer citizens in every neighborhood across America an opportunity to support their local firehouse," said Tom Ridge, Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security during remarks to the Fire Corps National Advisory Committee meeting. "Citizen volunteers can have an impact in a variety of ways. Some may choose to spread the word about fire prevention or educate the community on fire safety or help with routine administrative tasks. But all in choosing to serve will give firefighters more time and resources to pursue their critical, highly skilled responsibilities on the front lines of emergency response — where they are needed most."

Fire Corps volunteer activities may include assisting fire department personnel with administrative duties, performing education and outreach efforts to encourage fire safety and prevention, supporting CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) training in emergency preparedness and basic response techniques, and other non-suppression activities unique to rural and urban areas.

"Across this nation, we are keenly aware of people with a strong desire to serve their communities and contribute their time and skills to support homeland security, and in particular their local firefighters," said Chief R. David Paulison, U.S. Fire Administrator, Department of Homeland Security. "When firefighters can stand side by side with citizens in promoting fire prevention and general safety efforts, and are able to invite citizens to assist with non emergency responsibilities, the overall security and safety of their community is greatly enhanced."

Prior to the launch event, Fire Corps hosted its first meeting of the Fire Corps

National Advisory Committee. The Committee brings together fire service organizations to help provide strategic direction for the Fire Corps program. Members of the Committee include the following organizations:

Congressional Fire Services Institute (CFSI)

Fire Department Safety Officers Association (FDSOA)

International Association of Arson Investigators (IAAI)

International Association of Black Professional Fire Fighters (IABPFF)

International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC)

International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF)

International Fire Service Training Association (IFSTA)

International Society of Fire Service Instructors (ISFSI)

National Association of Hispanic Firefighters (NAHF)

National Association of State Fire Marshals (NASFM)

National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)

National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC)

Additionally, the Committee also serves as the Fire Service Subcommittee of the National Citizen Corps Council.

Fire Corps is coordinated nationally by the NVFC and is a Program Partner of Citizen Corps, the Department of Homeland Security's grass-roots effort to actively involve everyone in making communities across America safer, stronger, and better prepared for emergencies of all kinds.

To learn more about Fire Corps, please visit www.firecorps.org or contact Shawn Stokes at (202) 887-4809 or via email at info@firecorps.org. ★

Paulison, U.S. Fire Administrator, who further emphasized the use of seatbelts by firefighters and other emergency responders. "This partnership effort also supports the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation Firefighter Life Safety Initiative to mitigate on-duty firefighter fatalities."

In the last ten years, over 225 firefighters have been killed in the line of duty while responding to or returning from emergencies. Deaths during this type of duty are typically only second to deaths on the emergency scene in the number of firefighters killed. In 2003, more firefighters lost their lives while responding or returning than were killed by non medically-related causes on the fire scene. Most of these deaths occurred in vehicle crashes. This outreach project to the fire service regarding vehicle safety will address issues such as seatbelt use, intersection safety, fire apparatus and emergency vehicles safety design, driver selection and training, policies involving alcohol and driving, and implementation of alternative response programs.

"As crashes involving privately owned vehicles are the leading cause of volunteer firefighter on-duty fatalities responding and returning, this is a major issue of concern to the NVFC and the volunteer fire service," stated NVFC Chairman Philip Stittleburg. "The NVFC is strongly committed to eliminating firefighter deaths from vehicle crashes through this innovative partnership."

"The IAFC believes that no firefighter should be killed in the line of duty while responding and returning, especially from vehicle crashes," IAFC President Chief Ernest Mitchell said. "IAFC will work in partnership with USFA, the IAFF, and the NVFC to reduce, if not eliminate, firefighter loss of life from this cause."

"The vast majority of firefighter deaths while responding or returning are preventable. We must do everything that we can to provide our members with the information that they need to be safe," said Harold Schaitberger, IAFF General President. "Our members face these risks every day and this project will make them safer as they do so."

Further information about the these partnership initiatives as well as other USFA efforts in emergency vehicle safety may be found on the USFA Web site at <http://www.usfa.fema.gov/inside-usfa/research/vehicle.shtm>. ★

President Signs FY 2005 Homeland Security Spending Bill

FIRE Grant Cut, SAFER Funded for the First Time

On October 18, 2004 President Bush signed the \$33.1 billion Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act of 2005. While the bill provides \$4 billion for State and local assistance programs, including grants to high threat areas, firefighters, and emergency management, it cuts funding for the highly successful Assistance to Firefighters Grant program, commonly referred to as the FIRE Act, from \$750 million to \$650 million.

In addition, the legislation provides \$65 million for the SAFER program, marking the first time the program has received funding. Besides using the funds to hire new firefighters nationwide, the program includes an NVFC-backed provision which sets aside 10% of the total amount appropriated for retention and recruitment

grants for fire departments to enhance the number of volunteer firefighters and an additional 10% of the funds for hiring firefighters at volunteer and majority volunteer departments.

The law authorizing SAFER also included a provision protecting the right to volunteer. More specifically it states that, "any firefighter hired with funds provided under this bill shall not be discriminated against for, or be prohibited from, engaging in volunteer activities in another jurisdiction during off-duty hours."

"While we are pleased that Congress has again funded the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) program above the President's request and has providing initial funding for SAFER, we are very concerned about the substantial cut the program has taken over last year's level," said NVFC Chairman Philip C. Stittleburg. "The NVFC is also concerned about the potential in future years to use FIRE Act money to fund the SAFER program. Both programs need to be fully funded."

The Conference report from Congress also included the following language directed at the Department of Homeland Security:

"The conferees are concerned by the Department's proposed shift in grant focus from all-hazards to placing priority on terrorism, and the proposed deletion of several eligible activities, specifically, wellness and fitness programs, emergency medical services, fire prevention programs, public education programs, and modifications of facilities for health and safety of personnel. The Department should continue the present practice of funding applications according to local priorities and those established by the United States

Fire Administration (USFA); reinstate all previously eligible funding areas, continue

direct funding of grants to fire departments and the peer review process for determining funding awards; and include the USFA during grant administration."

The President's budget, submitted to Congress in February, proposed funding the AFG program at \$500 million and did not request any funding for the SAFER program.

Below is a breakdown of final first responder funding levels for FY 2005:

- \$650 million for FIRE Grants;
- \$65 million for SAFER Grants;
- \$1.1 billion for basic formula grants;
- \$1.2 billion for high-density urban areas, including \$150 million for rail security and \$150 million for port security;
- \$400 million for State and local law enforcement terrorism prevention grants;
- \$180 million for Emergency Management Performance Grants;
- \$195 million for First Responder training and;
- \$30 million for USAR Teams. ★

"The NVFC is also concerned about the potential in future years to use FIRE Act money to fund the SAFER program. Both programs need to be fully funded."

Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge Resigns

Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge, who was picked by President Bush to be the first Secretary of Homeland Security after the Department's creation in January 2003, announced his resignation

"The NVFC is saddened to see Secretary Ridge leave DHS and we wish him well in his future endeavors," said NVFC Chairman Philip C. Stittleburg.

on November 30. The department, which merged all or parts of 22 federal agencies, was the biggest government revamping in 50 years. The new agency was charged with preventing future attacks on the United States and helping first responders minimize damage from any that do occur.

"The NVFC is saddened to see Secretary Ridge leave DHS and we wish him well in his future endeavors," said NVFC Chairman Philip C. Stittleburg. "He really understood the issues facing the volunteer fire service and kept them in mind as he tackled the gargantuan task of creating this new agency."

The NVFC was honored to have Secretary Ridge speak at its Spring 2004 Conference in Washington, DC.

Ridge, 59, resigned as governor of Pennsylvania in October 2001 at Bush's request to become the President's homeland security adviser before he was nominated to be Secretary. A Harvard graduate, he was drafted in 1968 while a law student at Dickinson College. He served in Vietnam the following year as a sergeant with the U.S. Army's Americal Division. He was a Republican congressman from the Erie, PA, area from 1982 to 1993 and governor from 1995 to 2001.

He has announced his intention continue to serve as Secretary until February 1, 2005 or until the Senate confirms a successor. ★

DHS Announces Over \$2.5 Billion in Grants

On December 3, 2004 Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge announced the recipients of \$1.66 billion in grants to states and an additional \$855 million in grants to urban areas to fund first responders and support state and local resources necessary to prevent, respond and recover from acts of terrorism and other disasters. The NVFC is encouraging the fire service to work closely with their state homeland security points of contact to ensure they receive proper consideration when funds are distributed to the local level.

Under the state Homeland Security Grant Program, each state, territory and the District of Columbia receives a portion of the \$1.66 billion in grants based on a formula consisting of a baseline amount plus the population of the state or territory. The funding is used for equipment, training, planning and exercises. The Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) provides additional resources to those areas with greater security needs by allocating

\$855 million in a formula that considers a number of factors including population and population density; critical infrastructure; threat information; formal mutual aid cooperation; and law enforcement investigations and enforcement activity.

The recipients of this round of FY'05 Homeland Security grants will benefit from new measures recently adopted following recommendations from a task force to expedite the flow of funds. State and local governments may now have up to 120 days to draw down funds in advance of purchase and investments, as compared to the three to five days allowed previously, so that even small localities have the buying power to purchase expensive or back ordered equipment. The Department of Homeland Security also has hosted training seminars and coordination calls with states and urban areas to ensure that they are coordinating to prevent delays in the funding flow.

All 56 states and territories and the

UASI areas have conducted risk, capability, and needs assessments, and have developed multi-year homeland security strategies as a condition of grant awards. The department maintains oversight controls with onsite monitoring of all states, territories and UASI areas, and the reporting requirements provide additional oversight to ensure that states and localities spend their grants for the homeland security priorities identified in their strategies.

To view the amount each state and urban area received, go to: www.dhs.gov/interweb/assetlibrary/Grants_Recipients_FY05.pdf

To find your state homeland security contact, go to: www.dhs.gov/interweb/assetlibrary/states.htm

To download the program guidelines and application kit, go to: www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/docs/fy05hsgp.pdf ★

Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program Reauthorized

On October 28, 2004 President Bush signed H.R. 4200, the Fiscal Year 2005 Department of Defense Authorization Act. Included in the bill was legislation to reauthorize the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) program through 2009.

Highlights of the reauthorization include:

- Authorizes appropriations of \$900 million, \$950 million, and \$1 billion in FY 2005, 2006, and 2007-2009 respectively.
- Reduces the non-federal match for departments serving jurisdictions of greater than 50,000 people from 30% to 20% and jurisdictions of less than 20,000 people from 10% to 5%.
- Increases the maximum grant size to \$1 million for departments that serve a jurisdiction with 500,000 people or less; 1,750,000 for departments that serve a jurisdiction with 500,000 to 1,000,000 people; and \$2,750,000 for departments that serve a jurisdiction with more than 1,000,000.
- Increases the grant cap from \$750,000 to \$1 million for fire prevention

grants. Specifies the fire prevention grants to community organizations shall not have a matching requirement.

- Specifies that non-affiliated EMS organizations may compete for up to 2% of the funds appropriated each fiscal year. The bill defines the term 'non-affiliated EMS organization' to mean a public or private non-profit EMS organization that is not affiliated with a hospital and does not serve a geographic area in which the Director finds that EMS is adequately provided by a fire department.

- Codifies current program practices regarding annual criteria development and peer-review process. These practices have been crucial to the program's tremendous success.

- Includes language to move the program back to USFA. However, Congressional appropriators and DHS leadership have continued to insist that the Office for State and Local Government Coordination and Preparedness (formerly ODP) administer the program.

"The NVFC applauds the reauthorization of the Assistance to

Firefighters Grant program for another five years," said NVFC Chairman Philip C. Stittleburg. "Although an important provision protecting the right to volunteer is not in the final version, Congress has still drafted a good piece of legislation and we appreciate the Fire Caucus leadership's efforts to strengthen and protect the volunteer fire service and the program."

The bipartisan group of Members that played a critical role in the bill's passage include: Senators John McCain (R-AZ), Christopher Dodd (D-CT), Mike DeWine (R-OH) and Representatives Curt Weldon (R-PA), Steny Hoyer (D-MD), Sherwood Boehlert (R-NY), Bill Pascrell (D-NJ), Nick Smith (R-MI) and Rob Andrews (D-NJ).

House and Senate Armed Services Committee leadership, including Senators John Warner (R-VA) and Carl Levin (D-MI) and Representatives Duncan Hunter (R-CA) and Ike Skelton (D-MO), were once again very supportive of the fire service's efforts to pass a major piece of legislation as part of the annual Defense Authorization bill. ★

NVFC Victory: DHS Changes Rules to Allow Volunteers to get Reimbursement for Training

On November 19, DHS announced it has changed its guidelines to allow ODP grant funds to be used to provide compensation volunteer firefighters participating in ODP training and exercises. The announcement comes after the NVFC, along with Congressional allies, had been working to implement this change through legislation.

“We are very pleased that the Department of Homeland Security has changed their policy to allow ODP grant funds to be used to provide stipends, cover lost wages, and provide other compensation to volunteer and paid-on-call firefighters,”

said NVFC Chairman Philip C. Stittleburg. “Nearly 75% of all firefighters in our country are volunteers and we feel it is imperative that DHS continues to keep these people in mind when creating policy and training programs.”

Until now, DHS grant regulations had made it nearly impossible for state homeland security agencies to compensate volunteer first responders for taking anti-terrorism training courses because the federal grants were only allowed to be used to reimburse for overtime and backfill costs, which had only applied to full-time firefighters.

The NVFC, with the support of

Representative Bart Stupak (D-MI) and Homeland Security Committee Chairman Christopher Cox (R-CA) had secured a similar provision in the House version of the 9/11 Recommendations Implementation Act (H.R. 10). However, with that bill stuck in Conference, Rep. Stupak along with Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) had introduced stand-alone legislation.

To view a copy of the bulletin from DHS outlining the policy changes, go to: www.nvfc.org/news/2004-dhs-rule.html. For further information on these policies, you may contact the ODP Helpline at 1-800-368-6498. ★

Homeland Security Outlines NIMS Requirements

In a September 2004 letter to the nation's governors, Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge outlined the minimum requirements for states and territories to comply with the new National Incident Management System (NIMS). Ridge said that fiscal year 2005 marks the beginning of a requirement for federal and local government leaders to begin putting in place practices and policies for the NIMS.

Following this timeline, fiscal 2006 will be a year for determining what works and what needs to be improved. After fiscal 2007, if DHS officials decide that local officials have not fully implemented NIMS, federal emergency preparedness funding will not be granted to that state or locality.

NIMS is the first-ever standardized approach to incident management and response. Developed by the Department of Homeland Security, with the input and assistance of organizations like the NVFC, and released in March 2004, it establishes a uniform set of processes and procedures that emergency responders at all levels of government will use to conduct response operations. The NIMS will enable responders at all levels to work together more effectively and efficiently to manage domestic incidents no matter what the

cause, size or complexity, including catastrophic acts of terrorism and disasters.

Federal agencies also are required to use the NIMS framework in domestic incident management and in support of state and local incident response and recovery activities.

The benefits of the NIMS system will be significant:

- Standardized organizational structures, processes and procedures;
- Standards for planning, training and exercising;
- Personnel qualification standards;

- Equipment acquisition and certification standards;
- Interoperable communications processes, procedures and systems;
- Information management systems with a commonly accepted architecture;
- Supporting technologies - voice and data communications systems, information systems, data display systems, specialized technologies; and
- Publication management processes and activities.

To view the letter to the nation's governors, go to: www.fema.gov/nims/ ★

New NIMS Resource Available Online

The NIMS Integration Center has developed and posted on its Web page, a template for a basic NIMS Implementation Plan that agencies involved in implementing NIMS can use for planning purposes. Although the template is designed for federal departments and agencies in particular, states and local and tribal agencies may find it useful in guiding their own NIMS implementation process.

The sample plan's concept of execution

envisions four distinct phases of NIMS adoption. Phase I is initial staff training, including completion of FEMA's independent NIMS and ICS study courses. The second phase involves evaluating plans, policies and procedures to identify aspects that need to be made compliant with NIMS concepts.

Activities in Phase III involve the actual modification of emergency response plans, Emergency Operations Plans and

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FEMA'S Fire Department Census Shows Increase in Registrants

The Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has announced that the National Fire Department Census had 22,250 registered fire departments on April 1, 2004 - approximately 75 percent of U.S. fire departments. This is an increase from two years ago, when only about half of all of the nation's fire departments had submitted information for the census.

"This national database is used by the fire protection and prevention communities, allied professionals, the general public and the U.S. Fire Administration," said Michael D. Brown, Under Secretary of Homeland Security for Emergency Preparedness and Response. "We're pleased that so many departments have seen the value and submitted information to this database."

The fire departments registered with the census represent some 41,000 fire stations and more than 1 million personnel, including career, volunteer and paid-per-call firefighters, civilian staff, and non-

firefighting volunteers.

The departments are located in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and U.S. territories. The census is managed by the National Fire Data Center, part of the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA). The census database provides a directory of registered fire departments and includes basic information including address, department type, Web site address and number of stations.

"USFA staff members plan to use the census data to conduct special studies, guide program decisions and improve our

communication with fire departments throughout the country," said U.S. Fire Administrator R. David Paulison. "The census is also a valuable resource for departments and we encourage fire departments to access the census information on the USFA Web site and to register if they have not already done so."

Census data, including a breakdown of participating departments, can be found at: <http://www.usfa.fema.gov/applications/fdonline/> ★

New NIMS Resource... continued from page 6

other relevant plans, procedures and policies to reflect the adoption of NIMS concepts. Phase IV involves credentialing and certifying personnel and equipment based on NIMS Integration Center standards.

The sample plan provides a checklist to help track progress in enhancing Emergency Operations Plans to reflect full NIMS adoption. In addition, Annex A of the plan compares the purpose, components, applicability, the command and coordination structures and requirements of NIMS with those of the National Response Plan.

To download the NIMS Implementation Plan template visit the NIMS Web page at www.fema.gov/nims and click on NIMS Implementation Plan Template. E-mail questions to NIMS-Integration-Center@dhs.gov, or call the NIMS Integration Center at 202-646-3850. ★

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Heart-Healthy Firefighter Program to Exhibit at Firehouse World Conference



N • V • F • C
hearthealthy
FIREFIGHTER

The NVFC will bring its Heart-Healthy Firefighter Program to the annual Firehouse World Conference & Exposition in San Diego, California from January 31 to February 4. Attendees at the conference are invited stop by the NVFC Booth #3025 and take advantage of free health screenings.

In addition to the free cholesterol screenings the program is known for providing to the fire service, the NVFC will determine attendee's blood pressure and body composition. The cholesterol screening takes only about seven minutes to complete, and participants will also be given the opportunity to meet privately with a health counselor to discuss their test results.

Now in its second year, the NVFC's Heart-Healthy Firefighter program educates firefighters and the communities they serve about the risks of heart attacks and other heart-related dangers inherent in firefighting. The program has set an aggressive goal of reducing heart-related on-duty firefighter deaths by 25% by the year 2008.

A Heart-Healthy Firefighter Kit developed by the NVFC has already provided thousands of firefighters throughout the United States with

valuable information on fighting cholesterol and heart disease, as well as promoting better nutrition and overall physical fitness. The Heart-Healthy Firefighter Kit is available by visiting www.healthy-firefighter.org. This web site also offers other heart-healthy tools, including a medical history form that firefighters can print out and provide to their doctor.

Heather Schafer, the NVFC's Executive Director, detailed the Heart-Healthy Firefighter program activities so far. "We're pleased with our success in providing information to firefighters about cardiac-related health issues. In 2004, we not only put life-saving information into the hands of over 5,000 firefighters, we also provided free cholesterol screenings for more than 4,000 people at a variety of fire service conferences. But obviously, much work remains to be done, which is why we're ramping up efforts in 2005, including our activities at Firehouse World."

Another exciting health initiative that will be launched early in 2005 is an online program called Fired Up for Fitness. This interactive program will allow firefighters to log on to www.healthy-firefighter.org, and plan and record their own personal fitness program. Participants can measure their progress by recording physical activity and results such as weight loss. Prizes will be awarded to many of the participants.

"This is a wonderful opportunity not only for individual firefighters, but also for

entire departments to improve their overall fitness," said Philip Stittleburg, NVFC Chairman. "We're hoping for widespread participation throughout the country."

For more information on the Heart-Healthy Firefighter program, contact Maggie Wilson, Director of Health & Safety, at 1-888-ASK-NVFC or 202-887-5700, or via e-mail at maggie@nvfc.org. For more information on Firehouse world, visit www.firehouseworld.com ★

Visit the National Volunteer Fire Council's exhibit booth at these upcoming events for free cholesterol and blood pressure screenings, body mass index testing, plus useful information on adopting a heart-healthy lifestyle.

Firehouse World, San Diego, CA

www.firehouseworld.com

January 31 - February 4

FDIC Show, Indianapolis, IN

www.fdic.org

April 14 - 16

Fire Expo, Harrisburg, PA

www.icfa.com/EXPO/

May 20 - 22

Fire-Rescue International, Denver, CO

www.iafc.org/coferences/fri/index.asp

August 11 - 13

NIOSH Releases New Report on Safety Management in Disaster and Terrorism Response

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) and the RAND Corporation has released a new study entitled, "Protecting Emergency Responders, Volume 3 - Safety Management in Disaster and Terrorism Response." This report addresses the protection of emergency responders against injury, illness, and death on just such rare occasions, when emergencies become disasters. It builds on a

broad base of NIOSH programs and RAND Corporation research on protecting emergency responders.

The report focuses on preparedness (especially planning and training) and management as means of controlling and reducing the hazards emergency responders face. It provides a set of recommendations on how disaster site safety and health management might be improved. Much of

the information contained herein is based upon the firsthand experience and suggestions of emergency responders who were there at the World Trade Center and at the Pentagon on and after September 11, as well as those who responded to the Northridge (CA) earthquake and Hurricane Andrew in Florida.

To download the report go to: www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2004-144/ ★



Let's face it.

You're not in great shape, or even very good shape. The alarm at the station sounds, and next thing you know, you're on the scene ready to protect your community and putting your life on the line. Heat, stress, exertion. You're up for it, but is your heart? What about next time? Half of all firefighter deaths each year are attributed to heart attacks. So instead of ignoring the risks, check out the NVFC Heart-Healthy Firefighter Program. It'll help you learn about eating right, exercising, quitting smoking... and staying alive. Getting started is easy. Just log on to www.healthy-firefighter.org.

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Nightclubs Required To Have Sprinklers

On August 17, 2004 Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney signed into law new fire-safety legislation which requires any nightclub with occupancy of 100 persons or more to install sprinklers within three years and sets stiff penalties for safety violations. The legislation is based largely on the recommendations of a 32-member task force on fire and building safety that Romney set up that panel after a nightclub

fire in neighboring Rhode Island last year killed 100 and left almost 200 injured.

The bill requires that if clubs with occupancies of fewer than 100 are cited for an occupancy violation twice in a year, they must install sprinklers within 90 days or be shut down. It creates criminal penalties for dangerous conditions in public-assembly buildings. First-time penalties are a fine of not more than

\$5,000 and/or imprisonment of up to 2.5 years. Penalties jump to \$25,000 and/or imprisonment of up to five years if the dangerous conditions lead to a fire-related death.

The bill also offers clubs an accelerated tax depreciation deduction for the purchase of automatic sprinkler systems that are required to be retrofitted. ★

Fire Departments Encouraged to Join Fire Corps

Kicked off in December of 2004, Fire Corps is the newest Citizen Corps initiative and a partnership between the National Volunteer Fire Council, the International Association of Fire Chiefs' Volunteer Combination & Officers Section and the International Association of Fire Fighters. Fire Corps is an exciting new program that's ultimate goal is to support and supplement volunteer, combination, and career fire departments through the use of citizen advocates for non-operational related activities. These include fundraising, life safety education, bookkeeping, and much more. The citizens advocates help relieve the burden of these tasks from the front line providers and allowing them to concentrate more on their front line duties.

From King County Fire District 40 in Renton, WA to the Troutville Volunteer Fire Department in Troutville, VA, departments from coast to coast are signing up to be listed on the Fire Corps website so citizens can find them and join. Almost 100 programs have registered in just three weeks. Citizens like Jeff Thorp, from Fairfax County, Virginia searched the web looking for opportunities to help his community and now is the bookkeeper with his local fire department. But the program will only work if a majority of fire departments join, helping supplement their providers and giving as many opportunities as possible to the citizens who want to help.

"Across this nation, we are keenly

aware of people with a strong desire to serve their communities and contribute their time and skills to support homeland security, and in particular their local firefighters," Chief R. David Paulison, U.S. Fire Administrator said. "When firefighters can stand side by side with citizens in promoting fire prevention and general safety efforts, and are able to invite citizens to assist with non-emergency responsibilities, the overall security and

safety of their community is greatly enhanced."

So log in to www.firecorps.org today. There you can learn more about the program, see what departments have already joined, and sign your own department up. There is no cost to join, and all we ask is that you keep your information up to date. Join today and make a new connection to your community while helping your organization. ★

The mission of Fire Corps is to enhance the ability of fire departments to utilize citizen advocates and provide individuals with opportunities to support their local fire departments with their time and talent. LAUREN MOORE

CITIZEN ADVOCATES | FIRE DEPARTMENTS | ABOUT FIRE CORPS

CITIZEN PROFILE

Jeff Thorp, a bookkeeper making a difference

Jeff decided in 2003 that he wanted a new challenge, to give back to his community. He started a search for some place to volunteer, starting with the Citizen Corps website. [Read More](#)

FIRE DEPARTMENT PROFILE

Massachusetts Corps of Fire Chaplains

On January 21, 1999 a Steering Committee of Fire Department Chaplains who were members of the Federation of Fire Chaplains or who had been recommended by their Chiefs met at the Department of Fire Services in Stow, Massachusetts and determined to form an Association of Fire Chaplains. [Read More](#)

WHAT'S NEW

Fire Departments Encouraged to Join Fire Corps

Kicked off in December of 2004, Fire Corps is the newest Citizen Corps initiative and a partnership between the National Volunteer Fire Council, the International Association of Fire Chiefs' Volunteer Combination & Officers Section and the International Association of Fire Fighters...

Fire Corps Announces Official Launch - New Program for Citizen Advocates

The Fire Corps partners announced the official launch of the Fire Corps program on December 8, 2004...

DaVanzo Wins NVFC Volunteer Firefighter of the Year Award



John DaVanzo (right) happily accepts the NVFC Volunteer Firefighter of the Year Award from Joe Guyotte, Chairman of the NVFC Membership/Awards Committee.

Surrounded by family members, friends and colleagues, John S. DaVanzo of the Mineola (NY) Fire Department was recognized for his long and distinguished career in the volunteer fire service by receiving the NVFC Volunteer Firefighter of the Year Award. The prestigious award was presented in conjunction with NVFC's Fall 2004 meeting in Asheville, North Carolina and is sponsored by Scott Health & Safety.

The NVFC awards individuals whose outstanding achievements in the fire service and their local community embodies the spirit on which the fire service was founded. This prestigious award is one of only two awards that the Council bestows. Nominated by their peers, the recipients are awarded a trophy and a place in history with the NVFC.

Mr. DaVanzo is the quintessential volunteer firefighter, whose accomplishments in his community are incredibly extensive and diverse. He was born and raised in Mineola, New York, out on Long Island. After graduating from Mineola High School, DaVanzo attended Hofstra University. In 1944, while still in college, he was called to serve his country during World War II and enlisted in the Navy.

He served honorably and bravely as a

Naval officer on the Navy Destroyer U.S.S. Glennon. Just two days after D-Day, the Glennon, which had been hurling shells upon the shore of Normandy in support of troops advancing North toward Quineville, struck a mine not far from the shore. The following morning, just as the commander was preparing to resume efforts to save his ship, a German battery found her range and hit the Glennon, cutting off all power. After a third hit, the Commander ordered abandon ship and the men were taken off in a landing craft. The Glennon floated for a while before rolling over and sinking. Twenty-five soldiers were lost and 38 more were wounded. DaVanzo survived the ordeal and returned back to Mineola where he began his long life in public service.

In 1947, John joined the Mineola Fire Department and quickly moved through the rank to serve as Captain from 1953 to 1955. John would become a delegate to the Firemen's Association of the State of New York, the Southern New York Volunteer Firemen's Association and the Nassau County Firemen's Association. He has served as President of the department's Volunteer & Exempt Firemen's Benevolent Association and was General Chairman when the department hosted the 84th Convention and Drill for Southern New York. In 2001, the Mineola Fire Department recognized his achievements by presenting him with the Fireman of the Year award.

While continuing to be active with the department throughout his life, John also found time to serve his community in a plethora of other capacities beyond the fire service. His exploits have earned him the nickname "Mr. Mineola." For ten years he served as Deputy Mayor and Trustee for the Village of Mineola. He then became Councilman for the Town of North Hempstead for ten years, and then became Town Clerk for an additional 17 years. He was recognized as the New York State Clerk of the Year for 1986-87. In addition he was a member of Mineola's Library Board for 17 years.

He has also found time to serve with the American Cancer Society, St. Francis Hospital, American Heart Association, Catholic Charities, Boy Scouts, Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club, Veterans of

Foreign Wars, American Legion, and the Sons of Italy. He is an usher in his church, has received an honorary membership of the Knights of Columbus and is a charter member of the County Seat Kiwanis Club. He didn't just serve with many of these organizations, in many cases he was President or Chairman, a true sign of his leadership.

Over the years, he has received many awards for his work in the community. These include: the Italian-American Man of the Year (1982); Kiwanis Club Man of the Year (1988); and Rotary Club Man of the Year (2002). His efforts with the Mineola Republican Club were recognized when that organization renamed itself the John S. DaVanzo Mineola Republican Club. Most recently the Firemen's Association of the State of New York awarded him their Fire Service Achievement Award for the Year 2004. The award is presented to a person who has become a pillar of their fire department and community.

In a letter of endorsement for John, New York State Senator Michael Balboni said, "Having known John for more years than I can count, I can't think of a more deserving recipient of this award. His dedication to his community is exemplary and he is an inspiration to all those who have the pleasure of knowing him."

Mineola Mayor John Colbert added, "John should, is and will always be known as a true selfless giver. He has etched his spirit on this community and has become a role model for all of us to emulate.

John was married for over 50 years before his wife's untimely death. He has raised five children.

Whether he is serving as the Chairman of the Mineola Fire Department Golf Outing, running a charity event for St. Frances Hospital or "flipping" pancakes for a Kiwanis Club fundraiser, John is always there. John DaVanzo's dedication and leadership have earned him the respect of his colleagues and he should serve as a model to firefighters everywhere.

Nominations for the 2005 NVFC Volunteer Firefighter of the Year Award must be received by August 1, 2005. For more information, contact the NVFC at 1-888-ASK-NVFC (275-6832) or visit www.nvfc.org. ★

NVFC Holds Productive Conference in North Carolina

The NVFC held its Fall Meeting in Asheville, North Carolina from October 13-16, 2004. Forty state associations, federal agency representatives, sustaining members, and special guests attended the productive meeting.



<http://www.firemansfund.com/>.

U.S. Fire Administrator R. David Paulison was the featured speaker at the Chairman's Luncheon and gave an overview of key initiatives being undertaken at USFA and the Department of Homeland Security that are benefiting America's fire service. Chief Paulison has been a strong supporter of the NVFC's work and attendees are always glad to be able to interact with him at each NVFC conference. In addition, Vernon Ward, President of the North Carolina State Firemen's Association welcomed attendees to Asheville and offered his organization's full support in making the conference successful.

On Friday, the conference was fortunate to have an impressive group of speakers address them on a wide variety of key issues. U.S. Fire Administration Project Director Tim O'Dowd discussed the current status of the multiple partnerships between the NVFC and USFA/DHS. These include a health and wellness initiative, educational seminars, Fire Corps and a vehicle safety project. Fire Corps Director Shawn Stokes also addressed the group to discuss this new initiative (see related article on page xx).

Dennis Gage of the Insurance Services Organization (ISO) also addressed the conference to discuss resources they provide to local fire departments. In

Continued on page 12

Workshops on the National Incident Management System, Developing a Volunteer Fire Service Specific Health and Safety Program and the National Fire Incident Report System (NFIRS) kicked off the meeting. Following the workshops were over a dozen committee meetings, each of which made recommendations to the full NVFC Board on important legislation, regulations, standards, and other significant issues affecting the nation's volunteer fire service.

The NVFC was honored to accept a generous donation of \$175,000 from Gil Roeder, National Director of Communications with Fireman's Fund Insurance (see article on page 1). The donation will go toward the NVFC Heart-Healthy Firefighter program that is now entering its second year. Year two will expand the program's focus beyond basic cholesterol screening to focus more on nutrition, exercise and other health screening. For more information about the program, visit www.healthy-firefighter.org. For more information on the Fireman's Fund, visit,



addition, Mike Bazinet, Vice President of Marketing for UST and Ross Carlson of Polaris discussed their new partnership that will donate the Polaris rugged, all-terrain vehicles to state, county and municipal emergency service organizations. For more information on the program, visit www.us smokeless.com

Other speakers also included Gary Togle, National Fire Protection Association, Steve Austin, International Association of Arson Investigators, and Paul St. John-Byles, who is doing a research project

on behalf of the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation to document firefighter line-of-duty death that predate the Foundation's records.

On Friday evening, the North Carolina State Firemen's Association hosted a barbeque dinner for all attendees at Taylor Ranch outside of Asheville. The group was treated to live music from a blue grass band. The NVFC Foundation Auction followed the dinner and raised nearly \$5,000 to be dedicated toward firefighter health and safety projects.

On Saturday evening, the NVFC Banquet was held, which included the NVFC Volunteer Firefighter of the Year award presentation. Nearly 200 guests applauded John S. DaVanzo of the Mineola (NY) Fire Department as he was recognized for his long and distinguished career in the volunteer fire service and his many other community activities. This prestigious award is sponsored by Scott Health and Safety, who donated \$10,000 in Scott products to Mr. DaVanzo's department (see related article on page 11).



The NVFC would like to acknowledge and thank the following sponsors of the meeting for their continued support of America's volunteer fire service:

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International Code Council

Lancaster County Fireman's Association

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Western North Carolina Association of Firefighters

The NVFC's Spring 2005 meeting will be held in Reno, Nevada from April 27-30. For more information, visit: www.nvfc.org/2005-spring-meeting.html

Firefighter On-Duty Deaths Hit 107 in 2004

Despite continued advances in firefighting equipment, Incident Command System training, operations and safety training and improved communications, 107 U.S. firefighters died in the line of duty in 2004, a figure released by the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

"Our nation's firefighters lost in the line of duty is heartbreakingly real, directly impacting their communities, their fire departments, their fellow firefighters - and especially the families they leave behind," said Michael D. Brown, Under Secretary for Emergency Preparedness and Response. "As President Bush has noted, these men and women are sacrificing daily for the security and safety of their communities. We as a nation mourn the loss of these firefighters."

In addition to last year's 107 firefighter deaths, the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) has learned of an additional firefighter fatality in 2003 and a firefighter death in 2004 as the result of an incident in 2002. These fatality statistics for 2004 are provisional and subject to change as the USFA contacts State Fire Marshals to verify the names of firefighters reported to have died on-duty during 2004. The final annual firefighter fatality report for 2004 is expected to be available by early June.

"Firefighters continue to give their lives while serving their communities," said R. David Paulison, U.S. Fire Administrator. "In 2004, a number of individuals and organizations came together to start the Line of Duty Death prevention initiatives. I look forward to working with the entire fire service and stakeholder organizations, in making sure the 16 initiatives become a part of every department. We as a fire service must come together and take those actions necessary to ensure everyone goes home after every call," said Paulison.

There were a total of 104 incidents that took the lives of firefighters in 2004:

- Volunteer, seasonal, and part-time firefighters accounted for 78 deaths.
- Career firefighters, those who are employed full-time as firefighters, comprised 29 deaths (27%) in 2004.
- Half of the firefighters that died in 2004 died from traumatic injuries such as asphyxiation, burns, drowning, vehicle crashes, and other physical injuries.

- The balance of firefighter deaths in 2004 were attributed to non-traumatic injuries such as heart attacks and strokes. Heart attacks caused the deaths of 49 on-duty firefighters.

- Nine firefighters died in 2004 in response to wildland fires (grass, trees, brush). This is the lowest level of wildland-related firefighter deaths since 1996 and represents a significant drop from the 29 wildland-related firefighter deaths that occurred in 2003.

- Three firefighters were killed when fire apparatus backed over them.

- Five firefighters were killed when they were struck by passing vehicles at the scene of an emergency.

- Additionally, four firefighters were killed in falls from fire department vehicles.

- A Massachusetts firefighter died when he fell from a responding engine company. This department also suffered a fatal fall injury involving fire apparatus in 1984.

- A Kentucky firefighter was shot and killed as she approached an emergency that involved domestic violence.

- Twenty firefighters died in vehicle collisions.

- Seven deaths involved the crash of firefighters' personal vehicles.

- Three firefighters died in aircraft crashes; one in a medical helicopter and two wildland fire fighting aircraft.

- Five firefighters died in crashes that involved responding fire apparatus.

- Firefighter deaths took place in 40 states. Pennsylvania had the highest number of deaths with 17 firefighters killed; Kentucky suffered seven deaths, followed by California, Florida, Illinois, and New Jersey with five deaths each.

- The average age of firefighters killed while on-duty in 2004 was 47. The average age of a firefighter that died of a heart attack or stroke was 52, and the average age of firefighters who died of traumatic injuries was 42.

For additional information on firefighter fatalities, including the annual fatality reports from 1986 through 2003 and the Firefighter Fatality Retrospective Study 1990-2000, please visit the USFA website at http://www.usfa.fema.gov/fatalities/statistics/ff_stats.shtm. ★

Emergency Vehicle Safety Initiative Report Now Available

Michael D. Brown, Under Secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security for Emergency Preparedness and Response, has announced the release of the recently completed Fire Service Emergency Vehicle Safety Initiative report. This initiative, which was jointly sponsored by the United States Fire Administration (USFA) and the Department of Transportation (DOT) Federal Highway Administration, will enhance the safety of firefighters while responding and returning from emergencies and while operating on the roadway.

"We are grateful to the national-level fire service groups, allied federal agencies and other organizations that provided technical expertise and support for this project," said Michael D. Brown, Under Secretary of Homeland Security for Emergency Preparedness and Response.

"In the last ten years over 225 firefighters have been killed in the line of duty from roadway accidents - the second leading cause of death for our nation's firefighters"

Mary E. Peters, Administrator of the FHWA, said, "The Federal Highway Administration is pleased to be a key partner in an effort that contributes to the safety of firefighters and emergency responders working along our nation's roadways. We hope the guidelines and expertise offered in the report will help save precious lives."

R. David Paulison, U.S. Fire Administrator, emphasized that the initiative also supports the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation Firefighter Line of Duty Death (LODD) Prevention Effort.

The report addresses, in detail, recommendations developed from this

Continued on page 15

initiative regarding Standards and Standardized Operating Procedures (SOPs); training, and technology that could be utilized to enhance emergency vehicle operations safety, as well as the roadway safety operations of firefighters and other emergency responders. It also includes examples of "best practices" from several fire departments throughout the United States, which have developed innovative emergency vehicle safety mitigation techniques and technologies.

Limited quantities of this publication are now available, free of charge, by calling (800) 561-3356 or (301) 447-1189 to order. It can also be downloaded at: <http://www.usfa.fema.gov> (click on publications). Requests for the publication may also be faxed to (301) 447-1213.

For further information about this report and other USFA efforts in emergency vehicle safety, visit: <http://www.usfa.fema.gov/inside-usfa/research/vehicle.shtm>.

Department of Transportation Releases
Emergency Response Guidebook

The Emergency Response Guidebook (ERG2004) was developed jointly by the US Department of Transportation, Transport Canada, and the Secretariat of Communications and Transportation of Mexico (SCT) for use by firefighters, police, and other emergency services personnel who may be the first to arrive at the scene of a transportation incident involving a hazardous material.

It is primarily a guide to aid first responders in (1) quickly identifying the specific or generic classification of the materials involved in the incident, and (2) protecting themselves and the general public during this initial response phase of the incident. The ERG is updated every three to four years to accommodate new products and technology. The next version is scheduled for 2008.

The Department of Transportation's goal is to place one ERG2004 in each emergency service vehicle, nationwide, through distribution to state and local public safety authorities. To date, 9 million copies have been distributed without charge to the emergency responder community.

Copies are available free of charge to public emergency responders through the your state coordinator. To get a copy, go to: hazmat.dot.gov/gydebook.htm ★

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