



Division of Fire and Life Safety

Greetings,

There is a lot of good news to share in this newsletter. So I think I will start with the news we have been waiting to hear for over 20 years.

AFSC Funding

The Alaska Fire Standards Council was funded beginning July 1, 2008. To begin we need to recognize the leadership in the legislature that made this possible. Speaker John Harris, Representatives Bill Stoltze and Jay Ramras, and Senator Donny Olson were the key legislators pushing for this funding. We also need to acknowledge the efforts of Governor Sarah Palin and Commissioner Walt Monegan. Without them this funding would not have happened.

Many people have spent a lot of time to make this a reality. With the help of my good friend Gaylen Brevik I'll hit the highlights starting with some of the history of this effort.

A task force was established by the Alaska State Legislature in 1984 to finish the work of the first task force (1981), which had not been funded in its third year. This task force had 120 days to finish the work and had to be completed by October 1984. The final report was printed and produced in December 1984; the title is *Report of the Task Force on Fire Prevention and Control*. Among the many excellent goals in the report was call to establish a Fire Commission. Funding the Fire Commission became a major emphasis in the lobbying efforts. Companion Bills were in both the House and the Senate. **Representative Fran Ulmer** got behind the effort and CSHB 230 passed the House, but ultimately did not pass the Senate. It was felt that there was a chance to get funding because the insurance taxes had been set at 3% and had gone down to 2.8%.

The Fire Service Leadership lobbied to keep the tax at 3% and use the .2% to fund the Fire Commission. The insurance companies were already paying it and the state would not have to dig into the general fund to pay for it.

Over the next several years firefighters, fire chiefs, organizations, and fire service supporters lobbied, wrote letters, and testified to establish the Fire Commission. During this time the vision of a Governor appointed *Fire Council* was established. With the support of then Lt. Governor Fran Ulmer the legislature established the Governor appointed council in 1997.

Key Players

So that their efforts are not forgotten here is a list of some of those key players from the early to mid 80's. William "Bill" Hagevig, Al Judson, Jason Elson, Tom Take, Leigh Gallagher, James Messeick, Sam Neal, John L. George, Sandra Borbridge, E. Robert Haag, Bill Shechter, James "Babe" Evans, Dewey Whetsell, Robert Purcell, Rocky Ansel, Tom Monk, Gordon Brunton, Andy Postichek, Tom McAlister, Charlie Lundfelt, Warren Cummins, Jack Wilcock, Scott Wolfe, Mark Johnson, and Gaylen Brevik. In the 90's and beyond Craig Goodrich, Gary Powell, Mark Barker, Billy Harris, Tim Biggane and Mike McGowan led the charge. I know that the complete list is much longer than our memories. I apologize if I left your name off.

This year there were several folks leading the charge seeking AFSC funding in the legislature. Leading the charge was AFCA President Doug Schrage, ASFA President Carol Reed, Chief Warren Cummings,

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Special points of interest:

Appreciation comes in many forms, even licks!

See page three for a glance at animal gratitude "North Pole Alaska, Structure Fire"

Continued AFSC Funding

Chief Jason Elson, Chief Eric Mohrmann, our good friend and colleague Betty Svensson and everyone else who attended the Spring Legislative Conference in Juneau. There is, however, one name missing from this list. I did that on purpose because he needs to be singled out. The AFCA's representative to the AML, Chief Jeff Tucker, did an amazing job while in Juneau for the AML Spring Fly-in. He saw to it that the right information went to the right people. I thank you all for your dedication to our profession and the citizens of this state.

On that same note, Gordon Descutner, has been hired to be the new administrator for the AFSC. He began on July 1, 2008. His office number is (907) 269-5061. One of his first tasks is to hire a clerk and get his office set up. He will be working closely with Chief Buddy Lane, AFSC Chair.

Budget Funding

There were a number of other successes in the budget for the Division of Fire and Life Safety. We received \$220,000 to fund the Office of Rural Fire Protection. This office will be responsible for the training and maintenance of the 124 Project Code Red (PCR) communities across the state. Also the Alaska Village Initiatives (AVI) received \$1,000,000 to purchase more PCR units for rural communities.

Our request for a \$220,000 increment to make up revenue short falls was funded. With this funding the Training and Education Bureau and the Life Safety Inspection Bureau will be able to operate independently from the Plan Review Bureau. This will allow us to plan and operate earlier in the fiscal year.

Plans Review Bureau

During this last quarter the Plan Review Bureau gave a presentation at the Fire Marshal Forum to Fire and Building Code Officials from deferred jurisdictions. It was great being able to share ideas and code concerns from all over the state. The response back was helpful and beneficial to everyone. Subsequent to this meeting, we have received numerous phone calls regarding the States interpretation on code related and general procedural issues. In addition, we have received requests from several deferred jurisdictions for courtesy pre-audit surveys. Thank-you for your support.

The State Fire Marshals office is within a few weeks of implementing ('Go-live') with our new computer building database software system... 'Hansen 8'. In a phased approach, the first phase will include Building Permitting, Inspections, Code Enforcement, and has merged the three regional Fire Marshals Office building databases. The second phase will include Map Drawer, and public web access and tracking. The third phase will implement Mobile Solutions.

The Municipality of Anchorage implemented Hansen and they are also using a phased approach.

Hansen 8 is the latest suite of innovative software solutions for the public sector market from Hansen Information Technologies. Based exclusively on Internet technology, Hansen 8 is 100% Web-browser-based, requires zero client-side software, and eliminates the issues of interfacing, plug-ins, message brokers,

There were also two capital projects that were funded. \$350,000 was approved for the replacement fire engine for the South East Fire Training Center, and \$395,000 was approved to complete the two story live fire training building at the Fire Training Center in Fairbanks.

Finally, many of you received grants for fire and EMS buildings and equipment through the capital budget. I know that everyone didn't get what they wanted, however, a lot of money went into fire service projects. Keep working with your local legislators. If you work with them, they can work for you. Make them a part of your planning process.

Overall this has been an incredible year for the fire service. Even with these successes in our wake we need to keep pushing. Our goal to protect the lives and property of Alaskans from the ravages of fire is a daunting one. We need to demonstrate to the legislature and administration that we have been successful with the public funds that they have entrusted to us this year. We need to continue to push for funding for more and better training. For example, I would like to see us work together to find a way to re-start the training grants that went away in 1991. I would also like to find a way to grant fund community public education programs. There is much left to do.

I am looking forward to seeing everyone at the upcoming joint conference in Juneau.

That is all for now. Have a safe summer.

David L. Tyler, State Fire Marshal

The Plan Review Bureau also welcomes two new plans examiners to the Anchorage office, Diana Parks and Chris Grooms. Chris has 20 years construction experience with general contractor and residential endorsements. He spent the past two years as the Building Inspector in Skagway. To further his education, he obtained 8 ICC certifications and attended two National Fire Academy courses. Diana has 9 years in plan review and inspections of health care facilities for the State of Alaska. We welcome their knowledge and experience.

Code Question: Expert Staff Opinions

Q: Table 508.3.3 of the 2006 *International Building Code* states the separation between a Group B and Group S-1 occupancy is permitted to be 0. Is it, therefore, the intent of this table to exempt the area calculation, as prescribed in Section 508.3.3.2, when utilizing the separated mixed-use design option?

A: The answer is No. The sum of the ratios, as prescribed in Section 508.3.3.2, of the occupancy groups involved must still be equal to or less than 1.

Code opinions are the opinion of the staff but do not represent the official position of the International Code Council nor do they represent the views of any enforcing agency. The final interpretation of the code is the legal responsibility of the code official.

Carol Olson, Deputy Fire Marshal II

Life Safety Inspection Bureau

It is revving up to top gear for the Alaskan summer in the Life Safety Inspection Bureau. Inspections are in full swing and the bureau has already had a few investigations to speak of. We welcome a new member on board in Judy Miller. Judy is assigned to the Juneau office as the Administrative Clerk, and we are thoroughly pleased to have her skills and attributes as a part of our "office machine." She will be a great asset to the bureau, division, and department.

The Alaska Association of Fire & Arson Investigators celebrated its return to prominence with its second consecutive statewide conference held in Soldotna. It was a week long seminar with various instructors from many different disciplines. Everyone attending left with something new added to their bag of tools and the networking side of things just cements the foundation

for Alaska's community of fire investigators so much further.

Nathan Rocheleau and John Bond were successful in solving an arson case in Nenana, Alaska and removed an unwanted hazard from our state's streets. Kevin Hunter attended the National Fire Academy for further education, and supervisor Lloyd Nakano attended the NFPA 99 class in Seattle. This solidified the office's ability to aid the Center of Medical Services in their pursuit of safe environments for all of Alaska's patients.

It's just a snapshot, but as you can see...the Life Safety Inspection Bureau is cruising into the summer with the top down.

Kevin Hunter, Deputy Fire Marshal I

First Annual Fire Marshal's and Building Official's Forum

On April 11 and 12, 2008 the State Fire Marshal Office sponsored the First Annual Fire Marshal's and Building Official's Forum. The invitees were from the 11 deferred jurisdictions from throughout the state and a few from potential deferred jurisdictions.

It is the expressed intent of State Fire Marshal Dave Tyler to improve communications between the State Fire Marshal Office and the communities they serve by leading the way in a wide range of discussions regarding building and fire code adoptions, inspections, plan reviews, complaints, Fire Safe Cigarette legislation, public education and fire investigations. Members of the State Fire Marshal Office gave briefings for their areas of responsibility.

A new but separate area of discussion was the auditing of deferred jurisdictions. This will occur every 2 years using the deferral agreement requirements as a self inspection checklist and using the audit as an opportunity to fine tune but more importantly identify best practices that can be shared by all jurisdictions.

As a result of the forum there is an increased and renewed interest in formal and informal task forces to deal with common jurisdictional issues, further code interpretation and sharing of code determinations, sharing of resources for public education and joint training where possible. One of the best things to come out of the forum was the interaction between different building officials and fire officials from throughout the state and learning from the experiences of each other from different political, economic and social communities and backgrounds. There was good debate with

professionalism being the rule of the day.

After seeking consensus of the forum and examining the comments of feedback surveys, it is the intent of the State Fire Marshal's Office to make this an annual event and open it up to all communities who want to participate.

Future events will incorporate training opportunities, breakout groups examining and making recommendations on specific issues, code development recommendations from a national and local consensus basis and at least one social event.

It would be inaccurate to say the forum was a love fest, the state fire marshal's office took a couple issues on the nose but we knew we would. We learned and are making changes to improve our service delivery in some areas but more importantly, improving our relationship and communication with the fire and building official community.

I'd like to extend a special thank you to the Alaska Fire Chiefs Association and the Fraternal Order of Alaska State Troopers for their generous financial support of the Forum.

All communities are cordially invited to attend the Fire and Building Officials Forum to be held in Anchorage tentatively in April 2009. Make plans to attend and bring a willing hand to contribute to making Alaska a safer place to live.

Kelly Nicoletto, Assistant State Fire Marshal

North Pole Alaska, Structure Fire



On Wednesday morning, March 19, 2008, at 02:25 a.m., the North Star Fire Department was dispatched to 2242 Dawson Road, off of Hurst Road, for a reported structure fire in a barn. The North Star Fire Department responded and the first fire engine was on scene within 8 minutes of being dispatched. Firefighters found the

approximately 3000 square foot structure fully involved in fire and collapsing on arrival. The living quarters, located approximately 15 feet from the barn, was not damaged in the fire due to the quick action of the responding crews in knocking the fire down next to the house. The fire was

extinguished and overhaul completed at 03:12 a.m., approximately 45 minutes after arrival. North Star Fire responded with 2 fire engines from two fire stations, and 10 Firefighters, using a total of 4,000 gallons of water to extinguish this fire. In addition, neighboring fire departments provided 2 additional fire engines and 7 more firefighters.

The structure and its contents were a total loss. Several animals also died in the fire. The building and contents loss is estimated to be \$40,000. The occupants did not have insurance, however the property owners were insured. Mutual aid assistance was provided from the North Pole and Fort Wainwright Fire Departments. It is believed the most likely cause of this fire is related to a heat lamp that was on in the barn. There were no firefighter injuries as a result of this fire.

Steve Crouch, Assistant Chief, Training Division North Star Fire Dept

Training and Education Bureau

This has been an extremely active spring for the Training and Education. I have highlighted a few of the larger projects that we have accomplished.

IFSAC Accreditation:

In April, after more than 1 ½ years of work, we were re-accredited by IFSAC for Firefighter I, Firefighter II, Fire Service Instructor I, Fire Service Instructor II. We also added certification programs for Haz-Mat Awareness and Operations. Thanks to everyone around the state who assisted with test bank question review, policy development and moral support!

We were required to institute some major changes in our program policies to become accredited. We implemented those changes in February of this year and things are going fairly well. The most difficult change seems to be the separation of Firefighter testing from the Haz-Mat testing. While the Haz-Mat training has been required since 2001 we were not scoring it separately. We found that even if an applicant failed all of the Haz-Mat related test questions on the test they could still pass the Firefighter test and receive a certificate. Training Officers and Fire Instructors are now working to ensure that their Firefighter I and II students are receiving better Haz-Mat training to ensure that they meet the required standard.

The other major change dealt with the practical skills testing for all levels. We had two options for practical testing; test 100% of the skills or randomly select the skills that were tested. We chose to randomly select the practical skills for Firefighter I, Firefighter II, Haz-Mat Awareness and Haz-Mat Operations. We will continue to test 100% of the skills for Fire Service Instructor I and II. Please review the Certifying Officer Manual or skill sheets for more detail about the selection of skills.

We will be notifying IFSAC in July to transfer the Accreditation to the Fire Standards Council.

A Hearty Welcome To Alaska Fire Standards Council!

The Training and Education Bureau and Gordon Descutner, the Alaska Fire Standards Council Administrator will be working through the month of July to transition the firefighter certification program over to the Council. All of the certification programs, applications and forms will be updated on the website to reflect the change to the Fire Standards Council. We will not be changing any program policies or requirements. Please remember to download and use the most current version of the application, skill sheets or training records.

Certification We have processed more than 400 applications for certification this spring and coordinated 31 site specific tests for certification since the 1st of February. This is a substantial increase from previous years. Thanks to everyone for being so understanding about the delay's getting certificates issued and sent out.

Website Marie Collins completely revamped the Division website to improve the availability and accessibility of information. There are now resource pages for Training Officers and Certifying Officers. Please let us know if it would be helpful to add other information or materials to the site.

Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Training Mahlon made trips to Unalaska and Kodiak this spring to conduct Juvenile Firesetter Intervention training for a total of 23 students. This course focuses on strategies to identify kids who are setting fires and establish the correct intervention method to prevent further firesetting. We will be offering this course again in November in Anchorage and Ketchikan.

Kids Fire Safety Game We are in the process of testing our new game for kids. It will be an online game available to kids throughout the world. We will have a big presentation for the kick off in September right before Conference and hope to have many dignitaries in attendance.

Office of Rural Fire Protection This has been a great year for the Office of Rural Fire Protection. We have delivered training to 8 communities since the beginning of April giving us a total of 21 communities receiving Project Code Red training this fiscal year. The Office received funding for fiscal year 2009 to hire administrative staff and deliver refresher and advanced training.

Firefighter I in Kotzebue We are in process of delivering a Haz-Mat Awareness and Firefighter I course in Kotzebue. Kotzebue will now have more Firefighter's to serve the community. This course would not have been possible with out the assistance of a large group of instructors. Due to the course schedule it was a serious commitment of time by the course instructors. Many of whom had to stay in Kotzebue for a week to teach on week nights to make sure the departments volunteers could attend.

Holland Cruise Lines We have added Holland Cruise Lines to our cruise ship fire training program in the Southeast region. Todd Kollar has been working with them for several years to make the scheduling arrangements.

Fire Service Awards

The Division of Fire and Life Safety is seeking award nominations for the Annual Fire Service Awards. The awards will be announced at the 2008 Joint Fire Service Conference in Juneau.

Please review the criteria located on our website

<http://www.dps.state.ak.us/Fire/docs/FireServiceAwardsCriteria.pdf>

and take time to recognize the deserving personnel in your organizations. We must have all nominations to the committee by September 5, 2008. Nominations can be submitted to my office via email, faxed to 907-338-4375 or mailed to:

Alaska Division of Fire and Life Safety
Training and Education Bureau
5700 E Tudor Road
Anchorage, AK 99507

Jodie Hettrick, TEB Supervisor

Notices and Consumer Alerts

~ Fire Flyer Alert ~

In light of extraordinary fuel prices and limited personal resources in rural Alaska local fire response agencies should prepare for and be aware of additional residential fire hazards resulting from the personal storage of gasoline and home heating oil stored in non approved containers that are not properly marked.

As fuel companies deliver their products throughout rural Alaskan communities the cost per gallon can be significantly different from one load to the next. This invites residents to get the best deal possible but does not promote the proper handling and storage of these products. Technically speaking, dispensing fuel into unapproved containers is a violation of the fire code and an assumed liability by the fuel distribution companies who are allowing this to happen.

Fire response agencies should treat large containers, 50 gallon drums and such, stored next to homes as if they were full of gasoline and preplan for the hazard. Additionally, there is the potential for a significant increase in burn injuries as the public attempts to fuel their vehicles from these stored sources through inventive bush engineered methods.

On another front, commercially obtained auxiliary fuel tanks are being sold under the premise of refueling landscape equipment but being bolted into trucks to extend their travel range. These tanks are not regulated nor do they bear any third party listing for approval. The tanks gravity feed fuel to a dispensing nozzle through a rubber fuel hose. There is a shut off at the bottom of the tank to stop the gravity feed but access to it could be difficult. In the event of an accident this auxiliary fuel will be an additional hazard to responding fire and rescue personnel and could promote greater environmental damage and personal injury to the vehicle occupants.

Hazards to our selves and the public are ever changing we must have a high degree of situational awareness to anticipate economic, social and geographic dynamics that impact how and what we respond to.

~ Fire Safe Cigarette Law ~

Fire Safe Cigarette Law will be in effect August 1, 2008

Check out our website for details.

www.dps.state.ak.us/fire/firecigarettelaw

New Faces In Various Places.....

A warm welcome to the following Division of Fire and Life Safety personnel ~

Gordon Descutner, Fire Training Administrator Anchorage Office

Billie Lee , Administrative Clerk II - Palmer Office

Judith Miller, Administrative Clerk III— LSIB Juneau Office

Chris Grooms, Plans Examiner— PRB Anchorage Office

Diana Parks, Plans Examiner—PRB Anchorage Office

Aubrey Raby, Administrative Clerk III—Alaska Fire Standards Council

Alexandra (Alex) Richardson, Administrative Clerk III Anchorage Office

Cherie Woitel, Secretary — Office of the Director, Anchorage