



**ANNUAL REPORT
JULY 2001 - JUNE 2002**

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL

JEFFREY J. MORRISSETTE, State Fire Administrator
Established - 1975 Statutory authority - Chap. 7-323
Central office - Connecticut Fire Academy, 34 Perimeter Road
Windsor Locks, CT 06096
Average number of full-time employees - 21
Recurring operating expenses - 2000-2001 - \$2,343,873
Capital outlay - \$169,739

***Organization structure - Office of State Fire Administration, Training,
Certification, and Fiscal Services***

The Commission proudly presents the following summary of services, programs and activities as evidence that the responsibilities entrusted to it have been faithfully administered.

Agency Mission

To prevent or mitigate the effects of fire and disasters, either natural or man-made, on the citizens of the State of Connecticut. This objective shall be accomplished through the development and delivery of state-of-the-art educational programs designed to meet nationally recognized standards, certification of individuals to such standards and maintenance of up-to-date resources for use by fire service personnel, public educators and other first responders.

Statutory Responsibility

The Commission is charged with and has primary responsibility for training, public fire and life safety education and professional certification for members of the fire service. Connecticut General Statutes Title 7; Sections 7-323(j) through 7-323(q), 13(a) - 248; and others.

Public Service

The commissioners and staff are committed to Public Service Excellence. Feedback on services is continually solicited through the use of student comment sheets, surveys and regular interaction with regional, state and national fire service organizations.

In an effort to promote and market agency services, a display booth was staffed at several state and regional conferences during the year. Agency staff members continued to serve as a resource to the network television, radio and newsprint media. This has positively impacted local public fire and life safety education efforts.

The staff continues to conduct informational tours and demonstrations of the Connecticut Fire Academy facility on a regular basis in response to requests from legislators, local civic organizations and interested citizens.

Improvements/Achievements 2001-2002

A conscious effort is continually made to schedule programs and services within every region of the state. The needs of both the volunteer and career fire service are gauged in consideration of program development and delivery.

Reducing Waste

The Commission remains a small, efficient, organizationally streamlined agency. Through the use of full-time staff serving as facilitators and coordinators, per-diem adjunct instructors deliver a majority of agency services.

Administrative Projects

The State Fire Administrator and staff remain active in state and national committees, boards and organizations in an effort to maintain a positive proactive impact upon services. By Connecticut General Statutes, the Administrator serves on both the State Emergency Response and Enhanced 911 Commissions. He also serves on the state Domestic Preparedness Senior Steering Council maintaining a communication's link. The Director of Training serves as the Commission's representative to the Department of Public Health's Office of Emergency Medical Services Advisory Board. Agency administrative projects completed or ongoing include:

- Worked with the Connecticut Fire Chiefs' Association to develop a Statewide Fire-Rescue Disaster Response Plan. Full implementation of the plan is expected in FY 2003.
- Agency was activated to serve as fire service liaison in the state Emergency Operations Center following the attacks on September 11.
- Two meetings of the Commission were taped and aired statewide on the Connecticut Television Network (CT-N).
- Coordinated the distribution of Thermal Imaging Cameras (TIC) to fire departments statewide. By early August, 2002 a total of 315 TIC's will have been distributed with the assistance of the Office of Policy and Management.
- As a technical resource, distributed to every fire department four complimentary Terrorism related texts.
- Immediately following the anthrax outbreak, the agency hosted an expert panel to better prepare fire departments to respond to chemical and biological hazard emergencies.
- Continued administration of the 800 FIRE LINE Program, a national volunteer fire and emergency services recruitment tool. During the fiscal year, 143 calls were received with 77 referred to local fire and EMS organizations.
- Continued to host regional forums on volunteer recruitment and retention. Forums were held in West Haven and Wethersfield.
- Coordinated and delivered three Juvenile Firesetting Intervention Training programs with 71 attendees.
- In conjunction with the Connecticut Fire Chiefs' Association conducted a two-day Volunteer Leadership workshop attended by 35 students.
- Staff members continued assisting the Connecticut Fallen Firefighters Memorial Committee in fundraising efforts and construction support. Final plans are in place for dedication of the memorial to be held on August 18, 2002.

- Delivered three successful “Introduction to the Fire Service” summer training camps for youth 14-18 years of age.
- A total of 5,981 dormitory room reservations were handled during the year, a 47% increase.
- Provided ongoing assistance to the Joint Council of Connecticut Fire Service Organizations including coordination of the 4th Annual Fire Service Day at the Capitol.
- Maintained the agency’s homepage presence on the Internet. During the fiscal year our web site experienced 69,523 user sessions with a total of 526,673 hits on the entire site. With the assistance of the Department of Information Technology (DOIT) redesigned the agency’s web portal to serve as a model for other state agencies.
- Continued use of the agency’s electronic mail list service whereby providing immediate dissemination of information on a wide range of topics to subscribers. A total of 570 messages were transmitted during the reporting period, a 33% increase over the previous year.
- Increased the dissemination of press releases to the media most specifically in areas of public fire and life safety education.
- Agency staff in support of the Department of Public Safety’s Protective Services Division has initiated planning for the organization of a state Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) team.
- Full time staff completed state mandated diversity training. Staff attorneys with the State Ethics Commission presented four “Code of Ethics” overview sessions for full and part-time staff members.
- With the assistance of the Federal Emergency Management Agency presented four Assistance to Firefighters Grant workshop programs throughout the state with 292 participants.
- Continued in an advocacy role on fire service issues to members of the Connecticut General Assembly and United States Congress.
- Participated on the Connecticut State Firefighters’ Association Education Committee that completed a master plan study of the Regional Fire Training Schools.
- Completed Administrative Office and Training Tower Improvements at the Connecticut Fire Academy.
- Secured funding for the purchase of five mobile Foam Trailers to be resourced to local fire departments on a regional response basis.
- Coordinated the State Emergency Response Commission’s Annual Conferences held in Norwich and Southbury with 126 participants.
- Participated on Postal Service planning committee for hosting a United We Stand event honoring Connecticut’s emergency responders. Approximately 900 people attended the event held in Hartford on March 11, 2002.
- Pilot tested a cable television initiative with Cox Communications with less than satisfactory results.
- The Department of Administrative Services initiated a comprehensive agency organizational assessment.
- Provided administrative support to the statewide fire service organizations in their efforts to raise \$1 million in support of the New York Firefighters Disaster Relief Fund.

Certification Division

Director Frederick W. Piechota, Jr. administers the Certification Division. The division is responsible for the development and administration of a voluntary fire service testing and certification program. All examinations are based upon the Standards for Fire Service Professional Qualifications developed by the National Fire Protection Association and adopted as agency regulations. The certification system continues to be held in high regard nationally as is evidenced by the accreditation granted by the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications (NBFSPQ) and the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC). The security and integrity of the system remains a high priority as a majority of Connecticut’s fire departments have mandated certification through contractual or organizational requirements making it crucial the system be able to withstand legal challenge.

Fiscal Year 2002 saw a total of 3,277 personnel tested within the 14 levels of professional competency offered with an 86 percent passing rate realized. A total of 1,436 persons completed all requirements for a given certification level. Individuals certified by the Commission are eligible to voluntarily apply for national certification offered by our accrediting boards.

In cooperation with the Department of Public Safety's Office of Education and Data Management the agency continues to delegate national certification under its accreditation for the level of Fire Inspector.

Accomplishments during the year include completion of a major revision to the Regulation that governs certification. Significant progress has been made on the completion and initiation of a refined Testing in Context Examination process designed to closely examine Job Performance Requirements. A first of its kind examination proctor training program was refined and continues to be offered.

The division continues to work closely with the Department of Administrative Services and fire service to modify as necessary and deliver examinations that comply with the American's with Disabilities Act.

Continued to conduct numerous local examination question review sessions that were designed to ensure test item banks met the need of and were appropriate for Connecticut. The division assisted a number of departments with the development and administration of local promotional and entry level examinations through the use of its test item database.

Fiscal Services Division

The Fiscal Services Division is led by Director Peter F. O'Neil. The division is responsible for all of the Commission's accounting, budgeting, personnel, purchasing, payroll, contracting and physical plant functions at the Connecticut Fire Academy. The Commission also uses a contracted custodial and food service company for its customers and staff.

The division has recently begun the initial stages of transferring many of its administrative procedures over to the statewide CORE-CT system. Beginning, July 1, 2003, agency fiscal activities and other organizational duties will begin utilizing this system. The agency's human resource functions will commence on October 1.

The division administers payments to volunteer fire departments for emergency responses to limited access highways. The annual appropriation allows for \$100 payments to be made to local volunteer fire departments, which respond to emergencies on limited access highways. The most recent appropriation, as well as a transfer of \$34,000 in allotted funding, assisted in expediting over 2,740 payments this past fiscal year an increase of 240 payments.

Cooperation and progress continues with the agency's recycling program. Recycled totals for the past year are as follows: newspaper 1.3 tons; bottles and cans 1,200 pounds; cardboard 3.4 tons and white office paper 7.7 tons.

A substantial amount of publishing continues to be accomplished by the agency. Materials range from student workbooks and manuals to class flyers and course catalogs. Our contracted audio-visual library remains productive, loaning to local fire departments in excess of 1,000 training/education slides, videotapes and multi-media programs.

The Commission's database has allowed this division to increase its effort in collecting past due accounts. Total accounts receivable over 120 days continues to be less than one percent outstanding.

Training Division

The Training Division is led by Director Adam D. Piskura. The division is responsible for the development and delivery of Fire, Hazardous Materials/OSHA Compliance, Emergency Medical Services and public education safety training programs.

The division is comprised of both full-time staff and 150 part-time adjunct instructors all dedicated to keeping Connecticut's firefighters well trained and safe through the delivery of quality training and educational programs. Working primarily under the banner of the Connecticut Fire Academy, instruction is available in both cognitive and psychomotor development. During the year, the division conducted 310 training programs reaching 12,117 students resulting in 100,612 contact hours. The Annual June Fire School enrollment was 774 individuals participating in 46 unique training programs.

Curriculum development projects included pilot testing a lesson plan for hybrid vehicle emergencies. A 16-hour rescue course titled Breaching and Breaking Concrete has been completed and pilot tested. Other projects included revision of the Hazardous Materials Awareness and Operational training programs offered to all certified fire service instructors statewide.

The Academy's Bookstore completed its first year of service. It has enhanced our customer service efforts in providing full service training and educational resources to local departments and individuals. It also provides course support materials to our internal customers charged with program delivery.

Over 900 Candidate Physical Ability Tests (CPAT) for firefighter applicants have been administered at the Academy's Meriden facility. The pass rate for CPAT is currently 56 percent. Numerous fire departments and municipalities throughout Connecticut have adopted this test to identify firefighter candidates with the greatest ability for a successful career.

Federal grant assistance was pursued and received in the following areas:

Hazardous Materials Training	\$ 130,000.00
Emergency Response to Terrorism Training	\$ 80,000.00
Fire Officer Programs	\$ 25,000.00

Due to the September 11 terrorist attacks the focus of our state's emergency responders has changed to dealing with unknown chemical and biological agents such as anthrax. The Academy offered 50 Emergency Response to Hazardous Material Incidents (40-Hour) programs allowing the responders to safely respond to and investigate/mitigate these types of incidents.

Federal funding is used to subsidize or offer tuition free learning opportunities for Connecticut's firefighters and emergency responders.

Membership

Members of the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control are appointed by the Governor and represent statewide fire service organizations. The following commissioners served during the year: Chairman Peter Carozza, Jr., Waterbury; Vice Chairman Kevin J. Kowalski, Simsbury;

Secretary Edward F. Haber, Berlin; Clifford C. Brammer, Jr., Thomaston; Edward B. Gomeau, Greenwich; William Johnson, West Haven; Wayne Maheu, Middletown; William H. McDonald, Ph.D., Farmington; Daniel Milewski, Stratford; Andy Ouellette, Broad Brook; Richard H. Nicol, Middlebury; Charles M. Stankye, Jr., Derby; James P. Wilkinson, Milford and John Vendetta, Hartford.