



**ANNUAL REPORT
JULY 2003 - JUNE 2004**



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL

**PETER S. CARROZA, JR., Chairman
Kevin J. Kowalski, Vice Chairman
Jeffrey J. Morrisette, State Fire Administrator**

*Established - 1975 Statutory authority - C.G.S. Sec. 7-323
Central office - Connecticut Fire Academy, 34 Perimeter Road
Windsor Locks, CT 06096
Average number of full-time employees - 20
Recurring operating expenses - \$2,002,847
Capital outlay - \$108,665*

***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 entrusted responsibilities 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).

Public Service

The commissioners and staff are committed to Public Service Excellence. Every effort is made to continually promote and deliver quality agency services.

A trade show display booth was again staffed at several occupationally related state and regional conferences during the year. Agency staff members continued to regularly serve as an expert resource to network television, radio and newsprint media. This has positively impacted and reinforced local public fire and life safety education efforts.

Improvements/Achievements 2003-2004

A conscious effort is made to schedule programs and services within every geographic region of the state. To fairly balance program development and delivery, the competing needs and priorities of both the volunteer and career fire service are considered.

Events/Activities

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 and the Statewide Incident Management Task Force maintaining vital communication links. The Director of Training serves as the Commission's representative to the Department of Public Health's Office of Emergency Medical Services Advisory Board and also serves as the President of the North American Fire Training Directors Association. Agency events and activities included:

- The agency was fortunate to fill two vacant Trainer positions however, experienced a permanent net loss of two positions due to layoffs.
- Continued to Assist the Connecticut Fire Chiefs' Association to implement the Statewide Fire-Rescue Disaster Response Plan. Encouraged local fire department participation through a formal Memorandum of Understanding. To date, 91 municipalities have agreed to participate.
- Additional training was provided for agency staff that may be called to serve as Fire Service Liaisons in the state Office of Emergency Management's Emergency Operations Center (EOC). Staffing was provided for activation of the EOC as a result of an increase in threat level on several occasions and for the Patriot 04 Exercise.
- Provided logistical and staff support to the Department of Public Safety for their annual Advanced Fire Investigation and Vehicle Fire Investigation programs.
- Hosted a specialized rigging class for Urban Search and Rescue (USAR).
- Delivered a specialized training program on Planning and Responding to Terrorist Incidents and Civil Disturbances presented by Area Commander Chris Kerr of the Northern Ireland Fire Brigade with 130 participants representing all sectors of the fire and emergency services community.
- Hosted the second annual Connecticut Firefighters Memorial service that featured the unveiling of 307 inscribed names of firefighters who paid the supreme sacrifice.
- Continued administration of the 800 FIRE LINE program, a national volunteer fire and emergency services recruitment tool. During the fiscal year, 40 calls were received with 20

referred to local fire, EMS, and other emergency response related organizations. Hosted two regional forums on volunteer recruitment and retention.

- Coordinated and delivered three regional Juvenile Firesetting Intervention Training programs highlighting a new assessment tool. There were 93 participants.
- Printed and distributed 10,500 copies of the publication titled “In Connecticut...Parents’ Legal Responsibility When Your Child Sets a Fire”. Printing was done in both English and Spanish.
- Coordinated the delivery of two specialized Incident Command programs for 37 participants.
- Delivered two, five-day “Introduction to the Fire Service” summer training camps for youths 14 to 18 years of age with 76 participants.
- Academy dormitory rooms were occupied an equivalent of 5,876 room nights during the year, a 57% increase over the previous year.
- Continued support to the Joint Council of Connecticut Fire Service Organizations including coordination of the 6th Annual Fire Service Day at the Capitol.
- Continued expansion of and use of the agency’s web site.
- Continued use of the agency’s electronic mail list service providing immediate dissemination of information on a wide range of topics to subscribers. A total of 724 messages were transmitted during the reporting period.
- Continued regular dissemination of press releases to the media most specifically in areas of public fire and life safety education. Several generated in-depth media interviews.
- With the assistance of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), presented four Assistance to Firefighters Grant Workshop programs throughout the state with 136 participants.
- Continued in an advocacy role on fire service issues to members of the Connecticut General Assembly and United States Congress.
- Continued participation on the Connecticut State Firefighters’ Association Education Committee in support of the Regional Fire Training Schools. A Mission Delineation agreement was approved between the Connecticut Fire Academy and the Regional Schools.
- Continued support for the Regional Foam Trailer program. Units were activated several times during the fiscal year and saw action in New Haven, Bridgeport and Shelton.
- Coordinated the delivery of the State Emergency Response Commission’s Annual Conference with 130 participants.
- Completed Burn Building Heat Increase project including computer upgrade and installation of thermal linings.
- Established formal agreement with the University of Connecticut Homeland Security Education Center.
- Disseminated information regarding a pilot program for fuel transfer by towing and recovery operators.
- Provided technical advice and site support for the filming of one episode of Courtroom TV’s “Trace Evidence, The Case Files of Dr. Henry Lee”.
- Provided administrative and financial support for the establishment of the new statewide Honor Guard initiative.

Certification Division

The Certification Division is administered by Director Frederick W. Piechota, Jr. The division is responsible for the development and administration of a voluntary certification and examination system for the fire service of Connecticut. All examinations are based upon the Standards for Fire Service Professional Qualifications that have been developed by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and have been adopted as State of Connecticut Regulation. The Certification System continues to be looked upon in high regard nationally as is evidenced by the national accreditation granted to the Commission by the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications (NBFSPQ) and the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC). Both of these entities have certified that Connecticut's certification process meets the high standards established for national certification. The security and integrity of the System remains a high priority as a number of fire departments have mandated certification through contractual or organizational requirements. It is crucial that the System be able to withstand legal challenge. The division is currently in preparation for a 2004 reaccreditation site visit by the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC).

Fiscal Year 2004 saw a total of 3009 examinations delivered within the 14 levels of certification offered with an 86% passing rate realized. Individuals who completed all requirements for certification are eligible to apply for National Certification under the agency's accreditation.

The division continues to refine practical skills testing to ensure that the testing process accurately reflects the actual performance of fire service personnel. Revision of the examination system continues to closely examine the Job Performance Requirements of the National Standards. Efforts are also underway to more closely integrate the examination process into the actual training delivery system while maintaining the required evaluation separation. The Commission continues to work with a nationally recognized expert to develop computer based simulations to examine the decision making process of Hazardous Materials Technicians.

The Commission continues to support the development of nationally recognized test item banks by providing development team members and serving as the host site for development sessions.

During the reporting period, the division presented 13 training sessions designed to train certified instructors to serve as Practical Skills Examiners. The Commission's program has been recognized as a model across the country.

The division assisted a number of departments with the development and administration of local promotional and entry examinations through the use of the Commission's question database.

Fiscal Services Division

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

This past year, the Fiscal Division has successfully transferred many of its administrative procedures over to CORE-CT, a statewide system that utilizes Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software. CORE-CT is the vehicle used to unify Connecticut's state government's core financial and administrative computer systems including central and agency accounting, purchasing, accounts payable, assets, inventory, payroll, time and attendance, worker's compensation, personnel, and other business systems. The agency's asset management and accounts receivable functions will commence with CORE Phase II during the upcoming year. Some of the immediate benefits of CORE have been: a single integrated system, eliminating multiple data entry; timely and accurate vendor payments; ability to view and update all information on-line in real time, as well as, better reporting and analysis of Human Resource and Payroll information.

The legislation which has allowed for \$100 payments to local volunteer fire departments for authorized emergency responses to limited access highways was repealed by the General Assembly. As a result, the Fiscal Division has suspended administering these payments. A supplemental program was administered this year which allowed for up to \$600 worth of training-related services for previously participating departments.

A substantial amount of publishing continues to be accomplished by this agency. Materials range from student workbooks and manuals to class flyers and the annual Training Catalog/Calendar. The audiovisual library remains productive, loaning in excess of 1,000 training/education films, slides, audio and videotapes annually.

The Commission continues moving forward with its recycling program. Recycled totals for the past year, are as follows: newspaper – 1.25 tons; bottles and cans – 1,200 pounds; cardboard – 3.2 tons and white office paper – 7.25 tons.

The Commission's database is continuing to allow this division to increase its effort in collecting past due accounts. Total account receivables over 120 days continue 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 Suppression, Hazardous Materials/OSHA Compliance, Emergency Medical Services and Public Fire and Life Safety Education training programs.

The division is comprised of full-time staff and 150 part-time adjunct instructors. Each individual is dedicated to keeping Connecticut's firefighters well trained and prepared for safe operations through the delivery of quality training and educational programs. During the year, the division conducted 292 training programs reaching 5,897 students resulting in 140,226 contact hours.

Curriculum development project finalized included Fire Officer II. Fire Service Instructor I revision is nearing pilot testing.

A total of 427 out of 555 candidates successfully passed the agency administered Candidate Physical Ability Test (CPAT) and are available for municipalities to select from.

Provided support to both state and federal Homeland Security training initiatives for first responders for terrorism preparedness, mitigation and recovery.

The Connecticut Fire Academy's Bookstore completed its third year of operation enhancing our customer service efforts in providing multimedia training and educational resources to local fire departments and individual firefighters. It continues to provide curriculum support materials to our internal customers charged with program delivery.

Supplied staff support to the National Fire Academy to act as peer reviewers for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program. Connecticut fire department recipients benefited directly from allocations from this federal program.

It should be noted that as fire service training student enrollments drop nationally, the Connecticut Fire Academy offsets the reduced participation by offering new or enhanced services such as Candidate Physical Ability Test (CPAT), full service bookstore with direct student access; quantitative face piece fit testing and daily technical compliance information regarding Occupational Safety and Health and National Fire Protection Association standards. The current environment of terrorism awareness and preparation has distracted fire department members from traditional suppression oriented classes and redirected them to specialized programs offered at no cost by the federal government and their contractors.

Commissioners

Members of the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control are appointed by the Governor and represent statewide fire service organizations. The following commissioners currently serve: Chairman Peter S. Carozza, Jr., Waterbury; Vice Chairman Kevin J. Kowalski, Simsbury; Secretary Edward F. Haber, Berlin; Clifford C. Brammer, Jr., Thomaston; Edward B. Gomeau, Greenwich; William S. Johnson, Jr., West Haven; John J. Blaschik, Jr., Middletown; Jeffrey A. Cantor, Ph.D., Norwalk; Daniel Milewski, Stratford; Adrian Ouellette, Broad Brook; Richard H. Nicol, Middlebury; Charles M. Stankye, Jr., Derby; James P. Wilkinson, Milford and Richard E. Morris, Niantic.