

**ANNUALREPORT
JULY 1996 - JUNE 1997**

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, Perimeter Road,
Windsor Locks, CT. 06096*

Average number of full-time employees - 22

Recurring operating expenses - 1996-97 - \$1,592,354.

Capital outlay - \$33,691

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

The Commission appoints the State Fire Administrator who oversees the functions of the agency. Jeffrey J. Morrisette has served in this capacity since October, 1992 overseeing four divisions: Public Information, Fiscal Services, Certification and Training.

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

Agency Mission

To prevent or mitigate the effects of fire and disasters, either natural or manmade, 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 an autonomous state agency, within the Department of Public Safety for administrative purposes only. The agency is charged with and has primary responsibility for fire service training, public fire and life safety education and professional/technical certification for fire service members within the state. Conn. Gen. Statutes Title 7; Secs. 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 is constantly sought through the use of comment sheets, surveys and interaction with fire service organizations. In addition, in an effort to promote agency services, a display booth was staffed at five state and regional conferences during the year.

Improvements/Achievements

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

- Provided list of upcoming certification examinations in the notification letters to persons who fail examinations to eliminate the need to call for such information.
- Streamlined the examination application process to allow candidates the ability to submit applications well in advance of the scheduled examination date.
- Streamlined the process for destruction of classified student information by entering into an agreement with a commercial firm.
- Implemented a one-on-one contact with local Juvenile Firesetting Coordinators and Fire Marshals to keep them updated. Assisted the Willimantic Fire Department to secure a federal grant for juvenile firesetter intervention training.
- Became the official International Fire Service Training Association/Fire Protection Publications (IFSTA/FPP) distributor for Connecticut. This new service makes the agency a one-stop-shop for fire service training resources.
- Conducted quarterly safety meetings to maintain compliance with Workers' Compensation Commission Regulations.
- Completed overhaul of training maze using staff labor - estimated savings \$8,850.
- Utilized students, volunteer and inmate labor for various agency projects - estimated savings \$20,000. Subject matter experts volunteered to validate test items - estimated savings \$15,000.
- Received private donations from Hartford Insurance (\$2,283.93) and the South End Volunteer Fire Department (\$10,000).

- Conducted training in the areas of hazardous materials and arson using federal grants.
- Provided curriculum and other resources to regional fire schools. In addition, the Academy was utilized by the Hartford County Regional School to train 3,714 fire service members.
- Established a policy to modify stock training programs to meet customer needs. This results in a net savings to fire departments contracting for courses.

Reducing Waste

The Commission remains a small, efficient, organizationally streamlined agency. Through the use of full time staff serving as facilitators and coordinators, part-time instructors deliver a majority of agency services. The Commission achieved savings through:

- Utilizing State Printing Services for majority of agency printing, binding and mailing needs. This one-stop-shop offers savings of both personnel time and printing expense.
- Utilizing press releases and media contacts to communicate safety concerns, items of interest and to enhance public relations.
- Adopting and modifying the State of North Carolina's Public Fire Educator curriculum. This eliminated the need to fund and develop a new curriculum - estimated savings \$15,000.

Strategic Planning

Divisional goal setting coupled with continual reassessment of the agency's strategic plan continues to guide planning and delivery of services.

Administrative Projects

The State Fire Administrator and staff remain active in state and national committees, boards and organizations to maintain a positive proactive impact upon services. By Connecticut General Statute, the Administrator serves on both the State Emergency Response and Enhanced 911 Commissions thus maintaining a communications link.

Administrative projects completed or ongoing throughout the year include:

- Developed a comprehensive training standard for minors who are members of Junior/Cadet Firefighter Programs. Upon approval by the Department of Labor, this standard will enhance future recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters while maintaining safe training environments.

- The Administrator served as chair of the Emergency Response Task Force charged with recommending improvements to Connecticut Light and Power Company's response to emergency incidents in North Central Connecticut.
- Staff served as a resource to the Legislative Task Force reviewing the agency's payments to Volunteer Fire Companies responding to emergencies on Limited Access Highways.
- Established a presence on the World Wide Web by launching the CT FIRE NET. Within the first eight months over 2,000 people accessed information.
- Provided ongoing assistance to the Joint Council of Connecticut Fire Service Organizations.
- Cooperated with the Department of Transportation to begin planning and design of a large frame aircraft fuel fire scenario expected to be constructed at the Academy.
- A total of 2,622 dormitory room nights were occupied during the fiscal year.
- Revised Recruit Firefighter Training Program by combining both Firefighter Level I and II. This results in a time savings to municipal departments.
- Full and part-time staff participated in staff/instructor development programs totaling in excess of 700 hours. Eight instructors completed three National Fire Academy Train-the-Trainer programs.

Public Education & Information

This division is headed by Director Cynthia Colton-Reichler. A major responsibility of this division continues to focus on providing education and technical assistance in the development of local Juvenile Firesetting (Firehawk) Programs. A multi-disciplinary steering committee was created to make recommendations on the future direction of addressing the juvenile firesetting problem. Additionally, a Business Plan was developed to illustrate the key issues, trends and implications of juvenile firesetting on Connecticut residents. The plan includes proposed strategies to prevent and reduce the number of child set fires. The Public Education Director was appointed chair of a national subcommittee to create a standard on juvenile firesetting.

An administrative guide was developed in a collaborative effort between a local fire department, mental health professionals and the Commission in response to a growing concern for local accountability and liability.

Juvenile Firesetting consultations and or training classes were provided to 13 towns. Additionally, 30 professionals participated in Firehawk Companion Training classes or workshops.

Approximately 190 professionals participated in this division's two annual conferences; Public Fire & Life Safety Educator Conference and Juvenile Firesetting Conference.

For a second year in cooperation with the Coalition, coordinated the bulk purchase and distribution of fire prevention banners. Approximately 100 municipalities participated. In addition, this division provided fire safety resources and information services to citizens, media, fire service personnel, teachers, businesses, state agencies and neighboring states.

Fiscal Services Division

This division is headed by Director Peter F. O'Neil. This division is responsible for the Commission's financial, personnel, purchasing and physical plant functions. The Academy's food service program which began in fiscal year 1996 continues to be run by the Connecticut Culinary Institute.

This division administers payments to volunteer fire companies for emergency responses to limited access highways. A recent deficiency appropriation from the state allowed all backlogged claims to be eliminated.

A significant amount of publishing continues to be produced by this agency. Materials range from student workbooks and manuals, program flyers and the annual Training Calendar. The audiovisual library remains productive by loaning over 1,000 films, slides, audio and video tapes.

The agency's new database is allowing this division to increase its effort to collect past due accounts. Also, a move to the automated personnel and the on-line accounting systems this fall should reduce costs by discounts realized from prompt vendor payments.

A number of significant equipment purchases, with a value in excess of \$700,000, were completed including acquisition of an escape trailer, ladder truck, 1500 GPM pumper and protective clothing. In addition, specifications were drafted by the Training Division staff members for additional equipment expected to be purchased in fiscal year 1998.

Certification Division

This division is headed by Director Frederick W. Piechota, Jr. This division is responsible for the development and administration of a voluntary, statewide, fire service certification and testing program. All examinations are based upon the Standards for Fire Service Professional Qualifications established by the National Fire Protection Association. The Certification System continues to be accredited by the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications. During the year certification to the level of Hazardous Materials Technician received national accreditation. The security and integrity of the system remains a high priority as many fire departments have mandated certification through contractual or organizational requirements.

In fiscal year 1997, 3,757 personnel were tested within the 13 levels of professional competency offered with an 81 percent passing rate realized. This is an increase of 17 percent from the previous year. A total of 1,661 personnel completed all requirements and were certified. Of this total, 869 personnel applied for and were awarded national certification.

A major initiative during the year was the conduct of numerous examination question review sessions designed to ensure that the nationally developed test item banks utilized are appropriate and meet the needs of Connecticut's fire service members. Also, question review sessions were conducted for the review of nine test item banks. A wide cross section of fire service personnel volunteered their time for this task.

This division continued to develop and refine the practical skills examination process. Skills examinations were finalized for the levels of Fire Service Instructor I, Fire Officer I as well as additional examination days for Firefighter levels.

The 11th Annual Certified Instructors' Seminar was held with over 70 instructors in attendance. This program is designed to offer instructors educational methodology refresher training as well as to introduce new ideas and methods which they may use to enhance their presentations.

The Commission continued to execute contract requirements with Performance Training Systems, Inc., which markets this division's certification questions to state and local fire training agencies throughout the United States.

The division assisted a number of departments with the administration of local promotional examinations through the use of its question database.

Training Division

This division is headed by Director Adrian Ouellette. The division is responsible for the development and delivery of fire service, hazardous materials, EMS, and other related emergency services training programs. These programs enable participants to meet OSHA and other regulatory mandates.

In fiscal year 1997, 535 programs were delivered to 9,062 students, resulting in 186,794 student contact hours. This reflects a 42 percent increase in contact hours over last year. An additional 6,848 emergency responders were trained through Train-the-Trainer programs in which local certified instructors trained by the agency delivered programs locally. These programs are funded in part by federal grants through cooperation with the State Emergency Response Commission. The division is also responsible for the agency's Escape Trailer which is designed to aid in teaching children to plan and practice home exit and escape plans. Utilizing our new trailer, 58 municipalities and non-profit organizations were aided and in turn reached a total of 16,045 children. This represents a 150 percent increase over last fiscal year.

Continued development and revision of curriculum including 2-Q Fire Apparatus Training, Fire Service Instructor I, Safety Officer and Pump Operator.

In cooperation with the International Association of Fire Chiefs and First Alert, Inc., Academy staff worked to produce a training video designed to educate emergency responders on response and investigation techniques when responding to carbon monoxide emergencies.

In addition to regularly scheduled training programs, the following special programs were offered:

- 14th Annual June Fire School attended by over 1,000 students.
- 7th Annual Hazardous Materials' Week attended by over 400 students.
- First Annual Fire Officers' Conference attended by over 100 students.
- Line of Duty Death Planning Seminar was offered in cooperation with the State Firemen's Association.
- Annual Fire Officer Weekend at the National Fire Academy attended by 125 students.
- Co-sponsored the 12th Annual Fire Apparatus Driver Safety Rodeo, designed to promote safety.
- Co-sponsored the Annual Trade Region I, New England Training Weekend in Amherst, MA. Of the 175 attendees, approximately 40 percent were from Connecticut.
- Agency staff continued to provide logistical support and resources to dozens of fire departments and outside organizations utilizing the Academy facilities.
- Planned for a Junior Firefighter Summer Camp scheduled for July 1997 as well as the Northeast Regional Rescue Competition to be held in August.

Membership

Members of the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control are appointed by the Governor. The commissioners represent the statewide fire service organizations. The following served as commissioners during the year: Chairman Peter Carozza, Jr., Waterbury; Vice Chairman John Vendetta, Hartford; Secretary Edward F. Haber, Berlin; Jon W. Andresen, Windsor; Robert J. Chatfield, Prospect; Edward B. Gomeau, Stratford; William Johnson, West Haven; Kevin J. Kowalski, Simsbury; Maurice F. Mc Carthy, Jr., Waterbury; Daniel Milewski, Stratford; Peter Mullen, Branford; George J. Munkenbeck, Jr., Waterbury; Richard H. Nicol, Middlebury and Douglas Peabody, Middletown.