



SC Firefighter Mobilization 2007 **ANNUAL REPORT**



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From the State Fire Marshal, John Reich



Prior to the restructuring of the Division of Fire & Life Safety and my appointment as State Fire Marshal in July of 2007, Ron Osborne served faithfully as the acting Chairman for the Firefighter Mobilization Committee. On behalf of

the entire committee and the state's fire service, I wish to thank Ron for his service.

Unprecedented achievements to the firefighter mobilization system were accomplished this year due to the collaborative efforts of many. Legislatively the fire service benefited by the passage of the Volunteer Strategic Assistance Fire Equipment Pilot Program. The legislation established a three-million dollar grant program to volunteer fire departments and provided proviso funding in the amount of \$983,500 to support the state's Urban Search & Rescue Programs. As a result of the V-Safe Program, measurable outcomes have been achieved such as: 25 fire departments have signed mutual aid agreements and are now participating in the firefighter registration system; 25 have joined the firefighter mobilization program; and 10 others are now reporting to the S.C. Fire Incident Reporting System. The most beneficial outcome was 104 departments received funds up to \$30,000 dollars each enabling them to purchase equipment to enhance the safety of firefighters and the citizens they serve.

S.C. LLR Director Adrienne Youmans has demonstrated her support to the S.C. Firefighter Mobilization Committee by supporting the restructuring of the Division of Fire & Life Safety. A new Assistant State Fire Marshal position was approved to coordinate our division's emergency response responsibilities for ESF4 & ESF9. Daniel McManus was hired and serves in this position and heads S.C. Task Force 1. His experience and knowledge in both US&R and emergency response will certainly raise our bar and provide better service to those within the state, as well as our nation. S.C. LLR has also provided extensive financial support for the new US&R / SCFA training facility. Construction is proceeding for a July 2008 opening.

Homeland Security grants have provided critical funding

for our state's fire service in the past year: \$200,000 for US&R, \$100,000 for IMT training, \$300,000 for the state's local fire department radiation / hazmat detectors. In addition, SLED has been amicable in providing de-obligated funds to LLR to purchase a new tractor to tow the Task Force 1 low-boy. Approval has just been received for \$650,000 to complete the state's local fire department hazmat / radiation, all hazard response equipment program. Future Counter Terrorism Coordinating Council meetings in the weeks ahead will determine the state's strategies for protecting our state from the threat of weapons of mass destruction via CBNRE incidents.

In light of these unprecedented achievements, it has also been a year of sorrow. South Carolina has set a new record low in civilian fire fatalities, with only 60 persons lost. However, during the same period we have encountered 11 firefighter line-of-duty deaths. The state's mobilization efforts stepped up to the plate and provided necessary assistance to Charleston in the aftermath of the tragedy. It is up to each one of us to promote training, education and legislation to ensure future incidents like these are eliminated.

"A unified effort by all will enhance our mission of making South Carolina a safer place to live, work and play."

With over 4,100 firefighters and 674 fire stations representing 238 fire departments participating in the Firefighter Mobilization Plan we remain strong, but there remains room for improvement. A concerted effort will be made this year to contact the 10,000 firefighters and 200 fire departments that are not participating in the plan. A unified effort by all will enhance our mission of making South Carolina a safer place to live, work and play.



On the cover: The top two pictures are from the Processional and Memorial Service for the Charleston 9, courtesy of The Post & Courier. The bottom picture was taken on the scene of the Tupperware Warehouse Fire.

Mobilizing For Our Own



Karl Ristow

On June 18, 2007 one of the most tragic events to impact South Carolina's Fire Service occurred in Charleston. The death of nine firefighters from the Charleston Fire Department impacted not only the City of Charleston but nearly every fire department in S.C. Firefighter Mobilization responded immediately to the area and began coordinating fire resources to respond for two specific missions over a seven day period.

The first mission was to mobilize staff cars to support the fallen firefighters' families in transporting them to and from the memorial service. These vehicles were acquired in a little less than two days and aided in comforting the families during this tragic time. In total, 60 staff vehicles from 31 fire departments were tasked and mobilized for this mission. Second, Firefighter Mobilization was tasked with supporting the City of Charleston by back-filling nine fire stations over a three day period to allow Charleston firefighters to attend all nine funerals and obtain counseling for all of its membership. 92 firefighters from 20 fire departments were tasked and mobilized for this mission.

Firefighter Mobilization also coordinated with local and state law enforcement to ensure all resources received the necessary support during this time. To date this is the largest mobilization of statewide fire service resources ever to be successfully accomplished within South Carolina.

6-18-07
Charleston
9

Did you know that...

- SC-TF1 received \$983,000 in non-recurring funds from the 2007 S.C. General Assembly?
- The entire City of Charleston FD was staffed by outside resources during the funerals of the Charleston 9?
- In 2007, S.C. LLR was awarded \$650,000 in State Homeland Security Grant Funds for continued funding of the State Fire Project?
- Firefighter Mobilization has a state-wide talk group on the Palmetto 800 radio system?

Mutual Aid in South Carolina

Mutual aid is an easy concept to understand. When a fire department responds to an incident that requires more resources than it can provide, the request for mutual aid is made. However in our state, there are several different levels of mutual aid response.

First, there is local mutual aid. This can be defined as using in-county resources. An example would be if a fire department in Greenville County requests assistance from another department within the county. This type of request could be made directly from an incident commander to another department or the request could go through a dispatch center. Either way, the assisting resources respond from within the county.

Second, there is county-to-county mutual aid. This usually happens when a county asks any of its neighboring counties for assistance. Neighboring counties are defined as any county that borders the requesting county. These calls are usually made between county emergency management directors.

Finally there is state-wide mutual aid. This may be defined as going beyond county-to-county mutual aid and reaching out to the entire state. This type of mutual aid request goes through the State Warning Point at the S.C. Emergency Management Division. Before the year 2000, there was no plan to accomplish this complex type of fire service mutual aid. As most of you know, the Firefighter Mobilization Plan was created to meet this need. In addition to basic firefighting mutual aid, specialty resources are available through Firefighter Mobilization Plan such as hazardous materials response and decontamination and urban search and rescue. For more details on this plan, please visit the Web site.

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"A Coordinated Fire Service Response"

S.C. Firefighter Mobilization Oversight Committee



Chairman- John Reich (State Fire Marshal)
Vice Chairman- Ron Osborne (S.C. Emergency Management)
Vacant (S.C. Firefighters' Association Executive Director)
Chief Phill Jolley (Pelham-Batesville FD)
Chief Bruce Kline (Lady's Island-St Helena FD)
Chief Tommy McDowell (City of Greenville FD)
Dusty Owens (Emergency Management Association)
Chief Alvin Payne (Myrtle Beach FD)
Chief Karl Ristow (St. John's Island FD)
Paul Watts (S.C. Forestry Commission)
Chief Wendell Wilburn (Beaufort City FD)

ACTIVATION: Tupperware Warehouse Fire

At the request of Williamsburg County, 78 firefighters from 13 fire departments were mobilized and tasked over a 35-hour period to respond to a 160,000-square-foot Tupperware warehouse near Hemingway, S.C. Regional Coordinators Baker and Dangerfield were also tasked to respond as a part of the efforts.

These fire departments participated in this activation:

Clarendon County, Charleston City, Columbia, Conway, Darlington City, Florence, Georgetown City, Hartsville, Midway, Myrtle Beach, North Charleston, Summerville and Sumter.



First Regional Incident Management Team Deployment

Williamsburg County requested assistance from the Pee Dee Regional Incident Management Team (IMT) during the evening hours of December 12, 2007. The Tupperware Warehouse fire had taxed the local command personnel and Chief Timmy Godwin reached out for help. The team was notified then deployed to the scene and worked through the night to assist the county. This activation was the first and only activation of a regional IMT in our state. The IMT program has been in development for several years and last year it was funded through the State Homeland Security Grant Program.



Looking Ahead in 2008 ...

- Develop a Firefighter Mobilization Strategic Plan
- Secure sustained funding for SC-TF1
- Establish credentialing measures for personnel

Firefighter Mobilization currently has **238** registered fire departments and **4,115** registered firefighters. If you have questions about registering, please contact us or visit our Web site today.

www.ffmob.sc.gov