

## **Fire Marshal and Fire Academy July 2009 Activity Report**

- Fire and Life Safety (F&LS) staff represented emergency support functions (ESF) 4 and 9 in the state's annual full-scale exercise. This year's exercise centered on weapons of mass destruction and how our state will respond. Over the two-day period, ESF 4 and 9 received a wide range of challenging requests. In particular, ESF 9 (state search and rescue) was very busy due to several building collapse scenarios. This annual exercise gives state agencies an opportunity to test their emergency response plans. As always, exercises like this show how important it is to be prepared.
- The Division of Fire & Life Safety participated in the S.C. Firefighters' Association Fire Rescue Training Conference in Myrtle Beach. Staff provided assistance in delivering 29 courses/seminars to 1,241 students. A two-day fire camp for children was also provided by the Office of State Fire Marshal (OSFM) Adventure Children's Museum, that included topics on basic fire and burn prevention, escape planning and the importance of having working smoke alarms. Staff also staffed a large educational display within the exhibit hall. The educational conference provided a perfect opportunity to interact with more than 5,000 customers at one location.
- The mission of the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation, 16 Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives, continues to change the culture of the fire service with encouraging others to embrace residential fire sprinkler protection. Upon invitation of the Tega Cay Fire Chief, a presentation on the value of fire sprinklers and the S.C. Fire Sprinkler Incentive Act 357 was delivered to the Tega Cay City Council by the Fire Marshal and Public Fire Education Manager. The OSFM commend the chief and council for being progressive and seeking innovative ways of protecting their firefighters and the community they serve. This presentation is available for delivery to local municipalities by contacting the OSFM.
- Code enforcement and consultant assistance regarding unsafe structures on Huntington Island was provided to Lady's Island/St. Helena Fire Rescue and Beaufort County by the OSFM. A collaborative inspection team comprising the Office of State Engineer, S.C. Parks & Recreation, and the Office of the State Fire Marshal assisted the local authority to abate unsafe conditions due to erosion and loss of emergency accessibility.
- Due to a SLED policy change regarding name-based criminal records checks, the OSFM was involved in numerous meetings and phone conferences on firefighter background checks. The OSFM offered to conduct this service, effective August 3, 2009. New forms and procedures will be posted on the Web site in the near future. The process will eventually be modified to an electronic version, and a system of checks and balances will be implemented to provide an improved method of accountability for registering firefighters.
- A meeting with the S.C. Fire Sprinklers Association, Office of the State Engineer and the OSFM was conducted to establish better communication and procedures regarding the plan review process of state-owned buildings. The system was evaluated and recommendations offered to streamline and increase the efficiency of the process.
- Several S.C. Fire Academy (SCFA) staff members attended the South Carolina / Rhode Island Training Weekend at the National Fire Academy. There were 56 S.C. firefighters at this annual event.
- The OSFM designed and delivered a program to the Russell Jeffcoat Company on the value of residential fire sprinklers. The program designed for realtors focuses on marketing sprinklers as an economic value, as much as a life safety advantage. Weighing the costs vs. benefits, people will soon make the right choice and choose residential fire sprinklers as one of their many options while building a home.
- Extensive site maintenance was conducted this month, including the sanding and painting of four outdoor 10,000-gallon fuel tanks, floor maintenance in all buildings, hazardous material prop modification, and relocation of archival storage within the new on-site LLR storage facility.
- The South Carolina State Fire Marshal's Office acknowledges the importance of educating children about fire prevention and survival, and is committed to revitalizing the "Freddie" Fire Safety Curriculum to help accomplish this effort. Student activity books will be provided in limited quantity to assist local fire departments with the "Freddie" Fire Safety Curriculum implementation

into the schools they serve. Student materials for those schools will be made available to fire departments agreeing to provide the following:

- Coordinate with schools to determine number of students per class and order materials from the Office of State Fire Marshal
- Distribute student workbooks to schools
- Offer assistance with program delivery
- Collect and return curriculum evaluations

Interested departments can contact the OSFM Public Fire Education Manager for more information.

- Due to the concerns of the hazards of light weight building construction, the Office of State Fire Marshal was successful in obtaining a wood product training display. The training prop will help describe the differences in construction materials and the effect those materials have on firefighting tactics and safety. This training will be incorporated into recruit training, Building Construction Principles: Non-combustible and Fire Resistive, Principles of Building Construction: Combustible.
- Twelve persons from the Division accompanied the State Fire Marshal on a tour and educational presentation to the Joseph M. Still Burn Center in Augusta, Ga. This burn center is the largest acute burn center in the nation at 59 beds. When the renovations and expansion program to 75 beds is complete next year, it will be the world's largest burn center. The Firefighter Jeff Chavis Family Support House, named after a South Carolina Firefighter who lost his life in the line of duty, was also visited. The facility is staffed and supported by 80 local churches that provide food and assistance to families over extended periods of time. The opportunity to visit the facility and speak with patients, family and staff helped renew our focus on the mission of fire prevention and public fire education. The OSFM will be supporting the burn facility in outreach programs in the near future. Appreciation is extended to Dr. Mullins and staff for their hospitality and sincere commitment to the prevention and treatment of burn injuries.