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Great Falls Mill Fire



Hemingway Scrap Metal Fire



SC Firefighter Mobilization ANNUAL REPORT



2006

Did you know that...

-FFMob supports the state emergency operations plan under ESF's 4 and 9?

-our state's fire service resources can be deployed out-of-state through an EMAC request?

-all seven FFMob regional coordinators serve with no compensation?

-every county has a mass decontamination unit (trailer or tent) that is available for mutual aid?

-South Carolina is in the process of developing state and regional incident management teams? *See back page*

Mass Decon Tent



From the Acting Chairman, Ron Osborne

As the acting Chairman, I am happy to report that 2006 was a very productive year for the S.C. Firefighter Mobilization Committee. Several initiatives supported by the Committee have been introduced by our state legislature. The first is recurring funding for the Urban Search and Rescue Team (*see more in article below*). Not only has the Firefighter Mobilization Committee provided guidance and assistance, it has been supported by the State Directors of Homeland Security and Emergency Management. We are optimistic that this funding will be a reality for next year.

Another issue that plagues our response efforts is workers' compensation for our volunteers, especially in the medical support area. The Committee continues to support legislation to provide this coverage and has contacted several agencies and organizations to promote this legislation. While this legislation should have been introduced before the end of the session, it was not. Therefore, I am asking that we all make an effort to ensure we have this important legislation introduced in the upcoming session.

On another note, Firefighter Mobilization participated in the state exercise held in June by exercising its notification and tasking procedures. Members of the US&R teams simulated tasking orders and information concerning hurricane damage and their required response.

During the last year, the Committee approved spending more than \$607,000 in grant funds allocated by State Homeland Security to purchase personal protective equipment and other items for our US&R team, SC-TF1. Equipment and personal protective equipment expenditures totaled \$170,000, and \$212,000 was spent on team training. Additionally, \$225,000 was approved and expended to purchase several vehicles, including a new tractor/trailer combination and a service truck.

During 2006, the Committee accomplished a great deal; however, as with all good things, hard work and persistence must be maintained to achieve our mutual goals. I ask that each of you continue to support the mission and goals of the Committee throughout the next year.

US&R Funding a Big Issue



From the first day that the South Carolina Emergency Response Task Force (SC-TF1) was considered "operational ready," the need for a sustained funding source has been a top priority. In the spring of 2006, the S.C. House of Representatives approved giving the team a funding source, but when the proposal was sent to the Senate, it was defeated. Currently the team is funded within the S.C. Firefighter Mobilization (FFMob) budget. The FFMob budget was established by legislative proviso that requires SC LLR, Division of Fire and Life Safety to spend \$165,000 annually on FFMob. As you can imagine, the costs of operating a state-of-the-art US&R Task Force are great, and the FFMob budget cannot sustain the team long term. SC-TF1 will be aggressively pursuing a sustained annual budget of approximately \$950,000 from the 2007 General Assembly. This budget proposal includes several full-time staff positions, equipment maintenance costs, training, and operational readiness exercises. It also includes some monies to help support the regional US&R teams. Please help the team by contacting your local state legislators and communicating to them how important a funding source is to the sustainability of this elite team. —

Federal Credentialing

The National Fire Service Responder Credentialing System (NFSRCS) was created in 2004 in response to the growing need to respond qualified fire service professionals to national incidents. The system identifies individuals requested to respond to a federalized incident, provides access control, confirms an individual's qualifications, and needs to function within existing State systems. Eligibility requires the person to be an active member of a participating department, must be at least 18 years old, certified as meeting at least one of the competency standards (NFPA, IFSAC, Pro Board), and must meet a medical and fitness standard (NFPA 1568) annually. Currently, the National Capitol Region is using the proposed model as a pilot program and it has had success with it. So what does this mean for S.C.? First, S.C. responders should keep aware of the NFSRCS's progression and continue to seek credentials as it could have an impact on their ability to respond to federal incidents. The system is currently voluntary, and it is not clear whether it will be mandated for federal responses. Secondly, The S.C. Mobilization Plan does require first responders to have completed certain training requirements in order to deploy in S.C. First responders may already meet many of the federal requirements should they have IFSAC, Pro Board or OSHA credentials. Finally, there seems to be a growing trend within the fire service career field to become credentialed through increased professional development. The fire service should pay close attention to this and continue its work towards a more proactive professional development system. Credentialing is certainly where we are headed as a profession as it is all part of providing an adequate response to the customer. If you wish to find out more information about the NFSRCS, go to www.usfa.dhs.gov/downloads/pdf/nfa/bov/credentialing.pdf.

Three Activations in 2006

Last year was a busy year for FFMob. In between all the planning and preparation for what we were told was going to be a busy hurricane season, we responded to three mobilization activations. The first came on March 19 as a result of a large scrap metal fire near Nucor Steel outside Florence, SC. The locals had been working all day to contain and extinguish the fire, and the manpower pool was running out. They turned to SC FFMob for help. As a result, FFMob tasked 25 firefighters from five different fire departments. FFMob Regional Coordinators John Baker and Chuck Black also responded as part of the activation. The fire was contained and nearly extinguished by the next morning. The next request for assistance came on June 6 from Chester County. Chester County personnel had been battling a large mill fire in Great Falls, SC for many hours. Being that Chester County is rural county with a volunteer fire service, the need for additional manpower and apparatus was great. Over an eight-day period, FFMob tasked 90 firefighters from eight different fire departments to assist Chester County. Regional Coordinator Skip Hannon served as the mobilization point of contact at the scene for the entire activation. We let him go home at night to sleep. The last call for help came on September 13. As this call came in, it sounded like someone played a recording of the Darlington County request. Williamsburg County was fighting a large fire at Don's Scrap Metal yard in Hemingway, S.C. Once again, the local manpower pool was shrinking. FFMob tasked 25 firefighters (two of which were command support personnel) from four fire departments to respond. The first mobilized units arrived on scene within two and a half hours, which we think is a very good response time. Regional Coordinator John Baker responded once again to assist the locals.

As a result of these three activations, our organization gained valuable experience that cannot be obtained by participating in an exercise or training event. After every activation, FFMob completed an after-action report that included a lessons learned portion. We will continue in the learning process, always looking for better and more efficient ways to serve our state.



Great Falls Mill Fire



Great Falls Mill Fire



Scrap Metal Fire, Hemingway, SC

Adequate Response?

By Chief Karl Ristow, St. Johns Island FD

Emergency service organizations have contemplated and discussed for years what it means for their organizations to have an adequate response. Subjectively they have validated their own time for response based on the perceived success and from the lack of complaints from the customer. As there are no laws requiring how fast an emergency service organization or entity responds to calls for help, the next avenue for the fire service is through the use of national consensus standards. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has issued such standards within the past five years and applies only to volunteer and career fire departments, not regional response forces.

Regional response forces are emergency response organizations that can combine multiple emergency disciplines to provide service to areas that need assistance. Through regionalization, smaller, less capable jurisdictions can obtain the necessary assistance during large-scale events that exceed their capabilities. Regionalization is also cost effective as no one jurisdiction has to incur the cost for a specific response team. The down side of regional response is that it can take an extended period of time before enough resources are in the area to affect services. The way to compensate for this delay is education and planning.

Elected and appointed officials are responsible for public safety in their jurisdictions. These officials should receive the

necessary technical advice from emergency service organizations concerning what is an adequate response for the citizens they serve. Additionally, our elected and appointed officials must be made aware of what the next step is for acquiring the necessary resources once theirs are depleted and how long it will take to get those resources into their communities should the call be made. By understanding these timelines, our elected and appointed officials can make informed decisions concerning the preparation of their communities and the funding of contingency measures.

S.C. Task Force One (SC-TF1) is a contingency response force that is regionally based within South Carolina for the purpose of providing Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) operations. US&R is considered a "multi-hazard" discipline, as it may be needed for a variety of emergencies or disasters, including earthquakes, hurricanes, typhoons, storms and tornadoes, floods, dam failures, technological accidents, terrorist activities, and hazardous materials releases. Once called, it will take approximately four hours for this force to spin up the necessary resources and respond to an event. Once SC-TF1 has arrived, it will take approximately another two hours before sustained rescue operations can begin. Other teams from outside of S.C. can take an additional 12-36 hours before they will be on the ground and ready work. Finally, Federal US&R teams are approximately 96 hours out should they be requested. Cont. page 4

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Mobilizing South Carolina's Fire Service

Chairman- Vacant (State Fire Marshal)
Vice Chairman- Ron Osborne (S.C. Emergency Management)
Jim Bowie (S.C. Firefighters' Association)
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)

Adequate Response continued from page 3

SC-TF1 was developed through Homeland Security grant funding and now needs to obtain local state funding to ensure its operability. If SC-TF1 is not funded, our elected and appointed officials need to understand that it will affect the ability to provide an adequate response for all South Carolinians as local responders do not have these capabilities. Additionally, US&R forces will change from a four to six hour response to a 12-36 hour response or longer. How will S.C.'s elected and appointed officials define an adequate response? They probably will not without our emergency service leaders providing them with the necessary information to make an informed decision. There is much education and planning that needs to take place; are you ready?

*Firefighter Mobilization currently has **206** registered fire departments and **3,774** registered firefighters. If you have questions about registering, please contact us or visit our Web site today.*

South Carolina Incident Management Teams

South Carolina is in the process of developing several incident management teams (IMT) to serve our state. The teams are typed based on the FEMA resource typing definitions for IMTs. The state will have one type II IMT based at the S.C. Forestry Commission. There will be four type III IMTs located at Anderson City Fire Department, Aiken County Sheriff's Office, Summerville Fire Department, and Florence County Emergency Management. The type II IMT will not directly manage the type III teams, but it will assist with training and writing of standard operating procedures. The IMT concept is based on supporting the local incident command system by providing trained personnel to staff NIMS-required positions during large incidents.

New Web site Unveiled

The brand new Web site for Firefighter Mobilization has been unveiled. This new site is designed to be more user-friendly and to provide more detailed information about FFMob. The page includes several key items such as, how to register, a regional map, a list of the FFMob Committee members, mass decontamination resources available, and incident command system forms. We also included a news portion so you can keep up with the latest FFMob activities. The page will be updated frequently so please visit on a regular basis and provide feedback.

www.ffmob.sc.gov



Looking Ahead ...

- Develop long-term strategic plan
- Secure funding source for S.C. Task Force 1
- Educate the state's fire service about FFMob
- Pursue resource typing based on FEMA standards

