



**ANNUAL REPORT  
JULY 2007 - JUNE 2008**



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT**

**COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL**

**PETER S. CAROZZA, JR., Chairman  
Kevin J. Kowalski, Vice Chairman  
Jeffrey J. Morrissette, State Fire Administrator**

*Established - 1975 Statutory authority - Conn. Gen. Statutes. Sec. 7-323*

*Central Office - Connecticut Fire Academy, 34 Perimeter Road*

*Windsor Locks, CT 06096*

*Average number of full-time employees - 17*

*Recurring operating expenses - \$2,394,009.85*

*Capital outlay - \$328,949.25*

***Organization structure - Office of State Fire Administration, Training Division and Certification Division***

The Commission proudly presents the following summary of activities for Fiscal Year 2008

**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 Authority**

The Commission is charged with and has primary responsibility for training, public fire and life safety education and professional competency certification for members of Connecticut's fire service. Conn. Gen. Statutes Sec. 7-323(j) - 7-323(s).

**Public Service**

In an effort to provide quality service to its customers, the agency continued working on various training and support initiatives in partnership with several state agencies including the Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Public Safety and the State Emergency Response Commission. A conscious effort is made to schedule programs and services within every geographic region of the state to ensure the needs of both the career and volunteer fire service are met.

The State Fire Administrator and staff members actively participate on state and national committees, boards and organizations in an effort to maintain a positive, proactive impact upon agency services. By Connecticut General Statutes, the Administrator serves on both the State Emergency Response and Enhanced 911 Commissions in addition to the Emergency Management and Homeland Security Coordinating Council and the Statewide Highway Incident Management Task Force. The Administrator also serves as the Executive Board Chairman for the International Fire Service Training Association. Agency staff and Adjunct Instructors represent the Commission on the Department of Public Health's Office of Emergency Medical Services Advisory Board and various committees and working groups established by the Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, Connecticut Fire Department Instructors Association, International Association of Fire Chiefs and the North American Fire Training Directors Association.

Employees receiving special recognition this year from the Connecticut Fire Department Instructors Association included Adjunct Instructor Frederica Weeks who was awarded the Harry Kelly Award and Jeffrey Morrissette recipient of the Richard P. Sylvia Instructor of the Year Award.

### **Improvements/Achievements 2007-08**

The following accomplishments suggest the wide variety of activities carried out by the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control:

- Continued to provide assistance to the Department of Public Safety in support of their Geographical Area Courthouse Bomb Threat Protocol serving as a secondary point of contact for the notification of local fire departments with threats within their jurisdiction.
- A total of 174 fire officers attended Connecticut Fire Officer's Weekend at the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland. Students successfully participated in one of six classes resulting in 2,784 contact hours at the nation's premiere fire education institution.
- Hosted the 5<sup>th</sup> annual Connecticut Firefighters Memorial Service. Three fire service personnel were added to the Memorial Honor Roll two as a result of line-of-duty deaths that occurred since the previous year's Service – Joseph S. Pagano, Jr. (Middletown - 11/3/2006) and John F. Keane (Waterbury - 5/22/07). The third name added was that of a historic line of duty death from 1899.
- Continued administration of the 800 FIRE LINE program, a national volunteer fire and emergency services recruitment tool. During the fiscal year, 19 calls were received with only one referred to local fire, EMS, and other emergency response related organizations.
- With the support of federal Homeland Security funding, procured three new foam trailer units that were placed into service and hosted by the Danbury, Willington and Winsted communities. Three deployments of Foam Trailers occurred during the fiscal year.
- Two Introduction to the Fire Service programs for youth 14 to 18 years of age promoting the fire service as an occupation and/or avocation within a camp like setting was delivered to 95 students. Evidence of the program's success is the retention of students as full-fledged firefighters once they attain the age of 18.

- Continued offering of the Fire Officer Seminar Series headlined by national speakers presenting on a variety of contemporary topics. Seven, day-long sessions were held with 539 students resulting in 4,312 contact hours.
- Academy dormitory rooms were occupied by students an equivalent of 6,842 room nights during the year, a 6% decrease from the previous fiscal year.
- Continued support to the Joint Council of Connecticut Fire Service Organizations including coordination of the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Fire Service Day at the Capitol.
- The agency's electronic mail list service continued to provide immediate dissemination of contemporary information to subscribers. Communications were reduced to a single daily message however multiple messages are typically combined. A total of 230 messages were transmitted during the fiscal year on well over 1,000 items of public safety interest.
- Continued regular dissemination of press releases to the news media, most specifically, in areas of public fire and life safety education. Staff provided radio interviews and commentary on issues regarding holiday fire safety, juvenile firesetter intervention, volunteer recruitment and retention, winter home fire safety and other contemporary issues.
- Our Public Life Safety efforts have produced 26 presentations of the Kids Fire Safety House reaching 3,955 students. Flashy the Fire Dog has delivered his fire safety message three times.
- Continued in an advocacy role regarding fire service issues to members of the Connecticut General Assembly and United States Congress.
- Actively participated on the Connecticut State Firefighters' Association Education Committee in support of the Regional Fire Training Schools. Capital Bond funds were authorized for the Hartford County Regional Fire School Expansion. Additional Bond funds were being requested during the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of FY09 for projects in Burrville and Fairfield. It is anticipated that funding for the acquisition of land for schools in Beacon Falls and Windham will be sought in the second or third quarter.
- Continued support to the Statewide Honor Guard initiative. This group of volunteers provides direct support to local fire departments. Hosted a week long National Honor Guard Academy with 35 participants from throughout the United States.
- In lieu of an annual State Emergency Response Commission (SERC) conference the Commission joined with the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) and the Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security and presented an update to over 300 municipalities on Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know at CCM's Emergency Management Symposium.

### **Certification Division**

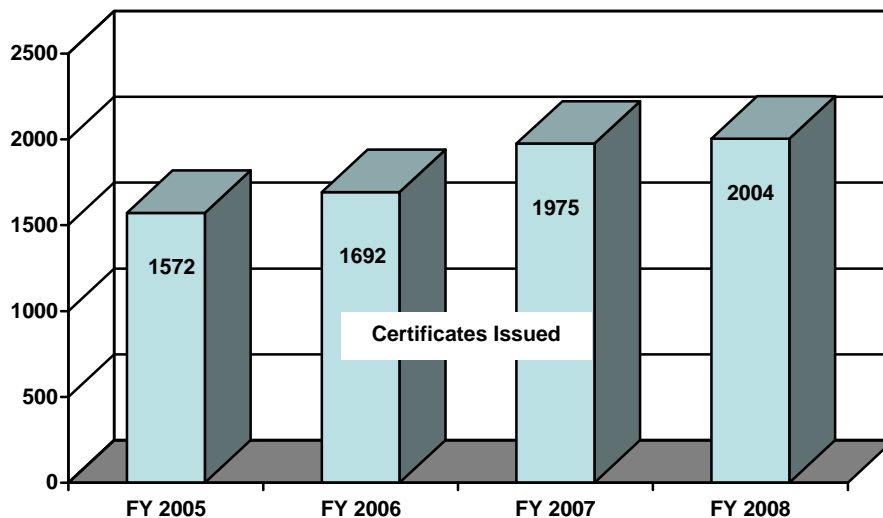
Director Thomas McGowan is responsible for the state-wide coordination of certification and assessment services. His leadership role focuses on using assessment methodologies to ensure fire service personnel accountability, competency and achievement thereby, providing analytical information to enhance the Connecticut fire service. The focus of this division is to assure customer orientation, quality and competence for the entire Connecticut fire service community.

Within the division there are two highly dedicated full time staff members and 35 adjunct examiners responsible for the development and administration of fair and consistent

examinations based on National Professional Qualification Standards. As independent accreditation entities, the National Board of Fire Service Professional Qualifications (ProBoard) and the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) have accredited the Commission for having met the high standards necessary for such recognition. This past year the ProBoard reaccredited the Commission for an additional five years based on excellence in service and commitment to the fire service.

There is a steady increase in the number of fire service personnel who voluntarily become certified within the 21 competency levels offered by the Commission. Career tracking, local fire department and community demand for highly trained, qualified, and certified personnel, leadership opportunities, and assurance that firefighters are trained and certified in specialty operations are just a few reasons for the continual professional qualification offered to the state's fire service personnel by the Certification division.

*Figure 1 - Total Number of Certificates Issued Over the Past Four Fiscal Years*



Several goals were accomplished by the division. One was the development of a dynamic 100-page dual-function reference document designed and developed to be used within the office and field to assist in the decision making process. Implemented in January of 2008, this resource offers the division, staff and customer a fair and consistent written policy and procedure instrument that has reduced disparity and streamlined day-to-day decisions and operations.

A second goal was to build a more collaborative working relationship with the Training division. This was accomplished by meeting with our colleagues to assimilate and balance each of our needs to better serve the customer. The relationship between the two divisions has enabled a closer look at each other's strengths and identified opportunities to develop cohesive models that ultimately serve the best interest of the fire service community.

Finally, the Certification division began a research project to determine the feasibility of facilities as they relate to supporting the certification process. This report outlined the facts pertaining to the adequacy of local training facilities on the certification process. The areas of

concern included the safety, training, and certification of the firefighter in Connecticut. It also identified related areas of effective budgetary needs and efficiency in the overall certification process for the Commission. Several outcomes from the report will be analyzed to determine if subsequent appropriate sites might be used to serve the firefighter's certification needs.

### **Office of State Fire Administration**

This Office provides fiscal and administrative support to the agency and Connecticut's fire service. With limited staffing we continue to rely upon numerous contracted services, including custodial, food service, information technology and instructional/consulting support.

This Office administered a legislated \$200,000 Supplemental Grant Program to 160 eligible volunteer fire companies who had previously benefited from the Limited Access Highway Reimbursement Program.

Funding totaling \$819,122 was disbursed to the nine independent Regional Fire Schools through the Connecticut State Firefighters' Association. This represents an approximate 22% increase or \$182,640 legislative allocation.

Program administration was also provided in support of a new initiative to provide reimbursement to municipalities or fire departments for 50% the cost of entry level training of their personnel that achieve certification. Approximately \$400,000 was expended in the first year of this important workforce development program.

The Office continued to provide consulting services to communities regarding Juvenile Firesetter Intervention. More than a dozen juvenile firesetter referrals were handled through the Commission. We are thankful for the support offered by local firesetter programs that accept out of town or district referrals. The Program Coordinator has presented informational programs throughout the state including Quinnipiac College and the University of New Haven Dr. Henry Lee Institute of Forensic Science. We have also been meeting with the Department of Children and Families, mental health practitioners and court officials to build a coalition to address juvenile firesetting issues that face cities and towns throughout the state. Work continued on revising the Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Specialist curriculum to meet the current National Fire Protection Association Standards.

On a legislative front, Commissioners and staff provided technical assistance to members of the General Assembly in support of several legislative proposals.

Federal grant funding in support of two durational State Fire Rescue Disaster Response Plan Coordinator positions was exhausted. Responsibilities included a revision of the Statewide Fire Rescue Disaster Response Plan ensuring compliance with the National Incident Management System. This updated Plan is expected to be adopted by early Fall. Coordinators also provided technical assistance and support to Regional and County Fire Coordinators, assisted in fire service equipment typing as well as updated procedures for the Fire Liaison position at the state Emergency Operations Center. With recent legislation, fire departments automatically participate in the Statewide Fire Plan unless they formally opt-out.

## **Training Division**

The Training Division, better known as the Connecticut Fire Academy, is led by Director, Adam D. Piskura assisted by nine dedicated full time staff and 200 part time adjunct instructors. Combined, these individuals develop curriculum and deliver diverse classes from the comprehensive entry level Recruit Firefighter Training program to Fire Officer level courses with collegiate transfer credit as well as technical specialty programs. With our nation's focus upon domestic preparedness, we work very closely with the Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security and other state agencies to plan and prepare our first responder workforces for contemporary situations.

During the year, the division offered 623 training programs reaching 11,235 students resulting in 230,232 contact hours. This represents a slight decrease in deliveries (84) with (1,315) fewer students and a consequent minor decrease in student contact hours (9,926). A contributing reason for the decrease is the change to National Incident Management System (NIMS) training from direct delivery to the non-traditional method of online distance learning. Our most visible on-campus event during the fiscal year was the annual June Fire School. This year 51 classes were offered over a five day period garnering 1,010 students. This was our largest gathering for the June Fire School since 1996.

During the reporting period, the Connecticut Fire Academy assisted the Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security with Citizens Emergency Response Team (CERT) training and education, and a Canine Search and Rescue program for the Urban Search and Rescue Team. We continue to provide technical assistance to the Office of State Fire Marshal in support of their Advanced Arson Investigation and Advanced Vehicle Fire training programs. A new initiative of offering Hazardous Materials commodity specific seminars was commenced similar to our popular fire seminar series.

We currently broker a Leadership Development program supplying a skilled facilitator to administer and interpret online survey instruments then lead discussions of specific recommendations for personal and organizational development. This service has expanded into 23 contacts within 8 fire departments.

The Recruit Firefighter program underwent significant retooling moving from a 10-week program to a 14-week program at the request of the Career Fire Chiefs Association. The primary reason for the additional time is to allow sufficient rotational practice for each student to ensure their skill mastery.

Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) Quantitative Face Piece Fit Testing continues to be a popular service offered to fire departments, law enforcement agencies, state agencies and private industry. A total of 995 tests were administered to 30 different organizations ensuring compliance with Code of Federal Regulations 1910.134.

The Candidate Physical Ability Test (CPAT) process changed as the result of a State of Texas court case. The Academy processed 1,042 registrations with 841 candidates testing

resulting in 785 passing, 56 failing. The increased pass rate of 93% is attributed to the new testing process that yields three attempts to complete the rigorous challenge course.

The Connecticut Fire Academy's Bookstore is enjoying seven years of supplying books and study materials to instructors, students, fire department promotional candidates, chief officers and family members. Bookstore sales reached \$314,985, a decrease of \$53,954 over the previous fiscal year. The total quantity of items sold is 13,341. Profits continue to be reinvested into inventory which also helps to reduce the contributory cost of course material.

### **Commissioners**

Members of the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control are appointed by the Governor and represent statewide fire service organizations. Commissioners serving during the fiscal year: Chairman Peter S. Carozza, Jr., Waterbury; Vice Chairman Kevin J. Kowalski, Simsbury; Secretary James P. Wilkinson, Milford; Edward B. Gomeau, Greenwich; David J. Dagon, Mansfield; John J. Blaschik, Jr., Middletown, Matthew Nelson, Glastonbury; Richard H. Nicol, Middlebury; Charles M. Stankye, Jr., Derby; Robert Walsh, Plantsville; John J. Brady, Madison; Megan Murphy, Trumbull; Victor Mitchell, Bristol and Philip K. Schenck, Avon.