

**ANNUAL REPORT
JULY 1995 - JUNE 1996**

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 - 21

Recurring operating expenses - 1995-96 - \$1,518,265.

Capital outlay \$21,887.

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



The Commission on Fire Prevention and Control is 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 Gomeau, Old Saybrook; 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.

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

The Commission on Fire Prevention and Control recognizes its responsibility to provide employment and services based upon affirmative action. The Commission is in full compliance with Conn. Gen. Statutes Sec. 46a-70 to 78. The Commission subscribes to the policy of providing equal employment opportunity and services on the basis of merit and qualifications,

without regard for race, color, religious creed, sex, age, sexual preference, national origin, ancestry, mental retardation or physical disability, including but not limited to blindness, unless it is shown that such disability prevents performance of the work involved or jeopardizes the safety of the public.

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

Since 1975 the Commission has served as the focal point for fire service training and education within the state. Commissioner's represent each of the major statewide fire service organizations as well as the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities, the Community-Technical Colleges and the Office of State Fire Marshal.

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.

Improvements/Achievements

Every effort is 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.

Reducing Waste

The Commission from its inception 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 the agency services. The Commission achieved savings through:

- Establishment of a printing and mailing cost reduction program. Estimated savings - \$5,000.
- Assigning instructors and proctors by geographic region to reduce mileage reimbursement.
- Utilization of various media sources to promote programs and fire safety initiatives.
- Curriculum exchange program with other state fire training programs. Estimated savings - \$20,000.
- Solicitation of grants and donations from federal and private sources. Agency received a \$35,000 grant from ITT Hartford and a \$ 500 grant from the Connecticut FAIR Plan.
- Use of student, volunteer and inmate labor in various agency projects. Estimated savings - \$20,000. Subject matter experts volunteering their time to validate certification test items realized a savings of \$18,000.
- The bulk purchase of public education banners for municipalities. This purchase and distribution program permitted each of the 85 municipalities participating to save approximately \$100.
- Reorganization of Training Division to allow for better planning and management.
- Replacement of an unrepairable hazardous materials' truck with a trailer type unit. Estimated savings - \$15,000.
- Establishment of a cooperative medical monitoring program for instructional staff whose job responsibilities include the use of respirators. Estimated savings - \$1,500.

Strategic Planning

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

In compliance with Public Act 95-83 each of the Commission's regulations were reviewed for effectiveness, obsolescence and compatibility with the provisions of general statutes and federal law.

Administrative Projects

The Commission's operating divisions continue to provide technical assistance in the areas of fire prevention and control to members of the fire service, industry and the general public.

The State Fire Administrator and staff remain active in state and national committees, boards and organizations maintaining a positive impact upon the training and education delivered. By Connecticut General Statutes the Administrator serves on both the State Emergency Response and Enhanced 911 Commissions thus maintaining a communications link with these groups.

Administrative projects completed or ongoing throughout the year include:

- Two members of the staff served on a legislative task force to study funding alternatives for firefighter training. Attempts to implement the recommendations of the task force proved unsuccessful. The issue will be resurrected during the next legislative session.
- Implementation of an academy food service program.
- Provided technical assistance to the Department of Public Safety Division of State Police in support of the World Special Olympics.
- In cooperation with three other New England states applied for and was awarded a Federal Arson Control Act grant for arson training.
- The agency's Apparatus Committee completed specifications for a 1500 GPM pumper and ladder truck. Contracts were awarded for both vehicles with delivery expected during FY 1996-97.
- In cooperation with the Department of Transportation reviewed facility expansion options to include a large frame aircraft live-fire training prop.
- Initiated application process for the American Council on Education/Program on Non-Collegiate Sponsored Instruction review of academy training programs. If successful numerous programs may be eligible for college credit.

Public Education & Information

This division is headed by Director Cynthia Colton-Reichler. The division is responsible for coordinating and supporting Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Programs. In addition, this division

provides fire safety resources and information services to citizens, media, fire service personnel, teachers, businesses, state agencies and neighboring states.

A major responsibility of this division is to provide education and technical assistance in the development of local Firehawk Programs. In 1995, problems with lax accountability and concerns about liability prompted a Firehawk Revision Team to form. A psychologist and grant/technical writer donated time to write policies and procedures, update forms and begin development of an administrative manual.

In 1995, statistics indicated there was a 17.3 percent increase in arson. Approximately 60.6 percent of all arsons were juvenile firesetter related. A one-day Juvenile Firesetter Conference was held drawing 100 participants

In cooperation with local public educators and fire marshals' offices coordinated a banner purchase and publicized a statewide Open House through the media. Fire departments from 85 towns participated.

Assisted WFSB, Channel 3 in producing a Fire Prevention miniseries by providing technical assistance. As part of this program 2,500 pamphlets and fact sheets were distributed statewide.

Nearly 100 public educators participated in a one-day Public Fire and Life Safety Education Conference.

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 at the Connecticut Fire Academy. A food service program, run by the Connecticut Culinary Institute of Farmington, began operation at the Fire Academy in Fiscal Year 1996.

This division administers payments to volunteer fire companies for emergency responses to limited access highways. A Finance Advisory Committee (FAC) transfer from savings in the personal services account totaling \$70,000 allowed the division to eliminate backlogged claims.

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

The acquisition of personal computers and installation of a database for the Commission will allow this agency to increase collection efforts for overdue accounts. It is expected that a move to

an on-line accounting system will reduce time related to these collections as well as vendor payments in the upcoming Fiscal Year.

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 Fiscal Year the agency underwent a successful reaccreditation visit in which the validity of the system was reaffirmed. A new level of certification, that of Aerial Operator 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 making it crucial that the System be able to withstand legal challenge.

In Fiscal Year 1996 a total of 3,094 individual examinations were conducted within the 12 levels of professional competency offered with an 81 percent passing rate realized. This total is an increase of approximately 14 percent from the previous year which had a 78 percent passing rate. The increase in examinations conducted are due in large part to the greater number of individuals participating in the expanded practical skills testing components.

A major initiative during the year was the formalization of the test question development process. This was done to ensure that the examination test items are of the highest quality. Commission and division personnel participated in a number of professional test item development workshops with subject matter experts from across the country. Additionally, each new test item bank was subjected to a local review for relevancy.

The division worked with the Office of the State Fire Administrator to finalize a revised set of “*State of Connecticut Fire Fighter Qualifications and Certification Policy and Procedures Rules and Regulations*” that are designed to incorporate all new Certification System qualifications and regulations. The new regulations received legislative approval during the year.

The Tenth Annual Certified Instructors' Seminar was held with over 75 instructors in attendance.

The division continues to execute its contract with Performance Training Systems, Inc., a private corporation which markets this agency's certification questions to state and local fire training agencies throughout the United States.

Assisted two fire departments with administration of local promotional examinations by permitting the use of the Commission's question database.

Training Division

This division is headed by Director Adrian Ouellette. The division is responsible for the development and delivery of fire, hazardous materials and related emergency services training.

In Fiscal Year 1995-96, 487 programs were delivered to 8,360 students resulting in 131,423 student contact hours. This reflects a 10 percent increase in programs delivered in Fiscal Year 1994-95. Program participants include municipal firefighters, state employees, industry and the military. In addition, the division is responsible for the agency's Escape Trailer which is designed to aid in teaching third grade students to plan for and practice home exit escape plans. This trailer was utilized by 22 municipalities reaching 6,675 children. Through the sale and distribution of lesson plans and student workbooks an additional 4,500 firefighters received training on a local level.

Both agency and outside organization use of the academy and associated services such as lodging increased at a tremendous rate. In addition to local fire department use of the Academy, the facility supported over 24 days of live fire training for state airport firefighting personnel. Also, the Hartford County Regional Fire School trained 3,320 students at the Academy.

Development of new curriculum and the updating of old continued. Curriculum and pilot training programs conducted include Fire Officer I, Chimney Fires, Cold Water Rescue, Commercial Vehicle Fires, Rope Rescue and a revision to Aerial Operator.

Establishment of an Instructor Physical Examination Policy and Program, implementation of a Safety Evacuation Plan for the academy's training grounds, establishment of an SCBA Inspection Policy and the development of specifications and bidding for a new Kids' Fire Safety House, Training Trailers for Industrial and Hazardous Materials' Programs. This equipment is scheduled for delivery during Fiscal Year 1996-97.

An outside agency conducted an evaluation of the academy's Safety Committee with results showing it to be in full compliance with state statutes.

Provided personnel and assistance to WFSB, Channel 3 aiding them in conducting a residential fire safety program televised live.

In addition to the regularly scheduled calendar, in-service and contract programs the highlights of the academy's special programs include:

- 13th Annual June Fire School attended by over 1,400 students.
- 6th Annual Hazardous Materials' Week attended by over 450 students.

- Annual Fire Officers' Weekend at the National Fire Academy attended by 208 students.
- Co-sponsored Annual Trade Region I, New England Fire Officers' Weekend in Amherst, Massachusetts. Greater than 40 percent of the attendees were from Connecticut.
- Provided logistical support and resources to numerous fire departments and organizations utilizing the Connecticut Fire Academy facilities.
- Co-sponsored Annual Fire Apparatus Rodeo.