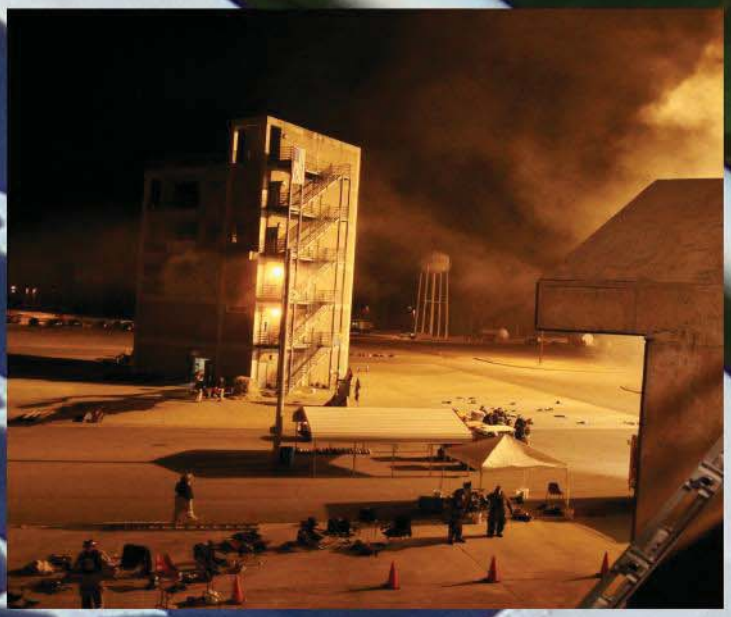
Shaping The Future

Strategic Plan

GEORGIA FIRE SERVICE

2012

GEORGIA
EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT
AGENCY



GA FIRE ACADEMY
E-ONE

PREFACE

By: Chief David Kimbrell,
President, Georgia Association of Fire Chiefs (GAFC)

Considerable changes have occurred in the Fire Service requiring updated strategy to meet timely challenges at the local, state and national levels. Financing the Fire Service has become increasingly competitive with other government delivered services. We have been successful in resolving many of the challenges presented in the previous strategic plan; hence it is time to move forward.

Personal interviews, surveys, group meetings and review of publications that reference trends at the national level were used to gauge both the quality and capacity of the Georgia Fire Service to meet community needs. Our fire service principals including chiefs, other officers, firefighters, EMS responders, investigators, inspectors, specialty team experts including search and rescue, haz-mat, mutual aid and wildland fire personnel were included. Also included were policy setting and support agencies such as the Georgia Public Safety Training Center, Georgia Fire Academy, Georgia Standards and Training Council, Georgia Fire Marshall's Office, Georgia Forestry Commission, and GEMA/Homeland Security. The U.S. Fire Administration and the International Association of Fire Chiefs both provided data that was valuable in our analysis.
The process was completed with an executive strategic planning session held in Athens, GA in June 2011 followed by four specially appointed task force meetings. Fire Service leadership participating in these meetings set the framework for our new strategy by establishing goals and objectives to be shared by all.

The Georgia Fire Service members exhibit a sincere, hard-working motivation to be the best. I challenge you to participate in reaching the goals and objectives set forth in this Georgia Fire Service Strategic Plan for 2011.

Our citizens deserve absolutely no less than our best collective effort!

OVERALL PLAN OBJECTIVE, PLAN STRUCTURE, IMPLEMENTATION OF OBJECTIVES

By: Chief Robert Singletary,
Chairman, Georgia Fire Service
Strategic Plan Steering Committee

Plan Objective
To convey to readers in simple, precise terms those obtainable goals and objectives the Georgia Fire Service has identified to assure statewide delivery of quality Fire, Rescue and EMS services to the citizens of Georgia.

Plan Structure
Advisors recommended we develop a select number of goals and obtainable objectives in support of each goal. Every effort is to be made to accomplish the objectives within a three year period. Leader challenges are included in the Goals Objectives and Leader Challenges section of the plan. The leader challenges attempt to summarize key points or problems inherent in each goal, thus to help leaders of fire service organizations and task forces involved in implementing the plan focus on priority issues. References are made to management systems within the Fire Service that are not considered to be fully effective. The six systems referenced are included in the appendix. During the plan implementation period, every effort is to be made to solve the identified problems. Hopefully, task force members, study groups and advisory personnel will benefit from the Leader Challenges included in the plan.

Implementation
Each stated objective under each goal is to be fully supported. This means identification of one or more individuals, task forces, associations, contractors or private entities to "own" a given objective, develop one or more implementation plans and carry out those plans until the objective is accomplished. The GAFC has agreed to act in a coordinating role to assure maximum attention is given to attain the stated objectives.

Communication
Progress reports including accomplishments, unforeseen barriers to progress and general information are to be developed and reported by internal stakeholders. This is to be done through leader-to-leader meetings, newsletters, web page content and reports at association meetings. State agency directors are to be fully informed of progress as are Unification Partners.

The copy developed under the four management areas above was derived from advice and counsel from leaders and task force members. The advice given was accomplished before, during and after the June, 2011 Athens meeting.

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ACRONYMS

ACCG	Association County Commissioners of Georgia
DCA	Department of Community Affairs
EMA	Emergency Management Association
EMS	Emergency Medical Services
ESF	Emergency Support Function
FMACC	Fire Mutual Aid Coordination Center
GAFC	Georgia Association of Fire Chiefs
GCCMA	Georgia City and County Manager's Association
GEMA/OHS	Georgia Emergency Management-Office of Homeland Security
GFA	Georgia Fire Academy
GFC	Georgia Forestry Commission
GFIRS	Georgia Fire Incident Reporting System
GFSTC	Georgia Firefighters Standards and Training Council
GMA	Georgia Municipal Association
GMAG	Georgia Mutual Aid Group
GPSTC	Georgia Public Safety Training Center
GSAR	Georgia Search and Rescue
GSFA	Georgia State Firefighters Association
Haz-Mat	Hazardous Materials
IAFC	International Association of Fire Chiefs
ICC	International Code Council
NFPA	National Fire Protection Association
NFIRS	National Fire Incident Reporting System
NPQ	National Professional Qualification
O.C.G.A	Official Code of Georgia Annotated
SFMO	State Fire Marshal's Office
VCOS	Volunteer & Combination Officers Section (IAFC)

Georgia Fire Service Planning Conference Keynote

Informative & Inspiring

Dr. Denis Onieal, Superintendent–U.S. National Fire Academy,
Department of Homeland Security, FEMA, U.S. Fire Administration

Application of Guiding Principles - Considerations for Planners

"Associations that don't participate are merely observers of the system(s) that influences their lives"

"Change comes from power; power comes from organization"

"Power is not always what you have, it is what others think you have"

"Leaders trust others even if the risk sometimes seem great"

"Power comes from alliances. An alliance isn't asking someone for help when YOU need it; but providing them with help when THEY need it"

"Don't look at people for what they are, look at them for what they will be"

"Approach problems from the present, not the past"

" The rate of change in our present society and the new generations we work with now and in the future will test your leadership abilities"

STRATEGIC PLAN – GOALS, OBJECTIVES, CHALLENGES

(goals below are not listed in priority order or order of importance)

Fire Marshal Dwayne Garriss GA State Fire Marshal's Office

GOAL 1: STAKEHOLDER RELATIONSHIPS

The achievement of a critical mission of the Fire Service **is to reach every stakeholder with valuable information they will need in their policy making roles** whether at the local, county, state or national levels. To achieve this goal, all communication tools are to be continuously identified and used to educate every elected, appointed or volunteer leader regarding the importance of their support for a vital and effective statewide fire service. This goal area is, in effect, essential to achieving the aspirations of all leaders in assuring that the Georgia Fire Service is the most respected in the United States.

Objective: ID stakeholders at all levels;
Objective: Create two master database files - internal and external;
Objective: Create recommended guidelines for leaders to achieve effective relationships with Georgia legislators and other policy leaders.

LEADER CHALLENGES

Assistant Chief Peki Prince Peachtree City Fire Department

The challenge to secure ongoing support to solve fire service problems throughout the state of Georgia is a complex task. Many fire chiefs who were asked questions about their relationships with stakeholders, whether at the state or local levels, gave positive feedback regarding their influence. In effect, those fire officers indicated they had good relations with their legislators and were effective in securing support from both local and state officials on matters affecting their departments. Conversely, persons representing fire service initiatives, especially at the state capital level, found very little support from members of the fire service when that support was most needed.

The biggest problems identified regarding stakeholder relations were as follows:
1.) communication tools that are necessary for a Fire Chief, or his regional association of fire officers to easily access outreach information for individuals legislators, i.e., phone, fax, e-mail, snail mail, etc. 2.) availability of best procedures to accomplish, face-to-face exchanges with elected representatives at least a few times each year, 3.) clear instructions regarding what is to be done when called upon to interact with General Assembly members during the General Assembly session (January through April), 4.) special newsletters or other written materials designed to keep stakeholders abreast of fire service goals, problems, success stories, etc., 5.) special how-to sessions at conferences devoted to successful methods to work with stakeholders, 6.) submission of articles by fire service personnel published in stakeholder magazines and newsletters (with special emphasis on GMA, ACCG), and newsletters provided to city managers, county council chairs, etc., 7.) a dramatic increase in recognition awards for stakeholders who have gone above and beyond their routine duties to help the fire service, whether at the local, regional, state, or national levels. Accompanying the aforementioned suggestion was an increase in publicity at the local and state levels regarding stakeholder contributions.

The objectives listed above represent only some matters that reflected concerns from fire service leaders. Accurate data development and data management top the list of objectives.

Fire Chief Jimmy Williams Jr. Houston County Fire Department

GOAL 2: TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT OF FIRE SERVICE PERSONNEL

The Fire Service is fully dedicated to the goal of assuring that members of the entire service including, but not limited to, Fire Chiefs and other Fire Officers, Firefighters, EMS Personnel, Investigators, Inspectors, Specialty Teams (HAZ-MAT, & GSAR), Incident Commanders, Mutual Aid and Forestry Personnel and all Educators and Trainers **receive basic training and certification training that is considered equal to or exceeding approved state and national standards**. Immediate attention to practices that have led to past accomplishments and the future role of both the Georgia Fire Academy and local training endeavors are of major concern due to recent budget cuts that have seriously impaired the statewide training programs once available to fire service personnel.

Objective: ID future educational needs of all fire service members;
Objective: Assist Academy to map plans for future operations and staffing;
Objective: Promote Academy offerings more effectively;
Objective: Solve the NPQ testing vs. curriculum content issue;
Objective: Work to reinstitute adjunct instructor program with emphasis on Volunteer and Combination Fire Departments;
Objective: Develop recommendation to bring about certification of training personnel.

LEADER CHALLENGES

Fire Chief Gordon Henderson Rome Fire Dept.

Dr. Onieal, Superintendent of the U.S. Fire Academy in his address at the Athens meeting referenced a Superintendent of Education for Georgia. The question becomes, should the function of the present Academy director and his staff take on the role of quality control agent for all education of Fire Service personnel in the state? As it stands now, the 11 remaining managers and professionals at the Fire Academy have their hands full trying to address the minimal training needs of fire personnel in a state with more than 640 fire jurisdictions. The reduction in force that has taken place at the Academy over the last three years is devastating from the standpoint of providing exemplary leadership from a Fire Academy that has enjoyed the reputation of being one of

the best in the United States. The void created by budget reductions affecting the Academy is being filled at the local fire department level. On the surface, this may seem like a reasonable solution to a major problem be it an interim solution or a permanent measure. As the representatives in Athens pointed out, there is no mandatory certification of instructional personnel in the State of Georgia. For years, recruiting and hiring standards at the Academy produced quality instructional staff, but based upon an antiquated state salary structure, many of those instructors were hired away by local fire departments. Those departments created their own instructional units and many no longer participate in Fire Academy offerings. *It is noted that while NPQ is the accepted testing practice in Georgia, fire service leaders continue to question why those who have been certified in other states where NPQ testing is the norm have to be retested to achieve Georgia certification.*

Butch Beach Deputy Director of Training, GA Public Safety Training Center

The question becomes: will a different operational model be necessary at the Academy if substantial funds are not restored? It is noted that the few management personnel serving at the Academy now have major instructional responsibilities; this to fill instructor voids in the overall program. Interviews indicated that even under the best conditions, management staff has little time to reflect on the future of the Academy or study and revise curriculum to meet the changing needs of end-users especially on non-operational challenges. One important issue emanating from interviews was the importance of not only <u>what</u> to instruct, but <u>how</u> to instruct. It was clear that the most effective and most appreciated instructors had long experience in teaching, while other instructors including personnel at local levels have not been adequately prepared to educate others. Special reference is made to the instruction of present and future fire officers who have to deal with some of the toughest problems facing today's fire departments namely, attraction and retention of personnel, liability issues, community risk management, stakeholder relations, fire code changes, and a series of issues regarding certification of various classes of fire department personnel.

Master planning is necessary to cover the needs of all personnel engaged in fire service activities and the future role of the Academy is a basic issue that needs to be addressed.

It is noted that in O.C.G.A. 25-7 mandates Academy support for the following disciplines: Rescue, EMS, Airport and Fire Investigator. The Academy is not in a position to fulfill all its obligations for the aforementioned, mainly due to budget reductions.

Adjunct instructor funding has been removed from the present Academy budget thus eliminating training in other than Forsyth for volunteer and combination departments. The new burn building utilizes adjunct staff. It is noted that attention needs to be given to the classification of adjunct instructional personnel both at the local and state levels. Distinctions are evident and include compensated and volunteer personnel, in-service personnel (adjuncts who follow institutionally prepared curriculum) and substitutes for professional instructors (adjuncts qualified to write or amend curriculum).

Task force work in this goal area is considered to be a top priority.

Assistant Chief Deron Pat Wilson Johns Creek Fire Department

GOAL 3: EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

The preparedness and response of Fire Service personnel is, in large part, based upon sets of procedures, protocols, personnel deployment guidelines, incident command practices and agreements between jurisdictions on the most effective and efficient methods to handle disasters. **Therefore the entire fire service is to continually dedicate resources to upgrade and improve all formal polices and practices used in training and certification of personnel involved in emergency response work**. This goal also includes master planning and creation of partnerships between communities and levels of government required to address both declared and undeclared disasters.

Objective: Resolve state-wide Fire Service mutual aid management issues through a major reorganization;

Objective: Attain GEMA endorsement for GAFC modifications to present State Fire and Rescue Response Plan;

Objective: Explore Fire Service Mutual Aid Consortium concept and provide recommendations to GAFC;

Objective: Review ESF (Emergency Support Function) system with emphasis on ESF 4 (Fire) ESF 8 (EMS) ESF 9 (S&R) & ESF 10 (Haz-Mat) to ascertain present efficiency and effectiveness of the Georgia Fire Service in each of the ESF designations referenced;

Objective: Identify gaps in present guidelines and protocols within the State Fire and Rescue Response Plan; recommend improvements as necessary and address future distribution of the plan;

Objective: Establish program to educate elected officials regarding their roles in supporting the Emergency Preparedness and Response goal.

LEADER CHALLENGES

Fire Chief Eddie Buckholts Forest Park Fire Department

In the vernacular of total quality management, the question becomes, who exactly "owns" a given [operational] system? In the case of state-wide fire service mutual aid, the answer is: there is no real owner or, there are a multitude of owners. *Ownership requires an individual, team or organization be given complete authority to fully design and continually understand the components of an entire system, to continually evaluate the quality of work provided through those systems, to continually evaluate gaps or faults in all systems, to rectify problems through budgeting, personnel training or disciplinary actions and to otherwise be held accountable for end-user dissatisfaction with the broad menu of services.*

When fire service mutual aid is discussed in Georgia, attention to the subject usually involves the Georgia Mutual Aid Group. As was pointed out in Athens, GMAG has not been acting as the authorized organization to fully manage all aspects of fire service mutual aid in the state, whether for declared emergencies or voluntary support. GMAG, for the most part, has been an organization that is involved in deployment of personnel and equipment. GMAG has had responsibility for identifying cooperating organizations willing to deploy equipment and personnel on a voluntary basis and at times to act an administrator to disperse mutual aid funds provided through federal and state auspices, usually for declared disasters.

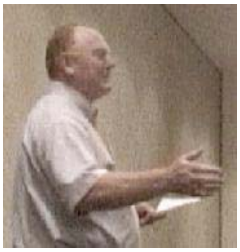
In recent years, contracts to provide mutual aid services have existed between the Georgia Association of Fire Chiefs and GEMA. GMAG has been chosen by GAFC as a contractor to provide 24/7 administrative services, coordinate certain training exercises and to assist in project work dealing with deployment protocols and other mutual aid related work.

Based upon leader interviews, it is a conclusion of a majority of those interviewed that the statewide fire service mutual aid program has not been stable. This observation is based upon what many believe to be an under-funded service. At issue has been a non-existent, reimbursable expense program that should have been available to fire departments for their help in undeclared emergencies. The reimbursement issue has been highlighted by departments that have thinly stretched resources. Reimbursements from an earmarked fund by a state agency or the Governor's office to fire departments utilizing their financial resources should be explored.

Fire Chief Jay Whitley Fitzgerald Fire Department

Effective communications between many of the players, including, but not limited to, the ESF [Emergency Support Function] administrators, those responsible for FMACC [Fire Mutual Aid Coordination Center], EMA [Emergency Management Agency] Directors, Fire Chiefs, GEMA Field Coordinators and a myriad of others are not considered to be exemplary.

Fire officer training both at the Fire Academy and local fire departments regarding incident command with respect to mutual aid coordination is inadequate. Funding is only part of the problem. Agency collaboration, final authority for incident command and clarity regarding use of approved protocols are all at issue.



Alan Dozier Chief of Forest Protection, GA Forestry Commission

A consortium, round table, or blue ribbon panel involving major stakeholders who should take ownership responsibility for mutual aid has been recommended. The work of such a group would be centered on policy issues, relationships between participants in addressing major disasters and budgeting.

A task force or other entity needs to study and make recommendations regarding the aforementioned challenges.

GOAL 4: EMPLOYEE SALARY AWARDS, RECOGNITION OF PERSONNEL AND BENEFIT PROGRAMS

Fire Chief Danny Bowman Forsyth County Fire Department

A major goal of the fire service is to attract and retain the best personnel the job market has to offer. As the cost of living dramatically increases and financial pressures affect the quality of family life and in particular, public safety personnel, the challenge of all management personnel responsible for recruitment, hiring and retention is to use the full resources of the fire service to achieve the stated attraction/retention goal. An important element of the overall mission is to communicate the importance of remuneration to stakeholders responsible for funding personnel costs and benefits and to explain that personnel losses resulting from across-the-board cuts and the commensurate replacement of highly trained, valuable personnel has led to major hardships for local fire departments as well as state agencies.

Objective: Utilize ACCG and GMA as resources for fact-finding;
Objective: Conduct comparative analyses of pay and benefit studies;
Objective: Re-examine retirement benefit opportunities for volunteers;
Objective: Recognize communities that achieve high personnel retention rates and utilize success stories in the development of "best practices."

LEADER CHALLENGES

Assistant Chief Deron Pat Wilson GA State Director SE Association of Fire Chiefs

Of all the challenges faced by the fire service, the subject of remuneration (pay and benefits) has been one of the most difficult. The attraction and retention of new members to the workforce presents a special problem for the Fire Service. Many younger workers are oriented towards early promotions in order to achieve higher pay, as opposed to an orderly building of their careers in the Fire Service. A number of seasoned fire officers are critical of the work ethic of younger workers, while other officers have recognized that the management, supervision, and career ladder building of employees new to the workforce are going to have to be handled differently than through traditional practices.

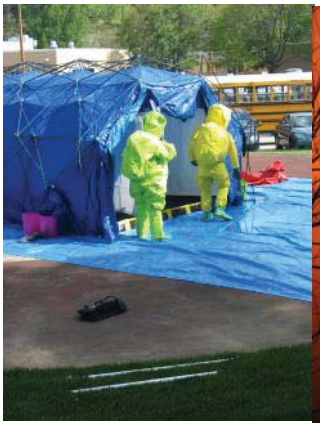
The aforementioned is only one part of the problem. Base pay for some personnel serving within the different departments of the Fire Service is less than $30,000 a year. This is an unacceptable wage in today's marketplace. Many Georgia families are meeting their basic needs because there are two wage earners, usually husband and wife. While some stakeholders adamantly stand by low entry wage levels and use the rationale that entry-level firefighters have time off due to shift work allowing them to have second or third jobs, that rationale should not be the basis for establishing remuneration. Especially vulnerable are forest service workers, and technical, professional and instructional personnel in state agencies.

The group in Athens called for study work to examine salaries and benefit options in other states and other professions. Programs to better educate stakeholders regarding the fact that the aforementioned challenge regarding employee retention is going to be very difficult to deal with in the future. It is noted that the federal government has not been helpful on this issue. Salary reimbursements for those serving in declared disasters and working under life threatening conditions are not fair, to say the least.

Fire Chief
Mike Satterfield
Newton County
Fire Services
(Salem VFD)

GOAL 5: INCIDENT ANALYSIS AND BEST PRACTICES

The incident analysis goal is critical to the development of curriculum used in training and protocol development work necessary to both effective incident command and community risk reduction programs. The institutionalization of after-incident reporting is a key to the advancement of the entire Fire Service profession and is to receive maximum attention by all organizations within the Fire Service as a priority.



Objective: Encourage written after-action reporting;
Objective: Create an online library of after-action reports;
Objective: Develop reporting templates;
Objective: Develop management templates in the areas of planning and personnel management applicable to emergency incidents requiring mutual aid.

LEADER CHALLENGES

Fire Chief
Iby George
Athens-Clarke
County
Fire & Emergency
Services

Formalized incident reporting is seen as a double-edged sword by some officers in the fire service. To place in writing what went right and what went wrong regarding a given deployment is seen as an opportunity for those who want to blame fire chiefs and fire officers or entire fire departments for incident response. Conversely, those who are not continually examining the quality of a given response to a disaster, especially when there are multiple players like Fire, EMS, Law Enforcement and even involved stakeholders, could be judged as a disservice to the entire Fire Service. Understanding service gaps, barriers that may have assured timely response, antiquated equipment and even inadequate training of personnel should all be considered critical matters. Reviewing incident reports and studying patterns of effective, as well as less than adequate service is necessary regarding the creation of new laws, rules, protocols, training of personnel and even procedures within a given fire department. This is a task force challenge that needs to be addressed.

GOAL 6: AT RISK VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENTS

Of all the goals that require the full support of the fire service, maximum attention is to be given to the plight of Georgia's volunteer fire departments. More than 70% of the fire departments in Georgia are volunteer departments. The goal, simply stated, is to **provide legislative support leading to no-cost personnel training, opportunities for networking of voluntary personnel with special emphasis on incident command**, and required financial support for firefighter safety equipment and state-of-the art life saving fire vehicles needed by at risk departments. Attraction and retention of personnel are to be a top priorities.

Fire Chief Craig Tully Colquitt-Miller Fire EMS

Objective: Conduct statewide needs assessment surveys;

Objective: Conduct regional conferences to verify critical problems and set priorities;

Objective: Develop educational program designed to encourage participation by volunteer fire departments in all-hazards incident reporting including GFIRS/NFIRS;

Objective: Conduct special regional conferences on serious issues facing Volunteer and Combination Fire Departments;

Objective: Promote Fire Academy sanctioned training in the areas of Quality Management of Volunteer Fire Departments and Preparing Volunteer Departments for future organizational and management issues.

LEADER CHALLENGES

The subject of attention to the large percentage (over 70%) of Georgia volunteer fire departments located (for the most part) in rural communities has been one of *talk* as opposed to action. The VCOS (IAFC) Volunteer & Combination Officers Section has produced one report after another pointing out the problems and challenges facing fire chiefs of both volunteer and combination departments. The Volunteer Fire Department challenge goes far beyond the content of any strategic plan. Structural reorganization, including forums of one kind or another are necessary to map out a master plan to guarantee the development of operational training tools to bring all departments up to fire service standards.

Research regarding the condition of both volunteer and combination departments in Georgia is lacking. Funds to bring volunteer and combination fire chiefs together on a regular basis to participate in master planning for their departments need to be accomplished. The entire approach to volunteer and combination departments by the state, ACCG, GMA, GFSTC, the Academy and fire service organizations needs to be examined.

A blue ribbon task force needs to be formulated on this subject and actions recommended.

Fire Chief Scott Carter Cartersville Fire Department

GOAL 7: ORGANIZATIONAL UNITY & NON-FIRE SERVICE PARTNERSHIPS

Overcoming stakeholder perceptions that the Georgia Fire Service suffers from a divided house has been a priority goal of the Georgia Fire Service. In recent years, significant progress has been made by structuring unification agreements affecting thousands of members of the Fire Service family. The unification movement is in its infancy and only **the work of organizational leaders will result in effective partnerships that lead to major legislative and public relations successes**. The next stage for the movement is to enlist additional supporters including other public safety organizations and private sector entities to fully support fire service goals.

Objective: Strengthen unification partnerships through improved communications;
Objective: Develop a plan to create a fire caucus among state legislators;
Objective: ID and educate potential stakeholders from the business community to support fire service projects;
Objective: Develop a plan to partner with EMS and law enforcement entities to address common public safety challenges.

LEADER CHALLENGES

Fire Chief Kenny Hannon Moultrie Fire Department

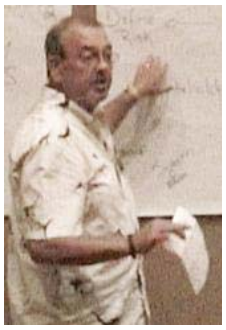
The move to bring about written understandings between the GAFC and regional fire service organizations has been successful. Nearly every organization that was asked to sign unification pacts with GAFC did so. Now others, like the 9-1-1 Directors are in support of the movement. Time has not been spent to bring about regular interchanges with unification partners on a variety of topics. The most important reason for regular exchanges between leaders is to assure support for the objectives in the strategic plan. Meetings will have to be held and understandings reached regarding the responsibilities that will have to be exercised in order to accomplish critical plan objectives. There will have to be meetings and understandings reached by and between the unification partners and leaders of the GAFC regarding this challenge.

In addition, better understanding of the content of the written unification agreements needs to take place. Officers new to the various regional organizations are often not given briefings on the reasons for the agreements, how they benefit regional associations, and how they can be best supported.

GOAL 8: COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT OF RISK REDUCTION

The Fire Service goal is to utilize factual information, knowledge and experience to assist every Georgia community to develop and implement risk reduction and mitigation programs.

"Risk reduction" is used in a broad sense and includes, but is not limited to, development and adherence to building construction and fire codes, continual risk analyses, findings of inspectors and investigators, education of citizens and business establishments regarding fire prevention and analysis of formalized data collection regarding incidents that will lead to program priority setting activities in order to address high risk findings.



Director
Alan Shuman
Chief Advisors, Inc.

Objective: Data development, management and extrapolation of data are to be given top priorities;

Objective: Utilize Web pages to communicate all the services of the State Fire Marshal's office;

Objective: Liaison with the Vision 20/20 organization (National Strategies for Fire Loss Prevention) to secure best methods to guide local communities on risk reduction;

Objective: Develop guidelines to identify risks that directly affect fire safety in local communities;

Objective: Support goals and objectives of state and local Fire Marshal's Offices with special reference to strategic objectives within the following disciplines: code development and refinement, code violations, fire code compliance; fire prevention; education of local officials regarding work of fire inspectors and fire investigators at both state and local

Objective: Involve Georgia Public Safety Educators Association in a program to educate stakeholders regarding the Juvenile Fire Setter Program;

Fire Chief
Bill Myers
Gwinnett County Department of Fire & Emergency Services

Objective: Evaluate issues regarding state recognition of NFPA standards with emphasis on fire investigation and leading to the development of recommendations to resolve priority problems;

Objective: Advocate a six year adoption cycle for new fire codes;

Objective: Examine and make recommendations to streamline codes in order to better communicate with end-users [ICC, NFPA, SFMO, DCA, (Department of Community Affairs)].

LEADER CHALLENGES

Interviews indicated the importance of the work conducted by the state fire marshal's office has been, for the most part, unknown to key stakeholders. The reduction in force in the fire marshal's office by more than 50% will have serious repercussions for many years to come. A program to reinstate many of the functions that have been lost will be necessary and fire service support for those efforts will be needed.

Fire Chief Jackie Gibbs Marietta Fire Department

Stakeholders and legislators in particular, need to be educated regarding the importance of code development, code refinement and code enforcement. In addition, the need for additional investigators and inspectors will have to be brought to the attention of those who develop state budgets. There are at least nine growth counties in the State of Georgia that will require new hospitals and other government facilities that will, by law, require professional work from the SFMO. The Fire Service needs to use its influence to bring to the attention of legislators and the general public the importance of the work of the SFMO.

A task force has already been created to deal with a number of issues raised in Athens. Some of their future efforts are found in the listed strategic plan objectives. The work of the new task force needs to be continued.

GOAL 9: EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY OF GOVERNMENT

The goal of the Fire Service to study, analyze and contribute viewpoints to those responsible for changes in laws, policies and procedures directly affecting fire service entities is a *standing goal*. Antiquated laws, burdensome reporting procedures, personnel certification requirements and a myriad of other matters require continual fire service fact-finding diligence. Efforts to consolidate or streamline government operations at every level require Fire Service input and response to any initiative. This goal requires extraordinary communication between Fire Service leaders and both internal and external stakeholders.

Byron Lombard Greene County Co. Manager (Chief, Walker Church VFD)

Objective: Track official legislative initiatives. For the immediate future, analyze the benefits and risks to the fire service for consolidation of state agencies;

Objective: Improve communication regarding legislative information to internal and external stakeholders with early emphasis on long-term effects of state departmental staffing reductions;

Objective: Continually study and respond to proposed changes in O.C.G.A. Titles and Chapter content. Recommend changes in present laws considered to be antiquated and/or no longer applicable; introduce legislation as necessary;

Objective: Create a task force to examine how best to utilize the resources of ACCG, GMA and the GCCMA (Georgia City and County Manager's Association).

LEADER CHALLENGES

Three issues are at the forefront of this goal. A careful study of laws that were placed on the books as far back as 1970 have never been analyzed from the standpoint of whether or not they are applicable to the present functioning of Georgia fire departments. The roles and responsibilities of fire departments over 40 years have dramatically changed, yet the laws that govern those departments have not been analyzed and neither have recommendations been made to eliminate, refine, or rewrite them. Interviews indicated that rulemaking activity over the last 18 months did not take into account problems with existing laws.

Next, it was the view of many leaders that an effective legislative advocacy program covering local, county and general assembly legislators is not in place. A master database containing legislators and contact information is necessary as well as a special quarterly stakeholder newsletter. Leaders indicated that working with legislators at all levels on a year-round basis to explain the challenges of the fire service is essential to bring about reforms designed to better protect the public. And finally, budget reductions at county and local levels are jeopardizing quality service in many communities. Far better relations with GMA and ACCG and utilization of their resources are critical.

Calls for streamlining of state government, while controversial, point out the need for the Fire Service to have a clear and sustained voice with the Governor and state legislators. Advocates for consolidation point out the present plight of volunteer fire departments and the major reduction of force in state agencies and especially the State Fire Marshal's Office and the Georgia Fire Academy as cases in point. Task force work on this goal is necessary.

Assistant Chief
Joey Hartley
Moultrie Fire Dept.

GOAL 10: FIRE PERSONNEL SAFETY AND WELLNESS

The goal is to assure that national fire service safety standards are understood and upheld by fire service personnel. Conveyance of information to fire service employees and volunteers is a management responsibility. Related to safety measures are health and wellness issues that are applicable to all regardless of their functions. *Everyone Goes Home* campaigns and guidelines are to be continually supported by the Georgia Fire Service.

Objective: Distribute success stories of wellness and fire safety programs practiced by Georgia fire departments;

Objective: Produce guidelines and other useful materials for those who wish to start or strengthen their fire safety and wellness programs;
Accelerate efforts to support universal seat belt use in emergency vehicles;

Objective: Strengthen association programs to place emphasis on safety and wellness.

Fire Chief
Marvin Riggins
Macon-Bibb County
Fire Department

LEADER CHALLENGES

Interviews indicated that progress has been made regarding Goal Area 14 (physical fitness and wellness) that appeared in the original Georgia Fire Service Five Year Strategic Plan. Leaders indicated that specific information on methods to start both wellness and physical fitness programs should be distributed by the fire service. Testimonials, photos, recognition awards to leaders in both disciplines are necessary, and especially at the GAFC and GSFA conference levels. The Marietta, Warner Robins and Thomasville success stories on physical fitness are good examples of the aforementioned.

APPENDIX

STRATEGIC PLAN OVERLAYS - RECOMMENDATIONS

(An "overlay" is defined as a challenge or issue that relates to all goals)

State Agencies and Departments: Each agency needs a strategic plan. Inclusions within strategic plans created by State Government departments that support or otherwise complement the work of the Georgia Fire Service should be shared with Fire Service personnel responsible for implementing the Fire Service Strategic Plan.

Task Forces: Critical to the implementation of the strategic plan is task force activity designed to establish and prioritize action plans necessary to achieve plan objectives. At a minimum, task forces need to be established for the following areas: stakeholder support, training of Fire Service personnel, at risk volunteer fire departments and community management of risk. [Four (4) task force groups have already met following the Athens meeting]

Stakeholders: The recommendation to encourage the creation of a Fire Service caucus within the general assembly needs to be acted upon. The education of Fire Service champions within the assembly is absolutely necessary to communications that deal with legislative reforms. In addition, accurate listings of stakeholders at the state, county and local levels are necessary to establish electronic links with elected leaders regarding challenges, problems and success stories experienced within the Fire Service.

Unification Partners: Recognition that there exist communication voids and an absence of meeting schedules with unification partners has been made. The unification agreements call for support for the strategic plan by the partners. Such efforts need to be organized. In addition, other unification partnerships, and especially with law enforcement organizations, need to be a priority.

System Problems: Problems addressed at the Athens meeting and subsequent interviews with Fire Chiefs require Fire Service attention. Solutions may require special task forces or advisory services to resolve long-standing issues. They include: A review and restructuring of mutual aid services within the state; resolution to the problem of instructional content by the Fire Academy and local training services that do not match the content of NPQ tests, projects to resolve the absence of data voids in order to address service gap problems and updating of both short-term and long term planning documents [emphasis on data necessary for state agencies and Fire Service organizations] and attention to incident command training.

Conference Inclusions: Progress reports on the attaining of objectives in the plan should be made. Planners should consider workshops at state and regional conferences regarding priority objectives within all goal areas.

Six Systems Requiring Attention

SYSTEM 1

NO CAPACITY TO COLLECT AND GENERATE AN ANNUAL REPORT ON FIRE SERVICE STATUS AND NEEDS IN GEORGIA

No up-to-date GFIRS-NFIRS reports.

There is little cooperation from 60% of Fire Departments on GFIRS-NFIRS reporting.

No uniform electronic reporting.

No central repository for after-action reports on major incidents (what is needed is a computerized system for ease in recall).

No master database in State Fire Marshal's Office.

SYSTEM 2

NO CONSISTENT DRILLS (EXERCISES) FOR POTENTIAL INCIDENT COMMAND PERSONEL IN HIGH RISK AREAS

[High Risk: Hurricane, Tornado, Flood, Earthquake, Forest Areas, etc.]

No uniform Emergency Support Function at the incident level. The only training for some is NIMS (basic).

No consistent guidance for potential high risk events.

No easy access to relevant protocols.

No regular team exercises.

No familiarity with mutual aid administrative responsibilities (staging, meal service, rest areas, etc.).

SYSTEM 3

NO DECISION ON UNIVERSAL USE OF NPQ TESTS; CURRICULUM OFFERED DOES NOT ALWAYS MATCH UP WITH TEST CONTENT.*

Debate regarding experiential (field experience) vs. theoretical (book learning) approaches exists.

Most popular text books do not adequately relate to NPQ test content.

No careful analysis of the reasons why fire service personnel fail tests (absence of personal interviews).

No certification of instructional personnel at State or Fire Dept. levels).

**Academy, Local Fire Depts., Technical Schools*

SYSTEM 4

THE ENTIRE PROGRAM OF FIRE SERVICE MUTUAL AID IS NOT "OWNED" BY A CONTROLLING AGENCY OR AUTHORIZED ORGANIZATION.

SYSTEM 5

THERE IS NO HIGHLY EFFECTIVE LEGISLATIVE CONTACT PROGRAM FOR THE FIRE SERVICE. *(Covering: LOCAL, COUNTY and GENERAL ASSEMBLY)*

SYSTEM 6

THE VOLUNTEER/RURAL FIRE DEPARTMENTS WITHIN THE STATE HAVE NO VOICE AT THE STATE LEVEL.

GEORGIA FIRE SERVICE STRATEGIC PLAN ADVISORS
ATHENS, GEORGIA – JUNE, 2011

Contributing Fire Dept. Personnel:
Gwinnett
Hall Co.
Gainesville
Forsyth Co.
Peachtree City
Johns Creek
Moultrie
Cartersville
Athens
Rome
Houston Co.
Sandy Springs
Crisp
Warner-Robins
Macon-Bibb
Douglas Co.
Colquitt-Miller
Walker-Church
Forest Park
Marietta
Flovilla
Winder
Dawson
Newton Co.
Oconee
Montezuma
Hazelhurst-Jeff Davis
Savannah

State Departments & Associations Represented: GA. Public Safety Training Center (Fire Academy); GA. Forestry Commission; GA Firefighters Standards & Training Council; GA.Emergency Management Agency; GA. Fire Inspectors Assn.; GA Assn. of Fire Chiefs; GA State Firefighters Assn.; GA State Fire Marshal's Office; GA Mutual Aid Group.

Advisors – Athens, Georgia (photos in order on opposite page, left to right)

1. Fire Investigator Wade Crider
2. Chief Jon Canada
3. Chief Lanier Swafford
4. Chief Danny Bowman
5. Chief Bruce Thaxton
6. Assistant Chief Peki Prince
7. Assistant Chief Deron Pat Wilson
8. Chief David Trussell
9. Chief Charles Wasdin
10. Chief Ray Lunsford
11. Chief Jay Whitley
12. State Fire Marshal Dwayne Garriss
13. Fire Inspector Craig Landolt
14. Chief Matt Whiting
15. Chief Kenny Hannon
16. Chief Bill Myers
17. Chief Mike Satterfield
18. Captain Joey Hartley
19. Chief Scott Carter
20. Chief Iby George
21. Director Alan Shuman, Chief Advisors, Inc.
22. Deputy Director Butch Beach
23. Chief Gordon Henderson
24. Advisor George Lanier
25. Chief Jimmy Williams
26. Chief Jack McElfish
27. Chief of Training Curt Pierson
28. Executive Director Bill Lewis
29. Chief Robert Singletary
30. Chief Marvin Riggins
31. 911 Pres. R.G. Whitaker
32. Chief Craig Tully
33. Chief Byron Lombard
34. Chief Eddie Buckholts
35. GEMA Fire Coordinator Ronnie Register
36. Chief Jackie Gibbs
37. Chief Glenn Williams
38. Chief Forestry Protection Alan Dozier
39. GFA Director Dave Wall
40. GFSTC Executive Director Lyn Pardue

Forsyth Follow-Up
ATHENS
PLANNERS

CREDITS

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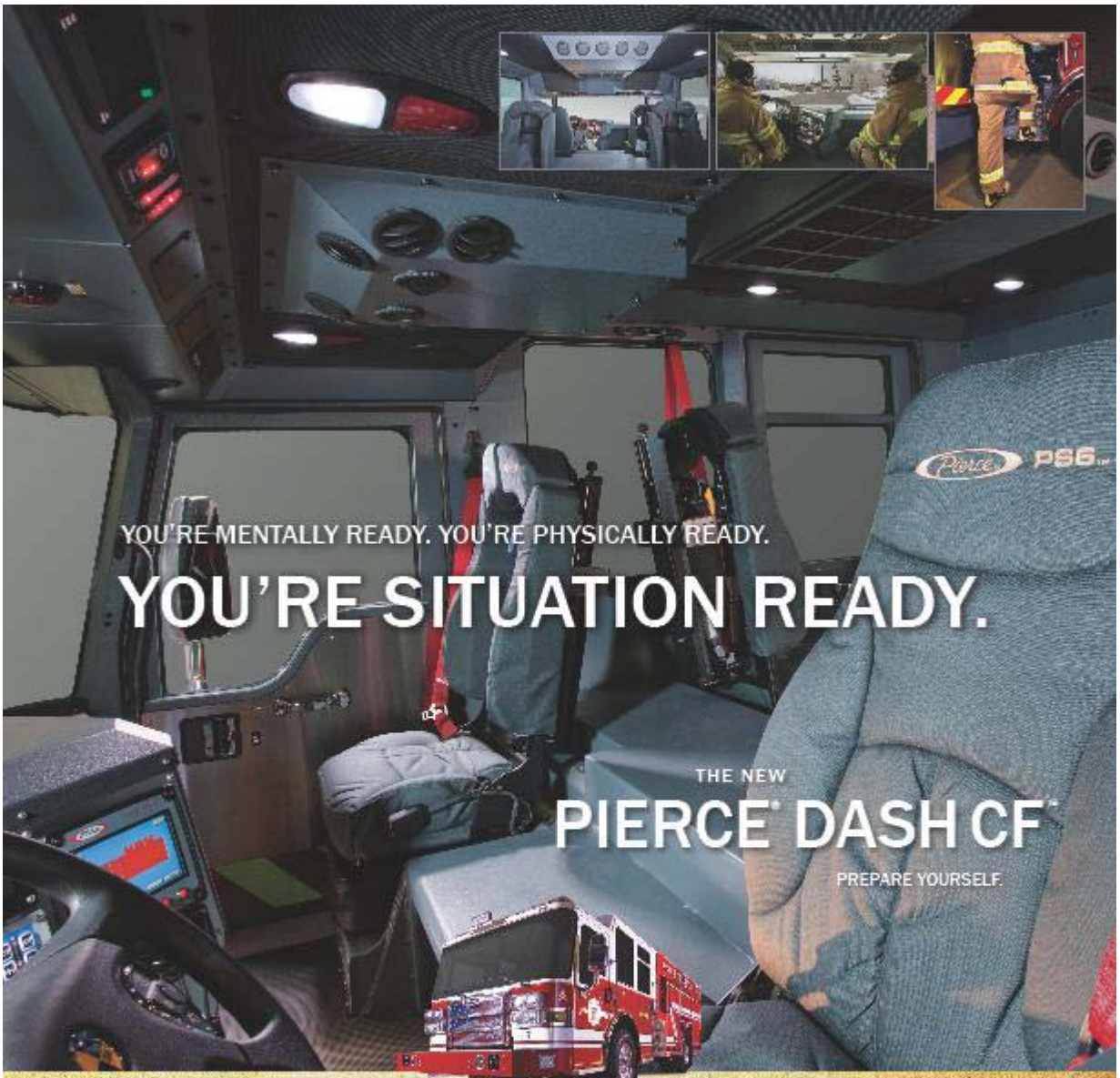

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