EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S RAMBLINGS

One of the most basic functions involved in providing emergency services is the ability to have some type of apparatus that carries the personnel and equipment necessary to handle an incident to the location of the emergency. In the earliest days of the fire service, the apparatus was towed to the scene by the firefighters themselves and then, later on, by horses or mules. It was not until the early years of the 20th century that motorized fire apparatus and emergency vehicles became widely available.

IFSTA's first offering on this topic was the Fire Apparatus Practices manual published in 1942. This book, and its future editions through the sixth edition, Introduction to Fire Apparatus Practices released in 1980, covered the basics of operating both pumping and aerial apparatus. In the late 1980's, the IFSTA Executive Board decided that fire apparatus design was more complex and the knowledge and skill requirements for personnel responsible for operating the equipment was expanding so much, that separate manuals should be developed for pumping and aerial apparatus. The idea was that members of agencies who operated aerial apparatus would only need to purchase the second manual. The Fire Department Pumping Apparatus, 7th Edition manual was released in 1989 and the Fire Department Aerial Apparatus, 1st Edition manual came along in 1991. I was the writer/editor of both of those manuals.

Shortly after the release of those two manuals, the NFPA made the decision to change the format of the performance qualifications standards from the traditional objectives-based standard to the Job Performance Requirements (JPR) format. One of the first two standards to make this transition was NFPA 1002, Standard for Fire Apparatus Driver/Operator Professional Qualifications. I was the Task Group Chair. During the process of developing the new standard, it became clear that there were some shortcomings of the IFSTA Pumping Apparatus manual, particularly in hydraulics and water supply. Firefighters would need three separate IFSTA manuals to meet the pumping apparatus portion of the new standard.

When the time came to revise these manuals, and with FPP Director Doug Forsman’s permission, I made a proposal to the IFSTA Executive Board to combine the IFSTA Fire Department Pumping Apparatus, Waters Supplies for Fire Protection, and Fire Streams Practices manuals into one book that would be titled Pumping Apparatus Driver/Operator Handbook, 1st Edition. The proposal was accepted and IFSTA published the first edition of the book in 1999.

As IFSTA approached the time to begin developing the 3rd editions of driver/operator handbooks, FPP staff members looked at how the manuals were being used and if there was a better way to present the material. It was clear that we still needed a standalone pumping apparatus manual, as U.S. Fire Administration statistics show that 90% of U.S. fire departments do not operate aerial apparatus and therefore have no need for that information. The new 3rd edition of the Pumping Apparatus Driver/Operator Handbook meets their need.

Also, we received many customer inquiries/complaints over the years regarding the need to have two manuals, study guides/Exam Preps, and curriculums for agencies that operate aerial apparatus. Our response to that need/desire was to develop a manual that covers both pumping and aerial apparatus operations. The 3rd edition of Pumping and Aerial Apparatus Driver/Operator Handbook covers both types of apparatus. The early chapters of this manual are the same chapters in the standalone Pumping Apparatus manual, but this version has 5 additional chapters on aerial operations. This approach also allowed us to develop only one set of support materials (Exam Prep, curriculum, etc.). It also eliminates the need for firefighters and agencies to utilize two separate manuals and support products. It mirrors the method we used to develop the two versions of Essentials of Fire Fighting, 6th Edition.

IFSTA/FPP always strives to meet the needs of the people and agencies that rely on our manuals and training materials. We believe that this new approach to the delivery of our apparatus driver/operator product line is what many of you have been asking us to provide. Thanks for using our products and I look forward to your feedback.

Slow down and keep all the wheels on the road!

Mike Wieder
Associate Director, FPP
Executive Director, IFSTA
The concept and utilization of social media by fire departments is still in its infancy. Many fire departments have a limited or nonexistent presence on social media outlets such as Facebook and Twitter. Typically, this lack of utilization is caused by unfamiliarity and a lack of awareness of the benefits of using such programs. When it comes to traditional public information functions, many fire departments still prefer to rely on a dedicated or semi-dedicated Public Information Officer (PIO) who handles the day-to-day interaction with the local news media. While traditional PIOs still have a place in the modern fire service, especially at emergency incidents, the use of social media by the leadership of the fire department can produce significant dividends to the community.

The use of social media allows a single newsworthy event to be sent to followers who may exponentially share the message to others. The message, which could include a photograph or video, can connect with citizens regardless of whether they chose to watch the six o’clock news. Because social media relies on small, concentrated posts to transmit a message, the time it takes to capture a worthwhile event and post it on social media is just a few minutes. This makes for an efficient and effective public communications strategy.

Our department utilized a civilian PIO for several years. After much debate and consideration, we experimented with the concept of a decentralized PIO function and repurposed that full-time employee to other duties. Our belief was that giving a few leaders access, training, and responsibility to post on the department’s Facebook and Twitter accounts would allow our community to stay informed about our activities, incidents, and initiatives. The results of our concept were unpredictably good.

Our chief officers, fire prevention personnel, and training staff are encouraged to share photos and interesting incidents using social media. This wide variety of contributors makes the variety of posts that followers (read: citizens) get to view much better. Consequently, our social media presence is less “stale” than it was when it was used and managed by a single person who may not frequent training events or other activities. Through the participation of our Battalion Chiefs, we are able to share appropriate photographs of emergency incidents in a timely manner. This has caused local television and print media outlets to rely on our social media presence and has allowed our department to increase its visibility to the public. When I speak to reporters, they are always quick to comment and complement our use of social media.

For our department, decentralizing public information has been a huge success. What used to occupy a full-time position is now done by several members and takes only a few minutes each week from each of them. The impact of the social media emphasis is also apparent in the analytics available from Facebook and Twitter. A recent post made by our department about a fire company that took some extra time to hang Christmas lights on a house after its owner experienced a medical emergency was seen by over 100,000 people online, and the message was picked up by CBS and ABC affiliates across the country. Without the use of decentralized public information, the story never would have left the walls of the fire station. Another video post from last winter reached nearly 1 million people!

The ease and accessibility of social media can help establish a positive image and online presence for the fire department; however, caution must still be exercised. Misspellings, poor grammar, and unprofessional posts can quickly produce a bad image for the department. It is essential that procedures be in place to direct those with access to social media and that individuals take the time and effort to make sure their posts make the department look professional.
2015 National Fire and Emergency Services Symposium and the 27th Annual National Fire and Emergency Services Dinner

“The Future Depends on Informed Leaders”

By: Chief Dennis Compton

On April 15 and 16, the Congressional Fire Services Institute (CFSI) will host the National Fire and Emergency Services Symposium and 27th Annual National Fire and Emergency Services Dinner. This year’s theme captures what should probably be the fire service mantra of tomorrow: The Future Depends on Informed Leaders!

Each year, fire service representatives from around the country gather in Washington, DC. Their purpose is to learn about critical issues and meet with their members of Congress, Congressional staffs, and representatives from federal agencies, all in an effort to let their voices be heard and advocate for federal support for issues that are important to the fire and emergency services community. The representatives also have the opportunity to build relationships inside the fire and emergency services industry that will benefit them for years to come.

It is incumbent upon today’s fire and emergency services leaders to place some emphasis on preparing the leaders of the future. To lead in the complex environments we have to operate within, leaders must be armed with the knowledge, relationships, and acumen to be successful. The job of leading won’t get easier; it will most likely get harder. Those individuals who step into the national leadership arena can hone those capabilities within themselves – and build them in future leaders as well – by taking full advantage of the opportunities available during this unique annual event that the CFSI hosts.

The symposium curriculum includes excellent sessions that feature national speakers from throughout our industry. Current and relevant topics provide attendees with educational opportunities that are sure to create more informed and capable leaders. Whether you are a veteran of one or more of the past annual CFSI events or new to the process, you will leave the symposium with information and reference materials that are sure to be beneficial.

Fire service representatives who attend the symposium and dinner have an opportunity to directly influence federal programs that will affect fire departments and other fire service organizations. Their efforts at the national level produce practical outcomes on the local level. Those outcomes focus directly on key areas, such as fire suppression, fire service-based EMS, fire prevention, public education, hazardous materials response, technical rescue, and training. The emphasis of the two-day event is on taking action that makes fire departments throughout the United States more effective in all aspects of service delivery and support.

The CFSI dinner always includes an outstanding cadre of high-profile speakers. They have featured U.S. Presidents, Vice Presidents, prominent leaders from the Congressional Fire Services Caucus, and fire service leaders. During the dinner, the presentation of prestigious national awards is also a highlight of the evening. These awards include the:

- CFSI / Motorola Solutions Mason Lankford Fire Service Leadership Award
- CFSI / NFFF Senator Paul S. Sarbanes Fire Service Safety Leadership Award
- CFSI / IFSTA at OSU Dr. Anne W. Phillips Award for Leadership in Fire Safety Education
- CFSI / Masimo Excellence in Fire Service-Based EMS Award

One of the best ways to grow as fire service leaders and develop future leaders is to participate each year in the National Fire and Emergency Services Symposium and Dinner. The larger and more active the group of attendees, the more clearly our message is received at the federal level. And that message is simple: The fire service needs and appreciates the support of Congress and the Administration for our issues.

The work of the CFSI and its National Advisory Committee (NAC) is critical to the success of the entire fire service, but they need our help. Each day, different groups of individuals arrive in Washington, DC to advocate for their agendas – and the fire service is only one of them. It’s a fact that the larger and more active the group, the more likely it is that Congress and the Administration will pay attention to its message. If we aren’t willing to show up and assert ourselves as advocates at the national level, then how can the fire service expect to have its message heard by our lawmakers? As current and future fire service leaders, go to the CFSI website today at www.cfsi.org and make your plans to attend. Remember – The Future Depends on Informed Leaders!

About the Author:
Chief Dennis Compton is a well-known speaker and the author of several books including his most recent offering titled Progressive Leadership Principles, Concepts, and Tools. He has also authored the three-part series of books titled When in Doubt, Lead, the book Mental Aspects of Performance for Firefighters and Fire Officers, as well as many articles, chapters, and other publications.

Dennis served as the Fire Chief in Mesa, Arizona for five years and as Assistant Fire Chief in Phoenix, Arizona, where he served for twenty-seven years. Chief Compton is the Past Chairman of the Executive Board of the International Fire Service Training Association (IFSTA) and Past Chairman of the Congressional Fire Services Institute’s National Advisory Committee. He is currently the Chairman of the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation Board of Directors.
Nancy Trench to Head NFPA® 1035 Committee

Fire Protection Publications (FPP) Assistant Director Nancy Trench has been selected to serve as Chair of the NFPA® 1035 Standard On Fire And Life Safety Educator, Public Information Officer, Youth Firesetter Intervention Specialist And Youth Firesetter Program Manager Professional Qualifications, technical committee. Nancy is a longtime Principal Member of that committee. She succeeds previous Chair Ernest Grant of the North Carolina Jaycee Burn Center, who recently became Chair of the NFPA® Board of Directors.

Nancy is recognized as a leader in the field of public fire and life safety education, and her career in this field exceeds 40 years of service. She has developed numerous public fire and life safety educational programs and is an active researcher dedicated to finding new ways to make people safe in their homes and other environments. In recent years, she led externally-funded FPP research projects that included finding more effective ways to educate children on fire and life safety, alerting people with disabilities to fire in their residences, and targeting high-risk areas with smoke alarm programs. She was awarded the Dr. Anne W. Phillips Award for Leadership in Fire Safety Education by the Congressional Fire Service Institute (CFSI) in 2008.

Congratulations, Nancy!

Mike Wieder Receives Award of Recognition

IFSTA Executive Director and FPP Associate Director Mike Wieder was presented a special award of recognition for his outstanding service to the Pennsylvania Fire and Emergency Services Institute (PFESI) at their annual dinner on November 22, 2014 in Camp Hill, PA. Wieder, a native of Pennsylvania, has served as the Master of Ceremony at this important PFESI fundraising event for more than a dozen years. Approximately 650 emergency responders and their guests attended this year’s event. Mike is a Life Member of the Pennsburg (PA) Fire Company.

From left to right: PFESI Statewide Advisory Board Chairman Frank Zangari, PFESI Executive Director Don Konkle, former U.S. Representative Paul McHale, Mike Wieder, PFESI Executive Board President Brian Connely.

Nancy Trench
Using Our Own Product To Pass Certification Exam
By Alex Abrams, FPP Senior Editor

For the four of us, our knowledge of fire fighting was limited mostly to what we had read, researched, and edited over the past few years.

We had attended seminars, gone on photo shoots, and spoken at length with some of the most respected names in the fire service. But none of us had actually ventilated a roof or crawled through a confined space. We are “pencil pushers,” not first responders.

The first time I wore a self contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) for an extended period of time was the first day of Firefighter I. I spent the next few hours gasping for air and trying to catch my breath.

In late September, four staff members from IFSTA/Fire Protection Publications – Curriculum Developers Brad McLelland and David Schaap as well as Senior Editors Libby Snyder and myself – were relative newcomers when we showed up for firefighter academy. All of the other cadets were either already on a fire department or working toward joining one.

At first, my goal was to simply survive Firefighter I and not embarrass myself while trying to gain as much hands-on experience and knowledge of fire fighting as possible. However, as the days passed and donning our SCBAs felt like second nature, the four of us from FPP became more determined to pass firefighter academy like everyone else.

To do that, we relied on some of the same IFSTA products that we had spent the past few years editing.

We read Essentials of Fire Fighting, 6th Edition from front to back to learn more about the knots, hoselines, and techniques that we used on the Fire Training Grounds. I carried that “big red book” with me every day. And when the Firefighter I certification test approached, we turned to the Essentials of Fire Fighting, 6th Edition Exam Prep+ app.

Brad used the app on his iPad, giving him a chance to take practice exams that showed him what material he needed to spend more time studying. Whenever he got a question wrong, he would turn to the section that covered it in Essentials of Fire Fighting, 6th Edition and then re-read it before taking another practice exam. Along with the app, he used the manual’s accompanying workbook to study.

David downloaded the app on his Android cell phone, and he flipped to it to help him prepare for the Firefighter I written test. After two weeks of climbing ladders and inspecting his personal protective equipment (PPE), he had no trouble performing any of the individual or team skills that were required to pass the exam. But the app got him ready for the written test, which was believed to be the highest score in the state at the time.

It would have been excusable if any of us from FPP had come up short on the certification test, and none of us did. We passed Firefighter I despite having never responded to even a dumpster fire in the years before firefighter academy. In fact, Libby scored an 89.9 on the certification test, which was believed to be the highest score in the state at the time.

A week after completing Firefighter I, I was sitting in a coffee shop and overheard the man at the next table tell his girlfriend that he had to read “this 1,000 page book” for work. I glanced over and saw the book he was referring to: It was Essentials of Fire Fighting, 6th Edition.

As it turned out, the man was on a fire department and trying to study for his Firefighter I exam in a few days. I laughed when I saw his copy of the red manual, and I could not resist saying something.

Without telling him that I work for FPP, I leaned over and said, “I read that book. I just finished Firefighter I.”

GRADUATE STUDENT PRESENTS INTERNATIONALLY
Joel Billings, a Ph.D. student in the Fire and Emergency Management Administration Graduate Program and Graduate Associate at Fire Protection Publications was invited to present his research at two international conferences in November. Billings gave an oral presentation entitled “The Effects of Fire Department Shift Schedules on Sleep Quality” at the Emergency Services Conference: Second Biennial Event, Themes in Planning, Response, and Recovery on November 11 at Nottingham Trent University in England. On Thursday, November 13, Billings provided a poster presentation at the Fire-Related Research and Development Annual Conference at the British Fire Service College in Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire.

“This was a great experience for me to present the results of my thesis and receive feedback from an international perspective. I was able to network with scholars and meet other students that are actively involved in conducting research,” said Billings. During the Fire-Related Research and Development Conference, Billings was awarded the FIRE Magazine/Gore Research Excellence Award for Best Poster with a price of £250. Billings said “It was wonderful to receive the opportunity to travel internationally and I want to thank Dr. Anthony Brown and Fire Protection Publications for their support.”

Dave Frodsham, Product Specialist at W.L. Gore & Associates Inc. said, “We are committed to supporting the development of new ideas and innovation in the UK Fire Service, all of which are driven by research. We continue to support this award so that it will encourage ongoing research that will ultimately make our communities safer.” Andrew Lynch, Editor, FIRE magazine, said “It is crucial that fire-related research continues to be given the support it deserves and I am pleased that Gore is once again supporting the award, underlining the pivotal role industry plays in keeping fire personnel safe.”

Joel Billings is invited to present at (forthcoming):
2. 2nd European Symposium on Fire Safety Science, Nicosia, Cyprus, June 16-18, 2015.

New Award
• Inaugural International Fire Service Journal of Leadership and Management/Research Symposium (IFSJLM/RS) Graduate Student Presentation (to be awarded at 2015 IFSJLM/RS)