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**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY  
DIVISION OF FIRE SAFETY**

**Division of Fire Safety  
Fire Summit Response**

First I would like to express my appreciation for the efforts to bring a stronger sense of unity among Missouri's fire service leaders and organizations. In particular, I would like to commend the Missouri Association of Fire Chiefs for organizing the Fire Summit. In order to be successful in any mission, it is imperative to ensure there are numbers behind the voice and that the voice is carrying the same message.

After reviewing the Fire Summit report, I would like to respectfully provide some points of clarification and additional facts in relation to various issues that relate to the Division of Fire Safety so the whole picture is in focus.

**Issue #1 Statewide Fire Training**

Missouri State Statute RSMo 320.202 states the State Fire Marshal and the Division of Fire Safety shall be responsible for "the voluntary training of firefighters, investigators, inspectors, and public or private employees or volunteers in the field of emergency response, rescue, fire prevention or preparedness and establishing and maintaining a voluntary training and certification program based upon nationally recognized standards." With that authority, the Division of Fire Safety's Training and Certification Unit serves as the state's certification entity and establishes minimum curriculum requirements in accordance with the most current NFPA Professional Qualification Standards.

The Division's certification program is internationally accredited through the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) which requires certifying entities to adhere to NFPA Professional Qualification Standards for testing. This accreditation allows Missouri's fire service to be recognized for their training worldwide and ensures consistency when fire fighters from multiple departments respond to an emergency incident. There is a growing trend among fire departments around the state to require certification prior to hiring and/or promoting individuals. The Division currently offers 15 levels of certification and has issued more than 65,000 certifications to over 25,000 individuals since the program's implementation in 1985. Missouri's fire service personnel who have

attained certification through the Division of Fire Safety share reciprocity with over 40 other states, the Department of Defense, the Canadian National Defense, 11 Canadian Provinces and 8 additional countries. The Division is also scheduled for accreditation review by the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications (ProBoard) this summer, which will add yet another layer of credibility to the certification programs we offer.

Through the Missouri Fire Safety Advisory Board and the Fire Education Commission, the Division's Training and Certification Unit works closely with local government agencies, universities, colleges, academies, state fire associations and other training entities in the development and/or delivery of training programs which meet the specific certification requirements for first responder personnel. Currently the Division of Fire Safety has within its budget two funding mechanisms for contracted no-cost fire fighter training. First, RSMo 320.094 establishes the Fire Education Fund which derives funding from the Division's Fireworks Licensing program per RSMo. 320.111. This fund generates approximately \$160,000 annually, depending on the number of fireworks permits and licenses issued each year. Additionally, the Division of Fire Safety receives funding through the Chemical Emergency Preparedness Fund via RSMo 292.604 to provide hazardous materials related training to emergency responders. The appropriation is capped at \$100,000, but typically funds actually received range between \$75,000 - \$78,000. Although historically the Division had general revenue support for fire fighter training, that is no longer the case. Due to the state's budget reductions, the commonly referred to "House Bill 230" funding was cut from the Division's budget at the start of the 2011 fiscal year.

State law requires the Division to distribute the Fire Education Fund "in cooperation with community colleges, colleges, regional training facilities, fire and emergency services training entities and universities of this state". By doing so, delivery costs remain competitive, allowing the available limited funds to be spent in a fiscally responsible manner. Also by statute, distribution of these state funds must be approved by the Fire Education Commission. As with all state funds, contracts issued must meet specific State of Missouri Office of Administration requirements for the bidding and awarding of contracts and are subject to audit by the Missouri State Auditor's Office. While this process does require both the Division, as well as the training vendors with whom we contract, to jump through many more hoops, the added oversight lends credibility and efficiency to the final dollars spent.

I would like to point out that all contracted courses must meet specific criteria for delivery as set forth by the Fire Education Commission and the Division of Fire Safety and be made available to any and all fire fighters throughout the state. For Fiscal Year 2011, a total of \$248,640 was contracted with eight training vendors to provide no-cost training for the state's fire service. This is an extremely detailed and organized process.

It is fair to say the fire service of Missouri has never been afforded enough funding for contracted no-cost fire fighter training. Therefore, over the years the Division's Training and Certification Unit has evaluated various means for all departments in the state to train their personnel at either no cost or minimal cost to the local entity. Using existing staff and internal resources, the Division has been developing and providing curriculum since 1989 and we will continue to do so to meet the needs of Missouri's fire service. Curriculum packages are available at no cost to departments with qualified instructors and include student manuals, practical skills and Powerpoint presentations on CD for the Basic Fire Fighter, Fire Fighter I & II and the Fire Officer I & II courses. In order to prepare the student completely for certification testing, the Division has always based our training programs on the entire NFPA standard to which they will be tested. Similar commercially produced curriculum packages sell for up to \$400. We are extremely proud of these quality training programs developed by our staff which we are able to offer at absolutely no cost to the fire service and utilizing no state training funds.

Also, due to the recent elimination of the general revenue (HB230) funding for no-cost contracted fire fighter training, the Division has included IFSTA Hazardous Materials Awareness and Operations to the list of available approved classes when delivered as part of the Fire Fighter I and II course. Fire Service Instructor I and II have also been added to the list of available courses the Division has approved for local delivery. Curriculum requirement for these courses is the IFSTA Fire and Emergency Services Instructor, Seventh Edition resource kit and text books purchased by the local entity. The Division provides a Guide for Lead Instructors and the approved Practical Skill Sheets required for all levels of certification in an electronic format at no charge. In addition, the Division delivers the Fire Investigator and Fire Inspector certification courses along with the Certification Evaluator course throughout the year.

The Division also works directly with 11 Community Colleges and Career Centers, 7 Secondary Education Programs and 7 Fire Department-affiliated Academies to provide training to first responders at the regional or local level. Using all of these approved resources, 17 Basic Fire Fighter deliveries, 62 Fire Fighter I and II courses, 15 Fire Officer I and II courses, and 17 Fire Service Instructor I and II courses are currently being conducted throughout the state. As with all certification-related courses, instructors must meet specific criteria and course registration and approval is required. Please see the Division's website at <http://www.dfs.dps.mo.gov/dfstraining.htm> for more information.

There are multiple benefits to the local delivery mechanism as established by the Division. First, NO state contracted fire fighter training funds are used in the delivery of these courses. Additionally, entities delivering these courses at the local level courses can schedule training to meet their needs, avoid student minimum enrollment requirements, and have control of their own training environment.

Lastly, because we believe so strongly in the value of fire fighter training, the staff of the Division of Fire Safety is continually networking with legislators, fire service leaders, organizations, and training entities in hopes of obtaining additional financial support for fire training efforts. We will continue to provide first-rate resources and be an advocate for fire fighter training at every level in order to provide top quality services so deserving of Missouri's fire fighters.

### **Issue #3 Division of Fire Safety**

The Division of Fire Safety, Office of the State Fire Marshal was formed in 1972 by the 76<sup>th</sup> General Assembly with the sole responsibility of investigating suspicious fires. More than three decades later, the Division employs 68 staff members, houses 6 Governor-appointed boards, and administers 12 statutorily mandated programs. In addition to the fire service community, the Division provides services to various industries with a mission designed to enhance the safety of all Missourians.

The Division of Fire Safety is in fact one of the most diverse agencies within the Department of Public Safety, whose scope over the years has broadened far beyond that of "fire" safety. Statutory responsibilities of the Division include:

- Fire Safety Inspections – Providing fire safety standards by inspecting facilities which care for our state's most vulnerable citizens. *Funded by general revenue.*
- Fire Investigations – Investigating incidents involving the possibility of arson, explosion, or related offenses as requested by the fire service, law enforcement, and prosecuting attorneys within the state. *Funded by general revenue.*
- Fireworks Licensing – Regulating the sale and use of fireworks and licensure of operators responsible for pyrotechnic displays. *Funded by general revenue.*
- Blasting Safety – Provides for the registration of commercial explosive users and the licensing of blasters employed by those users. *Dedicated fund.*
- Private Fire Investigator Licensing – Providing licensing and oversight of individuals performing fire investigations in the state. *Funded by general revenue.*
- Fire Fighter Training and Certification – Providing in-depth training and certification for the state's 25,000 emergency response personnel. *Funded by general revenue.*
- Contracted Fire Fighter Training – Contracting with multiple statewide training vendors to provide cost-free training to emergency responders. *Dedicated fund.*
- Boiler and Pressure Vessel Safety – Inspection and issuance of operating permits for boilers and pressure vessels. *Dedicated fund.*
- Elevator Safety - Inspection and issuance of operating permits for elevators and related equipment. *Dedicated fund.*
- Amusement Ride Safety - Inspection and issuance of operating permits for amusement rides operating in our state. *Dedicated fund.*
- Fire Safe Cigarette – Regulating the sale of reduced ignition propensity cigarettes. *Dedicated fund.*

- Incident Reporting and Statewide Fire Mutual Aid System – Record keeping of fire incidents, departments and resources as well as coordination of activation and deployment of resources when natural or man-made disasters occur.  
*Funded by general revenue.*

The Division's programs with dedicated funding sources are each fee-generating programs which are designed to be fully self-supportive. Because they are not dependent on state general revenue funding, these programs are not typically affected during the state's tough budget situations. These programs have not had any adverse affect on Division services which by some may seem more appropriate to the traditional mission of the Division of Fire Safety. In fact, in many cases these programs add to Division's strength due to an increased partnership with the various types of industry we regulate. Although the Division will always see the fire service as our strongest partner and number one priority, we, and certainly the general public, do benefit from having allies in all realms of public safety. Additionally, the dedicated funds appropriated to the Division assist in supporting the administration of the Division as a whole and allow for effective utilization of general revenue funding in the key program areas which more directly impact the fire service.

Any prioritization of specific operations would require a statutory change and result in a reduction in the level of public safety the Division is currently able to provide. If the idea is to identify program priorities in an effort to realign funding, due to statutory requirements and the appropriation structure only those programs funded by general revenue could be considered. A more appropriate and effective resolution would be to identify an alternative dedicated funding mechanism and eliminate the Division of Fire Safety's reliance on state general revenue funds.

In regards to credentialing, the Division is involved with the processes of which the Missouri Homeland Security Office has oversight. In 2011, the goal is to implement a basic process involving credentialing levels associated with firefighting, law enforcement, EMT, hazmat, search & rescue and IST.

The current direction of credentialing is a voluntary process in which the state will issue a credential to responders with qualifications from validated sources. The ID card issued will be compliant with the Federal Information Processing Standard for Personal Identity Verification Interoperability by verifying who and what the responder claims incorporating the following three factors: 1) they possess the card, 2) the photo identifies the holder, and 3) the information embedded in the card can be used to confirm qualifications. Our State Mutual Aid Coordinator will work with members of the fire service and will be involved in an interoperable credential exercise with several other states and FEMA during the week of March 14<sup>th</sup> with ongoing plans for incorporating the developing system into NLE11.

As mentioned previously, the Division's Training and Certification Unit continually researches resources and opportunities for departments to train their personnel at minimal cost to the local entity. This includes, but is not limited to contracted fire fighter training. Because contracted training funds have always fallen short of meeting the needs of Missouri's 900 fire departments, using existing staff and internal resources the Division has been developing and providing fire training curriculum since 1989. We will continue to do so in order to meet the needs of Missouri's fire service. The curriculum packages developed by our staff are of outstanding quality, and we are proud to offer them to the fire service at no charge. Please remember that no state training funds are used in the development or distribution of these courses.

Likewise, for more than 25 years the Division has delivered the Fire Inspector and Fire Investigator courses and certification programs due to the experience and technical expertise of our staff who work in these fields daily. These complex 45-hour courses are each delivered four times a year for more than 200 students and include lecture as well as the required practical skill evolutions for certification. Again, these courses are conducted by our existing staff and funded by the Division's core operating budget. Any course of this caliber and duration would be extremely costly in any other delivery mechanism and thus strongly reduce the availability to most of Missouri's fire service. Similar courses provided by other states or private entities cost up to \$800 per person and yet do not qualify for certification due to their inability to address the entirety of the NFPA standards. Accreditation for these levels of certification is particularly difficult to obtain due to the complexity of the practical skills required. By developing, delivering, and evaluating these programs, we are able to provide Missouri's fire service with a level of accredited certification which few other states are able to offer. We will continue our commitment to these programs at NO cost to the students and using NO contracted training funds. To reduce or eliminate these free courses as provided by the Division of Fire Safety would be a disservice to the fire fighters of our state.

#### **Issue #4 Statewide Mutual Aid**

It is important to remember the Mutual Aid System is solely a voluntary system. We all realize anytime a department deploys resources there is a cost associated with little expectation for reimbursement. The Division's role in this process is to field requests for assistance and identify where such assistance can be attained in the quickest and most fiscally responsible manner. This process relies heavily on the Regional Mutual Aid Coordinators who channel the specific requested resources to a requesting agency through our Mutual Aid Coordinator. It is critical all involved in this process have as much situational awareness as possible to avoid "overuse of asset deployment". Unfortunately, some critical and often used resources only exist within certain regions of the state. The Division cannot be

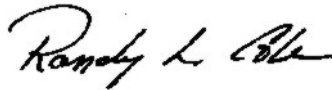
placed in a position to or be viewed as second guessing any incident commander's request for assistance.

There is no doubt identifying a funding source to support non-federally declared disasters is an avenue that needs further exploration. The Division has seen an increase in the number of entities that raise the question of reimbursement due to the recent economic challenges. We believe economic constraints, and not a basic change in the mutual aid philosophy, is prompting these inquiries.

Our Mutual Aid Coordinator has been involved in discussions with EMS and law enforcement in an attempt to move these disciplines toward the MOSCOPE template to develop a mutual aid process. Currently EMS is moving forward with such a program and fire-based EMS should be involved.

In closing, I appreciate this opportunity to provide you with in-depth details concerning the Division of Fire Safety operations. If at any time you have questions concerning the Division or any of the programs we offer, please do not hesitate to contact me at 573-751-2930 or [Randy.Cole@dfs.dps.mo.gov](mailto:Randy.Cole@dfs.dps.mo.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Randy L. Cole". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R".

Randy L. Cole  
State Fire Marshal