

Fire and Emergency Incident Information System Technical Advisory Panel
Tallahassee, FL
April 15, 2008

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT:

NAME

James Angle, Palm Harbor Special Fire Control Dist.
William Bryson, Miami Fire Department
Mike Coker, Division of Forestry
Julie Downey, Davie Fire Rescue
Greg Gay
Steve McCoy, Bureau of EMS
Dr. Ron Nutter
Shayne Stewart, Okaloosa Island Fire District
Laurie Sweeney, Orange County Fire-Rescue Dept.
Rick Talbert, South Walton Fire District
Charles "Scotty" Taylor Jr., Gainesville Fire Rescue
Ron Williams, Lake County Vo-Tech

REPRESENTING:

FL Association of Special Districts
FL Fire Chiefs' Association
Division of Forestry
State Fire Marshal
State Fire Marshal
Bureau of EMS
State Fire Marshal
State Fire Marshal
FL Professional Firefighters
FL Fire Chiefs' Association
FL Professional Firefighters
State Fire Marshal

ABSENT:

John Drago, City of Longwood
Jon Pasqualone, FL Fire Marshals & Inspectors Assoc.
Stockton Reeves, VI

FL League of Cities
FL Fire Marshals & Inspectors Assoc.
Insight, Orlando State Fire Marshal

On a motion duly made, the minutes from the Fire and Emergency Incident Information System Technical Advisory Panel held on January 24, 2008 were approved with a spelling correction.

Motion carried.

REPORT FROM DIVISION: *Given by Director Hallman*

Focus is still on this year's legislative session. It is a very different year than what is used to being seen in Tallahassee. The focus is on the budget. Most bills, in a normal year that would have been heard or processed, are not getting anywhere. Any bill that has any type of fiscal impact, even positive, is not being pushed forward to the committees.

The three bills with the most importance to this body and to the fire service are as follows:

House Bill 0727/Senate Bill 1554 - This has been named the Aldridge Binge Firefighter Safety Act. This bill is modeled after several other states that took the initiative to start marking buildings that have light weight frame truss roof systems. It is a good bill and it has done well both in the House and the Senate. It will most likely go to the floor. The only concern we have with this bill is if, by chance, an amendment is attached to it. We know of one amendment that is being attempted to be added and it has to do with fire alarm monitoring systems. The technology out there for telephones is being over run by voice over internet (VOIP). NFPA 72 currently does not address that technology. Even though voice over internet may be equivalent to or better than a phone system, NFPA 72 has not yet addressed it. You cannot be compliant if your alarm system is being monitored by a system that is voice over internet. The cable industry came forward and they are trying to put an amendment on this bill that would require the State Fire Marshal to do a study into this technology and to make a determination in a very short time frame whether the technology is equivalent to NFPA 72. If that is determined, it will go to rule making with input from all constituent bodies on whether Florida will allow that technology to be equivalent for fire alarm monitoring.

A meeting was held yesterday with all of the constituent groups and members of the cable industry. They received some very good feed back from the fire service people. NFPA has been asked to look at this. NFPA is studying this but as you know that will be a three year cycle. There is not 100% agreement on the fire service side that this is a good thing. There is some hesitation. The bill is moving forward but it is still uncertain if the amendment will be attached.

House Bill 1167/Senate Bill 2640 – Firefighter Protection Bill (Cigarette Regulation). This is modeled after several states which have this in place and the cigarette manufacturers actually endorse this bill simply because it has become cumbersome for them to have two different methods of manufacturing. This bill has not gotten a lot of recognition but Director Hallman feels it will move pretty quickly. The State Fire Marshal's office will watch it closely.

House Bill 1041/Senate Bill 2388 – Fire Prevention and Control (Re-write of 633). This bill did very well at the beginning but seems to have stalled in the last two weeks. The Senate side will be heard again on Thursday in front of the Council of Community Affairs. It is basically just a victim of the current legislation. Director Hallman is hopeful that this bill will pick up steam again.

There are a lot of bills out there that touch on condo associations and hotel/motel lodging. These are being watched closely for last minute amendments. We always worry about "sprinkler language".

Director Hallman noted that Sherm Sasser does an amazing job monitoring these bills. It is a handful and he is very good at it.

Budget – we are in the same boat everybody else is. The '08-'09 budget is still under negotiation. The House side is very favorable to the State Fire Marshal's office and

asked for no cuts whatsoever. The Senate side is asking for five positions from our Arson Bureau. We are hoping to go to conference between the House and Senate and do some negotiating. CFO Sink has mentioned that she would be willing to offer up other positions within the Department to help save our Arson positions.

Further clarification was requested on House Bill #1041. Director Hallman explained that the current language states that you cannot smoke for one year prior to certification but can smoke following certification. Both the Professional Firefighters and the Florida Fire Chiefs' agree that it is time to make sure that our firefighters are safe and healthy. With the enactment of the bill, any new firefighters from that date forward have to remain tobacco free. It states that the local agency has the right to report violators to the State Fire Marshal's office and their certification can be suspended/revoked if they do not comply. This is tied strictly to employment and is for all tobacco products.

REPORT FROM FFIRS: *Given by Keith McCarthy*

A FFIRS Status Report dated April 15, 2008 was provided to the panel.

As of April 1, 2008, 77.36% of fire departments have reported with a total of 1,670,973 incidents. The deadline for 2007 reporting is April 30, 2008.

The FFIRS Section continues to work on contacting departments who have not reported and are verifying information for the non-reporting departments.

The sunset of reporting through the old system is December 31, 2008. There are currently twenty (20) departments still using the old program. Keith McCarthy and staff have been visiting with fire departments helping to train them on the new system and are continuing to schedule training sessions.

Matt Hinson is the newest member to the staff of the FFIRS section, the FFFIRS section should be fully staffed by the end of next month.

The State of Florida has the lowest error margin for reporting in the nation.

The schedule for Annual Reports has been sent to all Bureaus.

Keith McCarthy is hopeful that through the efforts of the panel and the State Fire Marshal's office that all departments can be identified and be put into the FCDICE (Fire College Department of Insurance Continuing Education) system.

The deadline for submitting information for the annual report is the end of this month.

Eight (8) surveys were received so far. The only major department submitting a survey was from Hillsborough County. The other seven were received from small volunteer departments. Keith McCarthy stated that he feels the surveys should be done away with.

It has been found to be confusing for departments and it is basically just a summary with no raw data. He asked for the Panel's opinion with doing away with the surveys.

OLD BUSINESS:

Steve McCoy from the Bureau of EMS met with Keith McCarthy on March 17, 2008. It was a good meeting and they were able to discuss the trials and tribulations of data collection and how both agencies are having some of the same problems. The EMSTARS program is still in pilot testing and also trying to get agencies on board. Currently there are 110 agencies that have committed to the EMSTARS project. That is roughly 41%. The first extract will be performed where information can be uploaded into the national data base this week. There are roughly 800,000 records in the national data base. The first extract will be for approximately 110,000 records; the second will be for around 300,000 as more agencies come on-board. This will make us the largest provider in the nation.

Currently there are twenty providers submitting data into the EMSTARS data base. There will be seven more coming on in May. Training workshops will be provided state-wide from Pensacola to Miami starting this May and June. They will be listed on the Bureau of EMS web site.

The commonalities between both data bases were discussed. The crosswalk has been completed and will hopefully be on the Bureau's web site for viewing.

There are only 32 elements that are similar out of 156, so linking up data bases on the back side is probably not going to be the best way to go.

The push here is to identify vendors that can do both extracts. This will hopefully keep fire personnel from submitting two separate reports. There are vendors out there that can do both. Obviously, the correct software will be required.

Also discussed was pursuing state and federal grant funds to purchase the needed software.

Sherm Sasser recommended possibly looking to the Department of Health for assistance since they are in charge of the non fire-based ambulance/rescue units. The Department of Health is a very large grant provider and they might, at the State level, be able to apply for and approach it from that direction.

Sherm Sasser stated that the State Fire Marshal's office does not have the expertise or the staff to put together a grant funding unit. It was only recently that the Division was eligible to even apply for grants. Steve McCoy stated that the Bureau of EMS has a grant unit but not enough staff for another funding project.

Further discussion was held on ways to go about receiving grant funds.

Dr. Nutter suggested putting together a task force (with Panel members) to further the search for grant funding. Sherm Sasser offered his assistance to Dr. Nutter with this project.

NEW BUSINESS:

On a motion duly made, the Panel recommends to sunset the surveys (Annual Report) at the completion of the 2007 cycle.

Motion carried.

AUDIENCE:

None

NEXT MEETING: Friday, July 25, 2008 at 8:00 a.m. Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida.

Chairman Shayne Stewart announced that this would be his last meeting and respectfully submitted his resignation.

ADJOURN.