

CAMPUS Firewatch™

JUNE 2000

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Plans for Campus Fire Safety Forum II Announced!

At the National Fire Protection Association World Fire Safety Congress in Denver last month, the executive board of the NFPA Education Section finalized plans for holding Campus Fire Safety Forum II at the NFPA Fall Education Conference in Orlando, Florida. This forum will be a continuation of the first forum held at NFPA headquarters in 1999, and is being co-sponsored again by the NFPA and the United States Fire Administration.

There will be eight hours devoted to campus fire safety during the Fall Education Meeting. The first session will be on Sunday afternoon, November 12, 2000. Speaking will

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Working Together - Town/Gown

Ed Comeau, writer-tech.com

The relationship between the institution and the community, commonly referred to as "town-gown," is an important one. Often, neither one is completely responsible for all aspects of fire safety. The community may be responsible for building and fire code issues or providing emergency response services. The institution may have a staff dedicated to fire prevention, safety and response to incidents on the campus.

The town of Amherst, Massachusetts, is host to three institutions. The University of Massachusetts/Amherst is the flagship institution of the UMass system. There are 23,000 students enrolled there, with 11,000 living on campus in 41 dormitories that range from one-story buildings, to six 23-story high-rises. There is an internationally renowned polymer science research facility, as well as numerous other laboratories.

There are two private colleges within Amherst. Amherst College and Hampshire College are smaller liberal arts institutions with combined enrollments of 2,700 students.

The Amherst Fire Department (AFD) is made up of three components—a full time force of firefighters that staff two fire stations, a call force, and a student force comprised of students from the University and Amherst College.

Chief Keith Hoyle has been actively involved in campus fire safety for his entire career. As a student at UMass, he was a member of AFD's student fire department. Following this, he became the university's fire marshal, a position he held for fifteen years and was also a deputy chief for the fire department's call force.

He left UMass to become the fire chief of Franklin, Massachusetts, which is home to Dean College. While at Franklin, Hoyle was faced with dealing with several serious campus fires. Dean College had a catastrophic fire in one of its dormitories that totally destroyed it, followed by another fire seventeen months later that seriously damaged another dormitory. In 1999, Chief Hoyle returned to Amherst and took command of the fire department.

Campus Firewatch interviewed Chief Hoyle to gain some insight into the challenges that exist providing emergency services in a college community.

"The basic challenge," said Hoyle, "is that there is a large amount of educated young individuals who think they are invulnerable to anything that is going on around them and they are likely to have a more carefree attitude about how they approach life." This can create problems in "how they approach fire alarms and how they take care of themselves."

Constant education is one of the key aspects to an effective fire prevention strategy.

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FROM THE Editor

By the time you receive this, most colleges and universities will have finished their spring semester, and most of the students will have left campus. Many fire departments breath a collective sigh of relief that they have made it through another year, and use the summer as an opportunity to prepare for the return of the students in September.

There are some important topics covered in this issue of Campus Firewatch, and one that I am particularly pleased to see is that Campus Fire Safety Forum II is going to be happening!

The NFPA's Education Section, at their board meeting in Denver, decided to officially sponsor this forum as a follow-up to the first one held in 1999 at NFPA headquarters, and the United States Fire Administration has agreed to again co-sponsor the program. The board asked me to work on developing part of the program, which I gladly agreed to do.

While this is great progress, there are still issues to be addressed from the first forum that unfortunately haven't been dealt with. One of them is the formation of a coalition to coordinate many of the ongoing activities in the area of campus fire safety.

On a regular basis, I am hearing from people that are looking for information, or speakers (or both!) to help them in their efforts to improve the level of fire safety in a campus environment. Legislators in New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Washington, DC, are holding hearings on legislation and looking for experts to testify or provide support for their legislation. A wealth of information and talent out there can be tapped into to assist in these efforts. Unfortunately, there is no central clearinghouse to facilitate this process.

We'd love to hear from people that have ideas on forming such a coalition.

On another topic, we've received a number of requests from people that would like to reprint articles or the information contained in the first issue of Campus Firewatch. I thought that this might be a good opportunity to go over our policies.

The objective of Campus Firewatch is to create a means for sharing information and ideas. All of the articles in it are copyrighted (©2000 Campus Firewatch). If you want to reprint an article in your own publication, we're glad to let you do it. All that we ask is that you contact us with a request in writing (either via email, fax or letter) before you do so. We'll get a reply back to you as soon as possible.

Also, please do not pass on the entire newsletter by either forwarding or photocopying it. Since we are supported completely by subscriptions, we rely on new subscribers. If you think that we have valuable information that someone would find useful, suggest that they subscribe! We've worked hard to keep the subscription price as low as possible and within the reach of many people, and we would appreciate everyone's help in "spreading the word."

Thanks for your help!

Ed Comeau, the editor of Campus Firewatch, is the former chief fire investigator for the National Fire Protection Association. He began his involvement in campus fire safety as a fire fighter with the Amherst, Massachusetts, fire department while pursuing his degree in civil engineering. He can be reached at publisher@campus-firewatch.com.

CAMPUS JUNE 2000 Firewatch™

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Campus fire safety is a complex issue. The information in this newsletter is provided to help you in your efforts to provide as fire-safe a community as possible. However, it is no replacement for professional advice. For further assistance, contact your local fire department.

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LEGISLATION

Update

In the aftermath of the two recent tragic fires at Seton Hall and Bloomsburg, legislation has been filed at both the state and federal levels. These bills are focusing on various aspects of the fire safety issues relating to dormitories, Greek housing, and other educational-related housing issues.

All of this legislation can be found on the Campus Firewatch web site at www.campus-firewatch.com. Follow the links to the RESOURCE page.

Federal Legislation

The progress of any of the federal legislation bill can be tracked, online, through the Thomas Legislative Information website at www.thomas.loc.gov.

College Fire Prevention Act S2100

This bill has been proposed by Senators John Edwards (D-North Carolina) and Senator Frank Lautenberg (D-New Jersey). The aim of this bill is to require that all dormitories be equipped with automatic fire sprinklers. The bill, at this stage, is proposing \$100,000,000 in federal funds over a five-year period to support the installation. Institutions would have to provide matching funds, which would be awarded using competitive grants.

According to Senator Edwards's office, Senator Spencer Abraham (R-MI) has signed on as a co-sponsor of this legislation.

For more information on this bill, or to register your support, you can contact the following offices:

Senator John Edwards

*United States Senate
225 Dirksen Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510
PH: (202) 224-3154
senator@edwards.senate.gov*

Senator Frank Lautenberg

*506 Senate Hart Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
PH: (202) 224-4744
FX: (202) 224-9707
frank_lautenberg@lautenberg.senate.gov*

Fire Safe Dorm Act of 2000 S2178 (Senate) HR3831 (House)

The objective of this bill is to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to require colleges and universities to disclose to students and their parents the incidents of fires in dormitories, and their plans to reduce fire safety hazards in dormitories, to require the United States Fire Administration to establish fire safety standards for dormitories, and for other purposes.

The bill proposes that institutions adopt plans to install sprinklers, smoke detectors and flame-resistant furniture within ten years of the adoption of the bill. Within six months of adoption of the bill, the USFA would be required to establish standards for dormitory fire safety.

According to a spokesman for Representative Maloney, they are in the process of moving the legislation through the appropriations process. An additional representative, Steven LaTourette, (R-Ohio) has agreed to co-sponsor the bill. This is important because it represents bi-partisan

support for the legislation.

For more information on these bills, or to register your support, you can contact the following offices:

Senate:

Senator Frank Lautenberg (D-New Jersey)

*506 Senate Hart Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
PH: (202) 224-4744
FX: (202) 224-9707
frank_lautenberg@lautenberg.senate.gov*

House:

Representative Carolyn Maloney (D-New York)

*2430 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
PH: (202) 225-7944
FX: (202) 225-4709
rep.carolyn.maloney@mail.house.gov*

Higher Education Technical Amendments of 2000 HR4504

This legislation has several amendments attached to it pertaining to campus fire safety. They were passed on a voice vote in the Committee on Education in the Workforce on May 25, 2000. Some of the provisions include:

A description of campus fire safety practices and standards, including-

Information with respect to each campus residence hall and whether or not such hall is equipped with a fire sprinkler system or other fire safety system;

Statistics concerning the occurrence on campus of fires and false alarms in residence halls, including information on deaths, injuries, and structural damage caused by such occurrences, if any, during the 2 preceding calendar years for which data are available; and

Information regarding fire alarms, smoke

alarms, fire escape planning or protocols (as defined in local fire codes), rules on portable electrical appliances, smoking and open flames, regular mandatory supervised fire drills, and any planned improvements in fire safety.

Fire safety policies, procedures, and practices and disseminate information concerning those policies procedures and practices that have proven effective in the reduction of fires on campus.

Not later than July 1, 2002, prepare and submit a report to Congress containing-

An analysis of the current status of fire safety systems in college and university facilities, including sprinkler systems;

An analysis of the appropriate fire safety standards to apply to those facilities, which the Secretary shall compare after consultation with such fire safety experts, representatives of institutions of higher education, and Federal agencies as the Secretary, in the Secretary's discretion, considers appropriate;

An estimate of the cost of bringing all non-conforming residence halls and other campus buildings into compliance with appropriate building codes; and

Recommendations concerning the best means of meeting fire safety standards in all college facilities, including recommendations for methods of funding such costs.

Campus Firewatch will provide updates on this legislation as it moves forward.

State Legislation

New Jersey: Dormitory Safety Trust Fund Act S891

The status of this legislation can be tracked at www.njleg.state.nj.us

Senate Bill 891 is a merger of seven different pieces of legislation all relating to dormitory fire safety. It passed the Assembly, and as of 6/7/00 it was up for a second reading in the Senate, which would be followed by a vote. Following passage in the Senate, it would move to the governor's desk, where she has 45 days to sign or veto it. Governor Whitman, however, has expressed reservations over the five-year implementation window called for in the current legislation. She would like to see a

four-year window instead. As of press time, this issue had not been resolved.

This legislation calls for the installation of sprinklers in dormitories and Greek housing within five years. It provides 0% interest loans for public institutions and 2% interest loans for private institutions. There is a 15-year payback period for these loans.

For more information on these bills, or to register your support, you can contact the following offices:

Senate:

Senator John A. Girgenti

507 Lafayette Ave.

Hawthorne, NJ 07506

PH: (973)-427-1229

SenGirgenti@njleg.state.nj.us

www.njleg.state.nj.us/html/girgent.htm

Senator Louis F. Kosco

441 Market Street

Saddle Brook, NJ 07663

(PH: 201)-712-1221

www.njleg.state.nj.us/html/kosco.htm

Assembly:

Assemblyman John V. Kelly

371 Franklin Ave., 2nd Fl.

Nutley, NJ 07110

PH: (973)-667-6123

asmkelly@njleg.state.nj.us

www.njleg.state.nj.us/html/kelly.htm

Assemblyman John S. Wisniewski

3145 Bordentown Ave., Suite B

Parlin, NJ 08859

(732)-316-1885

AsmWisniewski@njleg.state.nj.us

www.njleg.state.nj.us/html/wisnew.htm

Office of the Governor

Governor Christine Todd Whitman

P.O. Box 001

Trenton, NJ 08625

(609) 292-6000

www.state.nj.us/governor/contact.htm

Pennsylvania Bill

Representative Michael McGeehan introduced House Bill 2458, the Dormitory Automatic Sprinkler Act, on April 11, 2000. This bill calls for the installation of sprinklers in all new dormitories, and in existing dormitories within five years. It proposes the appropriation of \$100,000,000 to fund a sprinkler loan fund for low interest loans.

According to a spokesman from

Representative Robert Belfanti's office, (Belfanti is the minority chairman of the House Labor Relations Committee), hearings before the committee on this bill are scheduled for Wednesday, May 31, 2000.

Testifying at the hearing will be:

Tim Knisely

Senior Fire and Housing Inspector, Central Region Code Administration

Chief Don Konkle

President, Pennsylvania Fire Emergency Institute

Aus Marburger-President, Fire Protection Industries, Inc.

Greg Mitchell-Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration, State System of Higher Education and

Don Sheaffer-Director of Facilities, State System of Higher Education

For more information on this bill, or to register your support, you can contact the following office:

Representative Michael McGeehan

221B South Office

Harrisburg, PA 17120

(717) 772-4029 (tel)

mcgeehan@pahouse.net

mcgeehan@pahouse.net

www.pahouse.net/McGeehan/index.htm

Wisconsin Bill

A bill was recently signed into law in Wisconsin that mandates retrofit sprinkler installation in all University of Wisconsin high-rise dormitories by the year 2006. It also requires that all future dormitories, regardless of height, be equipped with automatic fire sprinklers.

A fiscal estimate, prepared by the state government, on the cost of implementation is available on the Campus Firewatch web site.

For more information on this law you can contact the following office:

State Representative Rob Kreibich

107 West State Capitol

P.O. Box 8952

Madison, WI 53708

(608) 266-0660

rep.kreibich@legis.state.wi.us

Hotel/Motel Fire Safety Act

Many campuses use their dormitories and facilities to run conferences during the summer months. This provides a revenue stream to the facility at a time when these buildings would normally be idle.

However, did you know that by federal law when federal employees are traveling they are required to stay in housing that meets the guidelines stipulated in the Hotel and Motel Fire Safety Act of 1990?

This act was put in place following the devastating fires that occurred in the MGM Grand and Las Vegas Hilton hotels in Las Vegas, and the DuPont Plaza in Puerto Rico. Combined, 190 people lost their lives in these fires. The goal of the legislation was to provide a higher level of fire safety for federal employees when they were traveling by requiring them to stay in properties that were equipped with certain fire safety systems.

This law requires that employees be lodged in facilities that:

Are equipped with a hard-wired, single-station smoke detector in each guestroom in accordance with NFPA Standard 74.

Are equipped with an automatic fire sprinkler system installed in accordance with NFPA Standard 13 or 13R. Buildings that are three stories or lower are exempt from this requirement.

Crane Miller, from the office of general counsel for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (the parent agency that administers the United States Fire Administration), told Campus Firewatch that universities and colleges that hold conferences on their campus's fall under this law if any of the attendees are traveling using federal money. The attendees must stay in housing that meets these requirements.

A master list of accommodations that meet these criteria is maintained by the USFA and can be found on their web site at www.usfa.fema.gov/hotel/state_download.cfm

The complete text of the Hotel Motel Fire Safety Act can be found on the RESOURCE page of the Campus Firewatch web site www.campus-firewatch.com.

Statistical Summary

In the most recent report release by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), in school, college and university dormitories and fraternity and sororities, there were an average of 1,500 fires in 1997 that caused an \$7,000,000 in damage.

Cause of fires

For the period of 1993 to 1997, the following are the annual averages for the top three causes of the fires:

Cause	Percentage	Damage
Incendiary	32%	\$1,400,000
Cooking	19%	\$900,000
Smoking	12%	\$600,000

Area of origin

From 1993 to 1997, the top three areas of origin for fires are in these occupancies are:

Area of origin	Percentage	Damage
Bedroom	24%	\$5,000,000
Kitchen	21%	\$500,000
Hallway, corridor or mall	17%	\$300,000

According to information from the NFPA, "In 1997, smoke or fire alarms were present in 93% of all dormitory fires, but sprinklers were present in only 28% of these fires. These figures apply only to properties where fires occurred...On average, direct property damage per fire is 36% lower in dormitory fires where sprinklers are present compared to those where sprinklers are not present." (U.S. Dormitory Fire Statistics, NFPA)

A copy of the NFPA report School, College, and University Dormitories, and Fraternity and Sorority House Fires can be ordered from NFPA's One-Stop Data Shop at 1-617-984-7450, or osds@nfpa.org.



Campus Firewatch Website

The value of this newsletter doesn't stop with just this copy. Visit its companion website at www.campus-fire-watch.com, where you will find a wealth of information relating to campus fire safety. Included on the site is...

- Model legislation from Chapel Hill, North Carolina
- Lesson plans
- Pending federal and state legislation
- Testimony given before state legislatures
- Breaking news
- Fire facts
- ...and more!

If you have something that you would like to contribute, please send it to us at publisher@campus-firewatch.com

See you there!

Campus Fire Safety Forum - continued from page 1

be Fire Chief Dan Jones from the Chapel Hill Fire Department. Along with Chief Jones will be Mrs. Bonnie Woodruff, who lost her son in the 1996 fire at the Phi Gamma Delta fraternity, and rounding out the program will be Ed Comeau, the publisher of Campus Firewatch.

On Monday, November 13, Campus Fire Safety Forum II will be held. This session is going to build on the recommendations made in the final report for the first forum and look towards the future, and it will be moderated by Ed Comeau.

Both sessions will be open to all attendees to the Education Conference.

"With the recent college fire tragedies fresh on our minds," said Meri-K Appy, NFPA's vice president "I'm delighted that the NFPA fall meeting will provide an opportunity to bring together the very people who can make a difference. This is the next step in an ongoing process that started with the first forum at NFPA headquarters last August."

In speaking with Campus Firewatch about college fire safety, Carrye Brown, administrator for the USFA said that "students are one of our most precious present and future assets, and we don't want to lose them to fire."

More information will be available in future issues of Campus Firewatch, on our website www.campus-firewatch.com or on the NFPA website www.nfpa.org. A copy of the final report from Forum I can be found on the Campus Firewatch website's RESOURCE page.

Working Together - continued from page 1

"You must always try and educate them as best you can." The students don't want to be lectured at, so you try to use examples, especially on a nationwide basis. "Usually that has effect. If there is a large fire or a fatal fire at another institution, you do see short term benefit in terms of their attitudes." However, it is a fleeting thing. Hoyle agrees with Chapel Hill Fire Chief Dan Jones about the window of opportunity to make an impact or change (see the interview with Chief Jones in the May issue of Campus Firewatch). "Even if you get them as a freshman, a lot of them aren't on campus as seniors, so you have a whole new group to deal with." There is also more of a turnover in staff than there used to be to contend with.

Off-campus housing, however, is more of a concern than the dormitories. Since the dorms all have fire alarm systems, and a number of them are sprinklered, or will be in the near future, he feels that much of the efforts need to be focused on the apartments and houses that students are renting. "You don't see that level of protection in the apartments that were built 25 or 30 years ago. Plus there is little oversight when you get off campus," said Hoyle.

The Greek system is of particular concern, especially the fraternities. Recently three of the fraternities were taken to court for having inoperable fire alarm systems. They are under court order to upgrade their systems and have them monitored by a fire alarm monitoring company. Seizing this opportunity, Hoyle is going to mandate that all of the fraternities and sororities be monitored by September 2001.

How AFD approaches the Greek system is a good example of town-gown cooperation. Twice a year, all of the houses are inspected by a team made up of fire department personnel and staff from the university's Department of Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S). Even though the inspections are

announced well in advance, what the team of inspectors find when they arrive varies tremendously, observed Hoyle.

"When you arrive, sometimes you are greeted by three of the brothers in suits with coffee and donuts." In other cases, they walk in, no one is around, and the house is in shambles. The violations that they find, even though they are aware of the inspection, include fire alarm systems not working, fire doors missing, emergency lights inoperable, missing fire extinguishers, the fire integrity of the walls breached, and poor housekeeping, among others.

The joint inspections conducted by the fire department and the university is but one example of how closely they work together. The current deputy chief of AFD's call force is also Hoyle's successor as the university's fire marshal. Several other staff members of the fire protection division are on the town's call force. This helps immeasurably when dealing with incidents on the campus because of the familiarity the people have with the buildings and university operations.

EH&S also has a staff person that responds to incidents on campus, 24-hours a day. Known as "F1," this person serves as a liaison between the fire department and the university whenever there is a response on campus. By having someone immediately available to assist the fire department, incidents are handled much better than they might be otherwise.

There is a distinct difference in dealing with the private institutions than the state university. "It is much easier at Amherst College to get things done. They are not as bureaucratic and don't have to abide by the level of state oversight that exists at a public institution." It is also very helpful that the person in charge of fire safety at Amherst College formerly worked for Hoyle at UMass and is on the town's call force. This integration of fire department personnel and

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campus fire safety personnel also extends to Hampshire College, where the director of public safety is also on the call force.

According to Hoyle, Amherst College is 1/10th the size of UMass, but unfortunately it has the highest number of false alarms of the three institutions. "There are more fire alarms at Amherst College (212 fire calls in 1999) than UMass (165 responses). Because the university has kept pace with technology over the past 10 to 15 years, they don't get as many needless activations at UMass as they do at Amherst College."

According to EH&S, all of the dormitory rooms at UMass are equipped with single station smoke detectors, and as the systems are upgraded, system smoke detectors that provide pre-alarm notification are installed in the rooms. The corridors are equipped with cross-zoned detectors, and all of the high-rise dormitories are equipped with sprinklers. Amherst College is embarking on a program to sprinker all of their dormitories, some of which date back to the early 1900's.

The value of having a strong EH&S program extends to areas other than fire protection, such as a safe laboratory program. Even though the labs might be under the jurisdiction of the university and not the town, it is the fire department that will have to respond and handle any emergencies that might occur. They haven't had a lot of trouble in the labs at all," said Hoyle. This is mainly due to the fact that the university exercises good oversight over them." However, in the event that there is an incident, F1 plays a critical role as a liaison.

Because of the complexity of the systems used in some of these labs, it is impossible for the fire department, or other responders, to know first-hand how to operate them. During a recent hazardous materials exercise that simulated a release in one of the labs, the state's hazardous material team was

deployed. While the team was formulating a plan to mitigate this incident, the university's EH&S liaison recommended that one of the researchers don protective clothing and enter with the team. The computer systems used in the lab were so complex that it would have been very difficult to try and explain to the haz mat technicians how to purge the system.

At first, the hazardous materials team leader was strongly opposed to having a civilian enter into a "hot zone." After it was explained to the team leader how the staff is trained in using SCBA and how to handle themselves during emergencies, the researcher was allowed to be a member of the team. He was able to have the system purged within minutes. This would not have been possible if he wasn't able to enter into the lab. A simulated, potentially long-term incident that would have shut down a vital research building was controlled quickly because of the cooperation between the two entities.

The fire department's student force is another example of how closely the fire department and the institutions work together. Full time students from both UMass and Amherst College volunteer their time to staff an engine in one of the fire stations. Started in the 1950's, the student force, or Engine 3, is being doubled in size for the fall of 2001 to 30 members. "Engine 3, staffed entirely by students and under the direction of a permanent officer, will be on duty 24 hours a day, 7 days a week," said Hoyle.

This is a "win-win" situation for both the town and the university, according to Patricia Vinchesi, director of community relations for the university. "The students are a unique complement" to the relationship between UMass and Amherst. "It helps UMass pay something back to the community."

Engine 3 was recently recognized by the Chancellor for their role in an apartment fire that broke out. Both of the on-duty engines were on responses, one at

UMass for a false alarm, and another that was busy extinguishing dumpster fires following an off-campus party. A report was received of an apartment fire, and Engine 3 was dispatched and was the first engine on the scene of a working fire. Not having them available would have certainly resulted in more damage, and possibly injuries or fatalities, according to Hoyle.

The Student Force is also used in fire prevention activities. Mike Swain, fire prevention officer for EH&S at UMass has involved the students in his fire prevention efforts on campus. "It is a peer-to-peer effort... the students on campus don't think it is just the administration, but one of their own."

Swain emphasized the value of working closely with the fire department other than just during emergencies. "We bring them in early in the design process to get their input." This is done during the design phase, well before the university is required to get plans approval from the town. "This can give us more clout in getting fire protection in place if we're able to say that the fire department wants this too."

Working closely with the local fire department can only benefit both the campus and the department, both before and during an incident. When Swain was asked what advice he had to offer to campuses that did not have a program in place for working with the fire department, his answer was simple. "Establish one."

America Burning Recommissioned

In 1972, a commission was established to look at the fire problem in the United States. This commission published its findings in a report entitled "America Burning." In 1999, another commission was empaneled to review the current state of affairs and determine what progress had been made since the 1972 report.

The findings of the America Burning Recommissioned panel has just been released. Unfortunately, it paints a bleak picture of the lack of progress that has been made since the 1972 report.

The following is a cover letter for the current report that was written by the commission's chair, George Bernstein. The full report can be downloaded from the RESOURCE section of <http://www.campus-firewatch.com>

Honorable James Lee Witt
Director, Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street, SW
Washington, DC 20472

Re: America Burning Recommissioned

Dear Director Witt:

In creating this Commission, you directed us to recommend an updated approach and framework for the evolving role of the fire service with respect to fire and other hazards. You also asked us to review the 1972 America Burning Report in light of the 1998 review by the "Blue Ribbon Panel" of the U. S. Fire Administration (USFA), which "identified three core deficiencies that are undermining the effectiveness of" the USFA. You have emphasized that your major concern is that the Commission identify the means by which fires can best be prevented and loss of life and property reduced.

America Burning was considered the seminal effort in systematizing our nation's efforts to address the fire hazard and the resultant loss of life and property. It was greeted with praise by all elements of government and the fire community. However, more than one-third of the America Burning's recommendations have not been implemented and more than half were only partially implemented. During the intervening 28 years there was no systematic effort to track the implementation of these recommendations.

A prime example of the failure to adequately implement America Burning has been the unwillingness of the federal government to fund the USFA and ancillary programs at anywhere near the recommended level of \$153 million. The initial funding in 1980 was only \$24 million (\$45,130,000 in year 2000 dollars) and twenty-five years later, for fiscal year 2000, it is only \$42,982,000, an actual decrease of 4.7 percent, reflecting inflation.

The lack of substantial funding to implement America Burning speaks volumes about the low priority that all segments of government - federal, state and local - assign the fire hazard compared to other areas of public safety. The failure to adequately fund fire prevention and response, in general, and the USFA, in particular, has resulted in continued loss of life and property at levels that would otherwise have been substantially reduced.

Although deaths from fire have fallen from 7,395 in 1977 to 4,035 in 1998, those lost lives are not acceptable. One hundred and ten firefighters died in the line of duty in 1998. Despite the occasional periodic sympathy generated by tragedies such as the loss of six firefighters in Worcester, Massachusetts in December 1999, fire deaths receive little nationwide attention and sparse legislative and funding response. Since the Worcester fire, USFA has been notified of 40 firefighter fatalities and estimates that an additional 1,800 civilian lives have been lost from fires.

It is also unfortunate that, despite the current involvement of the fire services, often as first responder on the scene, in such areas as emergency medical services, hazardous materials and acts of domestic terrorism, the fire services

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America Burning Re-commissioned - continued from page 8

have not been granted the additional wherewithal to carry out these new responsibilities.

The Commission concurs with the conclusion of the Blue Ribbon Panel that the USFA's operations suffer from deficiencies in "leadership" and "communication." We believe that such deficiencies, which FEMA has begun to address, are derivative of the national lack of priority given to support of the fire services. As to the Blue Ribbon Panel's finding of deficiencies in "resource management," we agree with the panel that "At no time since 1974 has the USFA had the resources it needs to address this nation's fire problems with sustained impact." We believe that many of the other problems of "resource management" are also derivative of inadequate funding over the years and the attempt to accomplish too many tasks with too little money.

Ways to reduce fire losses and deaths are neither unknown nor arcane. The primary way and the goal of any effort in this area must be to prevent fires in the first place. Smoke detectors and alarm systems in homes and commercial buildings have already proven their worth in alerting occupants and saving lives. Sprinklers are acknowledged as the most effective tool in immediately suppressing fires, minimizing damage and saving lives.

Unfortunately, few jurisdictions require sprinklers in private dwellings or existing commercial and residential structures, or even in existing schools, nursing homes, hospitals or other places of public assembly, except in the event of major reconstruction. Moreover, the federal government sets a poor example by its failure to require sprinklers in assisted public housing or in existing federal buildings.

Although our Commission appreciates the concern of this Administration with the current fire situation, as represented by the re-commissioning of "America Burning," we are concerned, based on prior governmental inaction, whether there is the will and commitment at the federal, state and local levels to fund and implement actions that are essential to reduce losses from fire and other hazards.

Until the USFA is empowered by funding and staffing to become the leader in our nation's firefighting efforts, unless the fire services are adequately funded, and unless local communities enforce known fire preventive and suppression measures, the establishment of this Commission and its efforts to develop recommendations in the areas of leadership, research, training, communication and public education, sound code development, partnership between the public and private sectors, and above all, in mitigation, will be an exercise in futility.

If the number of fires and resultant losses are to be reduced, there must be a concerted and consistent effort among not just the fire services but, as recently observed by three of those involved in the original America Burning Report and its initial implementation, other stakeholder groups as well, including "city and county managers, mayors, architects, engineers, researchers, academics, materials producers and the insurance industry" as well as the general public.

Although members of the Commission have diverse backgrounds and concerns, they have subordinated parochial interests to the development of recommendations to prevent fires and reduce loss of life and property from fire and other hazards. I thank you for the privilege of working with this distinguished group.

The attached Findings and Recommendations summarize the conclusions of the Commission. We will shortly forward to you the complete Report. A number of our recommendations are not new and reflect the foresight and wisdom of the authors of the original America Burning as well as other studies since then. The Commission believes that had those past recommendations been more fully implemented, there would have been less need for this report. We hope that sufficient action will follow this Report so that twenty-five years from now another America Burning, Re-commissioned will be unnecessary.

Sincerely,
George K. Bernstein, Chair

COLLEGE Fire Log

The following are brief summaries of incidents that have occurred in college occupancies. Unless noted otherwise, they have been taken from press accounts and have not been verified for accuracy. Several of these incidents will be profiled in future issues of Campus Firewatch.

If you have an incident that you would like to contribute for this column, please contact us at publisher@campus-firewatch.com.

November 4, 1999

University of Iowa
Ames, Iowa

Four University of Iowa students were left homeless after a fire in their home. The fire, which occurred at approximately 3:48 a.m., started in a fireplace and extended into the structure. Two residents were at home at the time of the fire, which caused about \$25,000 in damage.

November 10, 1999

Oregon State University
Corvallis, OR

On Monday, November 8, 1999, five fires occurred in Sackett Hall dormitory. The building was evacuated four times, and ultimately the residents were kept out of the building until 10:00 a.m. the next morning. Another fire was discovered on Tuesday evening, November 9, 1999, at midnight. This fire occurred in a recycling bin and did not set off any alarms. According to police officials, the fires were believed to be maliciously set.

The building, which measures over 140,000 square feet, is divided into four quadrants. The 7:23 p.m. fire was located in the basement. The 9:30 p.m. fire was in a trash chute. The fire that occurred at 11:15 p.m. was located in the B wing. The location of the fire at 1:30 p.m. was not given.

November 14, 1999

University of Nebraska
Lincoln, Nebraska

A former resident assistant was accused of setting five fires in Selleck Quadrangle. The 19-year old RA was dismissed after he admitted to setting the fires. The fires were set in trashcans.

November 19, 1999

Florida State University
Tallahassee, FL

A wing of the Alpha Tau Omega fraternity house was damaged by a fire that broke out at 4:00 a.m. There were 27 people in the house, and all escaped from the fire. One was treated for smoke inhalation and released.

December 2, 1999

Pennsylvania State University
State College, PA

NOTE: Senior Fire and Housing Inspector Tim Knisely, Centre Region Code Administration provided this information.

An arson fire in a three-story fraternity, Phi Kappa Sigma, was suppressed by the activation of two sprinkler heads. Flammable liquid was poured on the floor in a mechani-

cal room and ignited at approximately 2:30 a.m. The building was occupied by 17 residents at the time of the fire.

December 8, 1999

University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, MI

An unattended Hanukkah menorah, which was set on a paper towel, was the cause of a fire in the South Quad Residence Hall. The fire damage was limited to the dorm room, but smoke damaged the hallway.

December 8, 1999

Yale University
New Haven, CT

A fire was started by an unattended menorah in a suite. The building where the fire occurred had been the location of a number of false alarms in recent weeks, and many students did not leave the building until they were ordered to do so by police officers. Yale prohibits candles in student suites.

December 11, 1999

Pennsylvania State University
State College, PA

NOTE: This information was provided by Senior Fire and Housing Inspector Tim Knisely, Centre Region Code Administration.

A vacant fraternity, Phi Mu Delta, was the site of an arson fire that occurred at 2:30 a.m. There were multiple points of origin in the building, which had been closed due to structural failure. The fire department had developed a pre-incident plan for this building that called for a defensive operation. Because of windows and doors that had been boarded up, it was difficult for exterior master streams to penetrate. The roof, third and fourth floors were destroyed by the fire.

December 31, 1999**Michigan State University**
East Lansing, MI

A fire in Michigan State University's Agriculture Hall damaged offices on the third and fourth floor of the building's north-east corner. Investigators found evidence of accelerants, which has led them to believe the cause of the fire was arson.

January 14, 2000**University of Alabama**
Tuscaloosa, AL

It was believed that a student set fire to his dormitory room as part of an unsuccessful suicide attempt. The fire was limited to the room of origin. The student was treated for smoke inhalation.

January 18, 2000**Rutgers University**
New Brunswick, NJ

NOTE: The precise date of this incident is unknown. The story was filed on 1/18/00.

Over the winter break, the Rutgers College Counseling Center and a neighboring fraternity house, Sigma Alpha Mu, were damaged by fire. The fraternity was burned down, and the counseling center had to be demolished because of the damage.

January 24, 2000**University of Michigan**
Ann Arbor, MI

A room was damaged on the sixth floor of Mary Markley residence hall. A university spokesperson attributed the cause of the fire to an "electrical situation."

February 2, 2000**St. Michael's College**
Colchester, VT

A fire at 11:18 a.m. in a garbage can forced the evacuation of Ryan Hall. The fire was extinguished with a fire extinguisher.

February 7, 2000**University of Kentucky**
Lexington, KY

A fraternity house was damaged by a fire that was attributed to an unattended space heater. The second and third floors of the Sigma Pi house were damaged by a fire that was believed to have been started by an unattended space heater. In press reports, one fraternity member reported that they all had space heaters because the building was too cold.

The fire came a week after another fraternity, Sigma Chi, was evicted because of fire-safety violations.

February 21, 2000**University of Virginia**
Charlottesville, VA

A student was arrested for setting a bulletin board on fire at 2:00 a.m. The fire activated the building fire alarm system.

February 23, 2000**Washington State University**
Pullman, WA

An off-campus apartment occupied by students was damaged by a fire. All of the residents in the apartment building were students at Washington State University. This is the second fire in two years in the same building. The previous fire had been started when the residents put boxes on top of the stove and then called the utility company to turn on the electricity. The cause of this fire had not been determined at the time of the report.

March 3, 2000**University of Toledo**
Toledo, OH

A series of arson fires since February 17, 2000, had occurred in Parks Tower residence hall. These fires followed 3 arson fires that had occurred between December 11 and 15, 1999, on the 14th floor of the high-rise. The building is unsprinklered.

March 2, 2000**Brigham Young University**
Provo, UT

A fire in a laboratory was extinguished by the sprinkler system. A gel test on a new plastic material was being done in the room where the fire occurred, although it is not clear from press reports if this was the cause of the fire.

March 8, 2000**Pennsylvania State University**
State College, PA

NOTE: This information was provided by Senior Fire and Housing Inspector Tim Knisely, Centre Region Code Administration.

The Chi Phi fraternity was the site of a fire at 11:30 p.m. The fire, which was contained to a bedroom on the second floor, was determined to be related to "a variety of electrical appliances at the point of origin. Numerous extension cords, power strips and appliances were utilized throughout the room."

March 25, 2000**Drew University**
Madison, NJ

A historic administration building at Drew University was damaged by a carelessly discarded cigarette. A cigarette fell through the boards on a porch and ignited kerosene lamps stored underneath. Press reports state that the sprinkler system stopped the spread of the fire.

March 28, 2000**University of Iowa**
Iowa City, IA

Two separate fires broke out in Daum Residence Hall. A poster board with papers on it was lit on fire at 3:30 a.m., and another similar fire occurred at 3:52 a.m. Even though the alarms sounded for the first fire, it was reported that there was no evacuation taking place.

April 5, 2000

Indiana University
Bloomington, IN

An apartment complex that housed university students and employees was damaged by a fire. Two units were destroyed in a fire that was believed to be incendiary.

April 5, 2000

Brigham Young University
Provo, UT

An air compressor burnt out, causing a small fire that forced residents to evacuate Lavina C. Fugal Hall. The fire occurred at 3:30 a.m. and has been attributed to an earlier power outage.

April 10, 2000

University of New Hampshire
Durham, NH

NOTE: The following information was obtained in an interview by Campus Firewatch with Assistant Chief Blake from the Durham Fire Department.

A fire in a 200-year-old balloon-frame apartment building seriously damaged the building. Six apartments in the three-story building were rented by students from UNH.

The fire was believed to have started in an apartment on the second floor in the area of a fireplace. Each apartment was equipped with a functional fireplace that apparently the residents were using.

Smoke had reportedly been smelled in the early afternoon, but it wasn't enough to activate any smoke detectors. The fire was reported to the fire department at 7:28 p.m. It required three alarms before the fire was brought under control.

April 10, 2000

Washington State University
Pullman, WA

Several fires over the weekend in fraternities were determined to be arson. One of the fires in the Tau Kappa Epsilon house was set in the stairwell. Fifteen fraternity members were in the building at the time of the fire. A heat detector was activated by the fire, which alerted the residents.

A fire in another fraternity was labeled suspicious. A burning mattress was found on the porch of the Delta Chi fraternity. These were the third and fourth fraternity fires at WSU this year.

April 11, 2000

University of Virginia
Charlottesville, VA

A fire in a student's apartment may have been caused by carelessly disposed cigarettes. Eight graduate students were left homeless after the fire, which was estimated to have caused half a million dollars in damage.

April 17, 2000

Pennsylvania State University
State College, PA

NOTE: This information was provided by Senior Fire and Housing Inspector Tim Knisely, Centre Region Code Administration.

A fire broke out in a fraternity that was located in a building with business and retail stores on the first floor. The second and third floors were occupied by the Kappa Sigma fraternity. The alarm was activated, transmitting a signal to an alarm monitoring company who, in turn, notified the fire department. The residents silenced the alarm and then attempted to extinguish the fire with a dry chemical fire extinguisher. No one called the fire department to notify them of the fire.

April 18, 2000

Pennsylvania State University
State College, PA

NOTE: This information was provided by Senior Fire and Housing Inspector Tim Knisely, Centre Region Code Administration.

A small fire in a trashcan occurred at the Kappa Sigma fraternity. The fire was quickly detected by a smoke detector, which sent a signal to an alarm monitoring company.

April 19, 2000

North Carolina State University
Raleigh, NC

A fire started by a burning candle damaged a dormitory room in Becton Hall. The room's residents were not present at the time of the fire. Smoke and heat damage were limited to the room of origin.

May 3, 2000

Martin Methodist College
Pulaski, TN

A historic home was damaged by a fire. The building was to have been renovated as an administration building.

May 5, 2000

California State University at Hayward
Hayward, CA

A fire in a library gutted several offices. No library books were damaged, but widespread smoke and water damage spread into an adjoining building.

May 6, 2000

Plymouth State University
Plymouth, NH

NOTE: The following information was obtained in an interview by Campus Firewatch with Chief Thibeault, Plymouth Fire Department.

A fire in an off-campus house rented by students caused extensive damage to the building. The fire started in a stuffed chair on a lower level and spread to the room's contents. As the fire broke out of the window, it ignited a pine tree immediately adjacent to the house, which allowed the fire to then spread quickly to the upper story and into the roof. Three out of five of the occupants smoke, and while the cause could not be definitively determined, the chief felt that it was probably smoking materials. At the time of the fire, there were a number of parties on the street where the house was located. This street has a large concentration of off-campus student housing, and the night before the department had responded to five couch fires outside of the buildings. There were also "significant alcohol issues involved."

Monday, May 8, 2000

Savannah State University

Savannah, GA

A fire in a 99-year old building was determined to have been accidental. The fire that destroyed the building was caused by a cutting torch.

May 12, 2000

Alfred University

Alfred, NY

A fire in an apartment house critically injured a student that was scheduled to graduate in two days. The building, which was a block away from Alfred University, was entirely occupied by students.

May 23, 2000

University of California-Berkeley

Berkeley, CA

Two marina warehouses belonging to the University of California-Berkeley were destroyed by a fire. Damage estimates were above \$2 million. The fire required five alarms before it was brought under control. At the time of this report, the cause of the fire had not been determined.

ANSWER THESE 20 QUESTIONS BEFORE YOU SIGN A RENTAL AGREEMENT!

In a few months, students will be searching for off-campus housing in communities across the country. According to the panel of experts at the 1999 College Fire Safety Forum, the problem with fires in off-campus housing is a serious one. These fires are often not reported as college-related, therefore the number of fires involving college students is under-reported.

This list of 20 questions was developed by the National Association of State Fire Marshals to help parents and students when selecting off-campus housing. By no means is this an all-inclusive list. For more information on any particular property, the local fire department is one of your best sources of information about any past problems or incidents.

1. Are smoke alarms installed? Working?
2. How old are the smoke alarms?
3. How often are the smoke alarms checked and batteries changed?
4. Are there at least two ways to exit your living space and your building?
5. Do the upper floors have a fire escape or ladder available for each bedroom? (if there are multiple floors)
6. Are the living unit doors rated for fire?
7. Are fire extinguishers available? Working?
8. Were the fire extinguishers inspected within the last year?
9. Is a sprinkler system installed?
10. Is the electrical wiring adequate?
11. Is the building regularly inspected by the local fire department or college emergency management office for safety?
12. What is the owner's policy and method for correcting safety problems in the building?
13. Has there ever been a fire in this building? If so, identify the cause.
14. Does the residence have a gas or electric stove/oven?
15. Do you know how to use the appliance(s) correctly?
16. Where is the nearest fire hydrant on the street?
17. Who is responsible for keeping it cleared in the winter season?
18. Did the school recommend the unit for student housing?
19. Is the owner a member in good standing in a landlord/tenant association or other housing association?
20. Has the city and/or university received any safety complaints regarding this building?

Source: "A Meeting of the Minds" A CD produced by the National Association of State Fire Marshals, October 1998. This list can also be downloaded from the RESOURCE section of the Campus Firewatch web site at www.campus-firewatch.com.

IAFC College/ University Chiefs Forum

At the annual meeting of the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the campus fire chief's forum has been a place where chiefs from across the country meet to share experiences, ideas, successes and failures in providing fire protection in college towns.

Boulder fire chief Larry Donner has been involved in this forum from its inception. "Each year we pick timely topics. Bruce Fuerbringer from Eau Claire spoke about the video 'Get Out and Stay Alive' one year. Another year, the topic was on spring riots and the riots that occur when universities win national championships."

The chiefs who attend the forum come from diverse communities, but they all share the same common problems of dealing with a population of young people, many out on their own for the first time. "The networking is one of the valuable aspects of the forum. You'll hear something that you think is not directly applicable to you at the time, but later, when you return home and it pops up, you know who to call," said Donner.

This year's meeting is being held in Dallas, Texas, on Sunday, August 27th from 1:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. More information can be found at the IAFC's web site at [HYPERLINK "http://www.iafc.org"](http://www.iafc.org) www.iafc.org, or you can contact Chief Donner at 303-441-3357, or via email at DonnerL@ci.boulder.co.us.



Going to Press...



As we were going to press with this issue, the Columbine Report had just been released by the Jefferson County Sheriff's Department. This is the report of the tragic incident at Columbine High School where 12 students and one teacher were killed by two students who then committed suicide. Twenty-one people were injured during the 41 minutes that the two roamed through the building.

In addition to the guns, the two killers planted two 20-pound propane bombs in the building, both equipped with timers. Because of faulty wiring and poor construction, both bombs failed to detonate. At one point, the gunmen were seen on videotape shooting at one of the bombs in the cafeteria, trying to detonate it.

During the 41 minutes, the gunmen detonated a number of pipe bombs, some in the cafeteria. Five sprinkler heads were activated by the explosion.

The report is available on CD, and contains the text of the report, video from surveillance cameras, news footage and recordings of the 911 calls. It can be ordered, online, at www.qualitydata.com/columbine.html.

An online version of the report is also available at the Denver Post website at www.denverpost.com/news/colreport/Columbinerep/pages/INTRO_TEXT.htm.

More information on this report will be available in an upcoming issue of Campus Firewatch.