



FEMA

# USEFA

News in Review

An Electronic Newsletter for First Responders and Allied Professionals

## Notes from the Fire Administrator

The death toll from residential fires seemed to soar late in 2003, with many fires taking multiple lives in tragedies that left even those of us with many years of service shaken and grieving. The death toll seemed to remain high into the beginning of 2004. In response, we disseminated an article on how fire chiefs can work with

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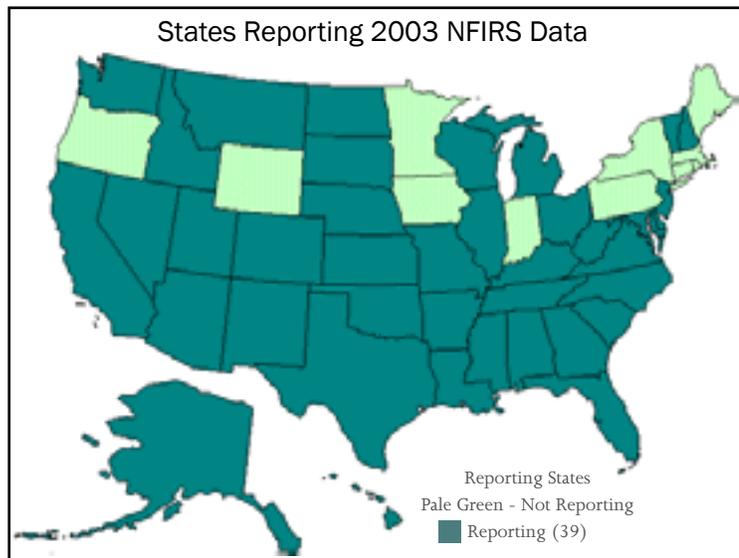
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## Michigan Cited by U.S. Fire Administrator as Success Story for the National Fire Incident Report System

U.S. Fire Administrator R. David Paulison is applauding the work done by Michigan's 1,080 fire departments to report their fire data electronically -- a task that provides good, valid data for budget justifications, grant support, public education, and planning.

"More than 96 percent of Michigan's fire departments report this data," said Paulison. "These data are available to code and standards groups, which means that model codes and standards reflect changing technology, lifestyles, and provide more appropriate documents for States and local governments to adopt and work with to provide a safe environment in their communities. Michigan is to be applauded for its success in this area."



As early as the mid-1970's, the Michigan State Police, Fire Marshal's Office recognized the importance of having good data relating to fires. The Michigan Fire Prevention Code, Act 207, P.A. 1941, made it mandatory that all fire and

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## Notes from the Fire Administrator

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their media to promote fire safety in the wake of such tragedies. The article has been very well received. I urge any of you who have not seen the article, to visit <http://www.usfa.fema.gov/inside-usfa/media/04-after-a-serious-fire.shtm> to see it. You are free to reprint this article and use it in any way you wish to help us spread these suggestions. Perhaps by working together, we may some day see a significant drop in the national death toll from these terrible fires.

R. David Paulison

## NFIRS Success Story

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hazardous materials incidents be reported to the State fire marshal. A paper-based fire incident reporting system, the "Michigan Fire Incident Reporting System," (MFIRS) was created. Michigan fire departments began filing reports and a mechanism was created at the State level to receive and input data to a mainframe.

The next logical step was electronic reporting. Vendors developed State-approved software that allowed fire departments to submit their data electronically, via a bulletin board system. The system was, by today's standards, cumbersome. But it worked and Michigan had most of its fire departments reporting either on paper or electronically. This provided a wealth of data, which was available for use by the State, and by local agencies, to consider when making decisions about codes and standards and in the creation of educational programs. Because the MFIRS system was unique to Michigan, the data had to be converted before being uploaded to the national level to become part of a national cache of data, which did cause some data to be lost or misrepresented.

During the early 90's, Michigan participated with many other States in the National Fire Information Council. The major emphasis was a complete revision of the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS). Michigan was the first State to implement the new NFIRS program.

One of the most important considerations in implementing the new system was to make the data as usable as possible, which meant minimizing the number of steps to get the

data submitted and available for analysis, and also making it as valid as possible. To this end, Michigan decided to use NFIRS without modification, and to make it possible for fire departments to submit data directly to the Federal server. This put the data at the end point as quickly as possible and also meant that fire departments could use free software, or software developed by vendors using the national specification without modification, keeping costs down.

"Good data directly impact the ability of the modern fire department to work effectively in preventing fires in its community," said Paulison. "Michigan can be proud of its achievements in the area of reporting, analysis, and use of the data. To be congratulated are the Michigan fire departments, which have stepped up to the plate and are doing an excellent job of providing data through NFIRS and electronic reporting."

## First National Summit to Address Fire Service Line-of-Duty Death Prevention Initiative

The National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF) has announced it will be holding the first National Line-of-Duty Death Prevention Summit to address publicly how the fire service can reduce firefighter fatalities within the next 5 to 10 years. The National Summit, to be held March 10 and 11, 2004 in Tampa, Fla., will bring together more than 100 officials representing various fire service organizations. The foundation is extending an open invitation to fire service and emergency personnel to participate in this event.

Nearly 100 firefighters die in the line of duty each year. The goal of the USFA is to reduce fatalities by 25 percent within 5 years and by 50 percent within 10 years. Among topics to be addressed at the summit are some of the more preventable causes of death, such as heart attacks and vehicle accidents, which account for the majority of fatalities. Additionally, the summit will explore the major issue of decreasing the number of fires in this country, which would reduce the potential of firefighter injuries and fatalities.

When *America Burning* was written 31 years ago, an average of almost 300 firefighters lost their lives in the line of duty each year. But the U.S. Fire Administrator said the current death toll, while lower, remains unacceptable.

“A rededication and recommitment of the entire fire service and allied professionals to reduce these tragedies further is needed. I applaud the NFFF for holding this summit,” he said. “I know this sharing and teambuilding effort will better serve and protect the lives of America’s firefighters.”

### Fire and Emergency Services Preparedness Guide for The Homeland Security Advisory System Is Now Available From FEMA

FEMA and the USFA have issued a comprehensive guide for all fire and emergency services, providing suggestions for activities that may be appropriate for the five Homeland Security Advisory System levels. Prepared by the Emergency Management and Response-Information Sharing and Analysis Center, the guidelines are vital for promoting critical infrastructure protection.

“The world has changed since September 11, 2001. We remain a Nation at risk from terrorist attacks and will remain so for the foreseeable future,” said Michael D. Brown, Under Secretary of Homeland Security for Emergency Preparedness and Response. “At all threat conditions, the fire and emergency services must remain vigilant, prepared, and ready to respond when called.”

FEMA officials acknowledge that the preparedness actions recommended are not all inclusive, nor do they reflect all the variations in local conditions, agencies, and operations, but they provide a starting point for local fire and emergency medical services departments to develop or enhance specific local plans.

The guidelines range from a low threat of terrorism (green) to a severe level (red), with actions ranging from avoiding complacency at the lowest level to mobilizing and pre-positioning assets at the highest level.

A complete copy of the guidelines, visit <http://www.usfa.fema.gov/fire-service/cipc/cipc-jobaid.shtm>

### Re-Tooled Fire and Emergency Services Higher Education Web Page Now Available

The re-tooled Fire and Emergency Services Higher Education (FESHE) Web page has been unveiled. The page is reorganized to provide users with streamlined and helpful

resources to acquire information they need in support of higher education-related interests. The link to the page is <http://www.usfa.fema.gov/fire-service/nfa/higher-ed/he.shtm>. It is also accessible from USFA’s home page by going the NFA site and clicking on “higher education” on the right side.

The major headings:

**Professional Development:** This describes the national Professional Development model developed at recent FESHE conferences, including the problems it addresses, why it’s important, and how it is applicable to State and local training, education, and certification programs. The National Fire Science Curriculum Committee is currently working on the National Professional Development Matrix that will transform the model into a Web-based spreadsheet prescribing national level training and academic courses cross walked against Fire Officer I to IV competencies. The matrix, when posted, will be a template that States can customize to include their own individual courses, programs, and standards. This page is helpful to State and local training agencies, academic fire programs, fire service certification agencies, fire departments looking for an integrated and cohesive professional development plan, and others interested in this topical.

**Model Curriculum:** For colleges and universities that offer fire-related degree programs, this page provides model associate’s course outlines. The page also provides the outlines for the Degrees at a Distance Program (DDP) courses that are available to other accredited bachelor’s programs in cooperation with their offices of State fire training. Degree programs offering or planning to offer fire-related courses, and State and local fire training programs looking to foster such programs, will find this page a valuable resource.

**FESHE Conferences:** Attended by fire science coordinators and directors, State and metropolitan fire training agencies, national fire service organizations, and others with related interests. These conferences are a combination of presentations, problem-solving workgroups, professional development workshops, and educational support exhibits. Slides, handouts, and reports (in part) from all the conferences since 1999 are posted here.

**Degree Schools and Programs:** This section is designed for anyone looking for fire-related degree programs, scholarship information, NFA’s American Council of Education (ACE) credit recommendation, and emergency

management degree programs. When the survey form is approved and distributed, this will be where visitors to the site will find NFA's searchable database of fire degree programs. Fire science coordinators are invited to add their schools' links under the "Links of Interest."

**Research:** A major component of higher learning and training program development, of course, is research. This page is designed for instructors, students, and project researchers who might benefit from having links to research-related Web sites in one place. For topical areas, you can link to the "model courses" where you'll find links to sites that support the course subject matter.

**Forums:** The discussion forum is designed for anyone with an interest, question, or an opinion about fire-related education.

Your feedback and suggestions are welcomed. You can contact Edward Kaplan, Education Program Specialist, at 301-447-1127 or at [Ed.Kaplan@dhs.gov](mailto:Ed.Kaplan@dhs.gov)

## FEMA and the Department of Interior Partner to Advance Tribal Communities Use of Electronic Mapping

FEMA has signed an interagency agreement with the Department of Interior to promote the use of electronic mapping in tribal communities. The mapping, known as GIS, would help tribal governments better protect their communities against all hazards, in part by allowing the inventory of resources and identification of shortfalls in emergency operations planning.

The agreement allows FEMA to further expand its support of tribal governments and to enhance the pre-disaster planning in these communities. A key feature of electronic mapping is the ability to update information readily as the community changes. The maps are excellent tools to use in times of disaster to identify special populations, determine evacuation routes, and coordinate resources.

Under the agreement, tribal representatives will be able to attend two special offerings of FEMA's "Basic HAZUS Multi-Hazard" and "Emergency Management Framework for Tribal Governments" courses. The training will be held at FEMA's Emergency Management Institute in Emmitsburg, MD. Enrollment in the course and lodging is free to participants, who pay only a small fee for meals.

Details on course dates are being finalized. Information on the future dates of the courses and how to apply will be

posted at <http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/EMICourses/index.asp>

## Evaluating Performance-Based Designs Course Wins Award of Excellence from the International Society of Performance Improvement

*Evaluating Performance-Based Designs*, a 6-day resident and regional course that gives code enforcement officials the skills and tools to evaluate performance-based fire safe building designs, has received an award of excellence from the International Society of Performance and Improvement (ISPI). The award is considered one of the most prestigious in the field of human performance technology.

Mary Feeherry, the course project officer, and Training Specialist Rob Neale, were responsible for the course with assistance from various subject experts. A reception in their honor is scheduled for April, at the annual ISPI conference.

According to Neale, buildings historically have been designed with "prescriptive" building code requirements that govern such things as the specific material and thickness of walls or floors to resist the spread of fire. Performance-based design, however, relies on engineering and scientific analysis to meet safety criteria. It gives the engineer, architect, and code official a life safety "target" that they must then figure out how to meet. While used in Europe for more than a decade, the approach is relatively new to the U.S.

The course was first offered in December 2002. Its intended audience is anyone involved in the design and approval process of performance-based designs, including architects, engineers, building and fire officials, insurance underwriters, and fire protection consultants. In 2004, it is being offered from Feb. 15-20, May 30-June 4, and June 27-July 2. For more information or to sign up for the course, go to <http://www.usfa.fema.gov/applications/nfacsd/display.jsp?cc=R108>

## Department Unveils National Cyber Alert System

The Department of Homeland Security's National Cyber Security Division (NCSD) unveiled the new National Cyber Alert System last month. The system allows the timely delivery to actionable information to help Americans better secure their computer systems.

As part of this program, Homeland Security is making available a series of information products targeted for home users and technical experts in businesses and government agencies. These e-mail products will provide timely information on computer security vulnerabilities, potential impact, and action required to mitigate threats, as well as PC security “best practices” and “how to” guidance.

This new National Cyber Alert System is America’s first coordinated national cyber security system for identifying, analyzing, and prioritizing emerging vulnerabilities and threats. Managed by the United States Computer Emergency Readiness Team, a partnership between NCSA and the private sector, the National Cyber Alert System provides the first infrastructure for relaying graded computer security update and warning information to all users.

The new National Cyber Alert System security suite of products includes cyber security tips, cyber security bulletins, and cyber security alerts. All information products are available on a free subscription basis and are delivered via e-mail. Home users can also access Cyber Security Tips and Cyber Security Alerts from StaySafe Online at [www.staysafeonline.info](http://www.staysafeonline.info).

For more information on the cyber alert system, visit <http://www.us-cert.gov>

### **President’s Budget Includes \$274 Million to Further Improve Nation’s Bio-Surveillance Capabilities**

Last month, Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge and Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Tommy G. Thompson announced a \$274 million Bio-Surveillance Program Initiative included in President Bush’s Fiscal Year 2005 budget request. The initiative will enhance ongoing surveillance programs in areas such as human health, hospital preparedness, State and local preparedness, vaccine research and procurement, animal health, food and agriculture safety, and environmental monitoring, and will integrate those efforts into one comprehensive system.

The initiative builds upon the success of the BioWatch Program, an important public health tool, which has been operating in more than 30 cities across the Nation since 2003.

President Bush’s Bio-Surveillance Program Initiative calls on DHS to spend \$129 million to expand and upgrade the BioWatch Program and create a system to integrate

a broad variety of surveillance data from across the government. HHS would spend \$135 million to strengthen laboratories, better monitor human health, and enhance food surveillance. In addition, the initiative provides \$10 million to the Department of Agriculture to improve food and animal surveillance.

### **FEMA Supports NASA on Anniversary of Columbia Shuttle Disaster**

Feb. 1, 2004, marked the one-year anniversary of the Space Shuttle Columbia tragedy--one of the most unusual disaster response efforts ever conducted by FEMA. President Bush issued emergency declarations shortly after the shuttle tragedy became known. It was FEMA’s first major disaster after the announcement that the agency would become a part of the new Department of Homeland Security.

FEMA served as the lead Federal agency for the search, find, and secure efforts in response--using the new department’s partnerships with local responders from multiple States and municipalities and other Federal agencies. FEMA used its own Urban Search and Rescue personnel and coordinated response and recovery operations with assistance from many other departments, including NASA, the Texas Forest Service, the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Coast Guard, and the EPA. Challenges facing the recovery operation included the vast amount of land that needed to be searched and the possibility of hazardous debris.

FEMA officials joined local mourners and member of NASA for memorial services held this month.

### **Special Report Underscores Link Between Alcohol Abuse and Fatalities from House Fires**

A new special report has been issued citing a significant link between alcohol abuse and residential fire deaths and between alcohol and the risk of unintentional injury, including car accidents, falls, drowning, homicide, and suicide.

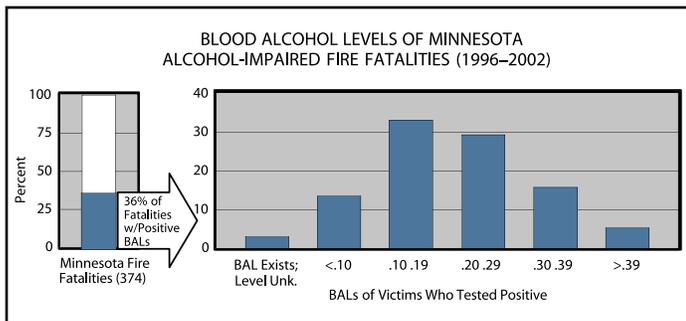
“This important issue of our Topical Fire Research Series underscores an often overlooked connection between alcohol abuse and fire injuries and death,” said Michael D. Brown, Under Secretary of Homeland Security for Emergency Preparedness and Response. “We hope this report helps educate fire officials and the public to this problem so that educational campaigns that have been so

successful in warning about drinking and driving can now also focus on drinking and fires.”

According to the report, “Establishing a Relationship Between Alcohol and Casualties of Fire,” developed by the National Fire Data Center, up to 40 percent of residential fire death victims are alcohol impaired. In addition, nearly half of adult emergency room patients treated for trauma are alcohol impaired, and burn victims with high blood alcohol levels are more likely to die from their injuries than victims with no alcohol impairment.

“This report also makes an important note that smoking combined with alcohol abuse exacerbates the risk of fires, fire injuries, and fire deaths,” said U.S. Fire Administrator R. David Paulison. “Smoking and drinking is a particularly dangerous combination since smoking materials offer a ready-made fire threat and alcohol consumption decreases one’s chances of detecting and escaping a fire.”

Two related case studies are also being released, further exploring the connection between alcohol abuse and fire deaths. One case study reviewed fire data for Minnesota, which collects alcohol use data as part of its ongoing injury surveillance system. In Minnesota, from 1996 to 2002, 36 percent of the State’s fire fatalities had alcohol levels of 0.1



or higher. The second case study looked at data collected by the Ontario, Canada, fire marshal. According to that case study, 19 percent of fire fatalities from 1995 to 2001 were alcohol impaired.

A copy of the full report can be ordered by going to <http://www.usfa.fema.gov/inside-usfa/nfdc/pubs/tfrs.shtm>

### New Name to Reflect Contributions to the System of Information Sharing and Analysis Centers

The USFA has announced a name change for its Critical Infrastructure Protection Information Center. The new

name, Emergency Management and Response-Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC), more accurately reflects the mission and responsibilities of its critical infrastructure protection officials and conforms to the system of ISAC’s supported by Homeland Security Presidential Directive-7. The EMR-ISAC is located at the National Emergency Training Center in Emmitsburg, MD.

According to the Department of Homeland Security, each ISAC serves to facilitate information sharing for a designated national critical infrastructure sector (e.g., water supply, transportation, telecommunications, emergency management and response, etc.). Specifically, an ISAC is the mechanism for the two-way exchange of information in order to analyze and disseminate actionable intelligence on threats, attacks, vulnerabilities, anomalies, and security best practices involving a particular sector.

The Critical Infrastructure Protection Information Center has performed the work of an ISAC for the emergency management and response sector since it began in October 1, 2000, in response to Presidential Decision Directive-63. Now, as the EMR-ISAC, it will continue to benefit emergency managers, firefighters, and emergency medical personnel through daily research on current CIP issues; receiving and processing threat intelligence; preparing and distributing weekly INFOGRAM’s and periodic CIP Bulletins; forwarding Sensitive CIP Information to sector key leaders; developing instructional materials; and providing technical assistance to sector members.

To acquire EMR-ISAC materials, emergency managers and responders should subscribe to the USFA-CIP INFOGRAM’s in FEMA’s DisasterHelp Web site at <https://disasterhelp.gov>. For more information, contact the EMR-ISAC at 301-447-1325. The center’s fax number is 301-447-1034, and its e-mail address is: [emr-isac@dhs.gov](mailto:emr-isac@dhs.gov). The former e-mail address of [usfacipc@dhs.gov](mailto:usfacipc@dhs.gov) will remain effective until March 31, 2004.

## Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program Gears Up for 2004

The Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) staff have released the 2004 Program Guidelines. There are several ways to obtain this and other important information about the AFG Program. Check the ODP Web site at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp> or contact the Help Desk by phone (toll-free at 1-866-274-0960) or use this by e-mail address: [USFAGRANTS@dhs.gov](mailto:USFAGRANTS@dhs.gov).

### A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words

The USFA National Fire Programs Division currently is developing a six-day course called *Fire Protection Systems for Incident Commanders*. The course is designed to provide fundamental knowledge, skills, and abilities to students who can optimize the use of built-in fire protection systems to achieve control objective and strategic success in emergency operations. The course will emphasize the value of preincident planning and knowledge of the operational features of fire protection systems to protect lives and minimize property damage.

*Fire Protection Systems for Incident Commanders* will employ a “case study” method to identify events where knowledge -- or lack of it -- about a facility’s fire protection systems affected the outcome of the incident. Course developers are asking for photographs and reports of actual incidents where the fire department was successful or a failure occurred due to a lack of preincident planning and fire protection system awareness.

Topics addressed in this course include developing model preincident plans; the importance of collecting and sharing information with other emergency responders; and understanding the fundamental operations, strengths, and limitations of built-in fire protection systems including automatic sprinklers, standpipes, fire pumps, fire detection and alarm systems, smoke management systems, and special hazard fire protection equipment.

Please send photographs (preferably in .jpg format) and incident reports or documented anecdotes to:

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Telephone: 301-447-1209

### USFA Announces Availability of New *Emergency Response to Terrorism* Document to Assist Fire Departments

A new *Emergency Response to Terrorism Job Aid* is now available to assist emergency response personnel in identifying a possible terrorist/weapons of mass destruction (WMD) incident and implementing initial actions. This job aid is designed to assist the first responders from fire, EMS, haz mat and law enforcement disciplines. The document includes both tactical and strategic issues that range from line personnel to unit officers and up to and including the initial incident commander. It is now available for download at <http://www.usfa.fema.gov/fire-service/c-terror/download-jobaid.shtm>

“Terrorist/WMD incidents are complex by nature and rarely handled by a single first responding unit or agency,” said U.S. Fire Administrator R. David Paulison. “This job aid is intended to be used by several different agencies and the first responders at an incident who will ultimately report their findings to the incident commander.”

The *Emergency Response to Terrorism Job Aid* is not a training manual. It is expected that personnel already have appropriate training and experience to address the identified tactics. It should serve as a reminder for those who already have completed the appropriate level of tactical or strategic training, such as the *Emergency Response to Terrorism* courses developed for classroom and self-study.

## New: EENET Schedule

FEBRUARY 11

2:00p.m. – 3:00p.m.

and re-aired

7:00p.m. – 8:00p.m.

Eastern Time

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 7TH WORLD CONGRESS (originally aired 7/16/03)

EENET traveled to the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation's 7th World Congress held February 12-16, 2003 in Baltimore, Maryland. The theme of this year's conference was "Critical Intervention in a Changing World." While there, we found the presentations so interesting we decided to share some of the highlights.

FEBRUARY 18

2:00p.m. – 3:00p.m.

and re-aired

7:00p.m. – 8:00p.m.

Eastern Time

LEARNING AGAIN -- "UNIQUE APPLICATIONS OF INCIDENT COMMAND AT DISASTERS"

Another award-winning program, this broadcast originally aired in 1999, and contains segments from a 1993 program entitled "The Incident Command System (ICS) and its Diverse Role in Emergency Management." Featured will be the Metro-Dade County Fire and Rescue's implementation of ICS during Hurricane Andrew and an update of ICS from Tom Marlowe, course manager with the Emergency Management Institute.

FEBRUARY 26

2:00p.m. – 3:00p.m.

and re-aired

7:00p.m. – 8:00p.m.

Eastern Time

CONSEQUENCE MANAGEMENT NEWS, EQUIPMENT, AND TRAINING (CoMNET) MAGAZINE

CoMNET is a recurring broadcast offering Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) related awareness information to the entire response community. The target audience for these programs is first responders to WMD incidents, to include local and Federal law enforcement, fire, and emergency response teams. The broadcasts will also be useful to local, State, and Federal administrators responsible for WMD resources and operations that may affect their communities.

For more information on content, see their Web site:

<http://terrorism.spjc.cc.fl.us/>

To register your downlink site on line go to:

<http://www.dlnets.com/ComNet1st.htm>

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MARCH 3

2:00p.m. – 3:00p.m.

and re-aired

7:00p.m. – 8:00p.m.

Eastern Time

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE FALLEN FIREFIGHTER MEMORIAL  
CANDLELIGHT SERVICE (held 10/4/03)

This was a special year for the fire service in that both the Candlelight Service on October 4th and the National Memorial Service on October 5th were broadcast to a potential audience of more than 6 million households throughout the country. Therefore, we are re-airing the highlights of these events to those who may have missed the live broadcasts.

The candlelight service will feature musical selections by members of the fire service and survivors of fallen firefighters and a video tribute to the fallen heroes of 2002. Fire service honor guard and families will light commemorative candles for the fallen firefighters. Luminaries decorated by the children attending Family Day will be displayed during the ceremony. As the ceremony closes, survivors will light the Remembrance Candle, a symbol of the hope and enduring friendship shared by all who have lost a firefighter.

MARCH 10

2:00p.m. – 3:00p.m.

and re-aired

7:00p.m. – 8:00p.m.

Eastern Time

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE FALLEN FIREFIGHTER MEMORIAL SERVICE (held  
10/5/03)

The National Memorial Service, led by Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge, and other fire service leaders, will remember America's bravest who died in the line of duty in 2002. Thousands of people are expected to attend and celebrate the lives of these American heroes. The ceremony, rich in fire service traditions, will begin with an honor guard and bagpiper salute. Families will receive American flags flown over the Nation's Capitol and the Emmitsburg monument. The tribute will conclude with the unveiling of the memorial plaque listing the names of the fallen heroes of 2002.