

USFA

N · E · W · S · L · E · T · T · E · R

December 2003, Issue 3

Holiday Fire Safety

Tips for Celebrating Safely with Your Family

USFA Touts Fire Safe Holidays

The U.S. Fire Administration and FEMA disseminated a press release and opinion piece and U.S. Fire Administration R. David Paulison conducted nearly a dozen radio interviews to promote a “fire safe” holiday this year. Statistics show that house fires increase during the winter holiday season – fueled in part by holiday decorations, candles and Christmas trees. Fires caused by children also spike in mid-December and again on New Year’s Day. The intent of the campaign was to reduce those statistics. Specific actions USFA and FEMA recommended included:

- Selecting a fresh Christmas tree that is kept in water at all times. Needles on fresh trees should be green and should not fall off easily. Don’t leave the tree up longer than two weeks. Dried out Christmas trees can ignite easily and boost a fire by spreading it rapidly!
- Placing Christmas trees in a safe place, away from fireplaces or heat vents.
- Maintaining holiday lights. Inspect your lights before you use them to ensure they don’t have frayed wires, gaps in the insulation, broken or cracked sockets or excessive wear. Only use lighting that is listed by an approved testing laboratory and don’t leave the lights on when you’re not home.
- Avoiding overloading electrical outlets. Don’t link more than three light strands unless the directions indicate it is safe. Periodically check the wires. They should not be warm to the touch.
- Using only nonflammable decorations that are placed away from heat vents and if you’re using an artificial tree, make sure that it’s flame retardant.
- Avoiding using candles. If you do use candles, ensure they are in a stable holder and place them where they cannot be easily knocked down. Do not

In This Issue...

USFA Touts Fire Safe Holidays

National Fire Service Credentialing System

Noble Training Center Offers Healthcare Leadership and Administrative Decision Making Course

National Fallen Firefighters Foundation Releases Large Format Book

Training Course To Help Safeguard Seniors and People with Disabilities Being Distributed by FEMA

Some Recent USFA Facts

Community Emergency Response Teams Respond

Area Warning System Dedicated in Emmitsburg, Md.

CIP DisasterHelp.gov Initiative

DOT and USFA Initiate Research on Non-Blinding Emergency Vehicle Warning Lighting Systems with Society of Automotive Engineers

Cooperative Agreements Funds Mississippi Project

US Fire Administration Hosts First PARADE Conference

National Fallen Firefighters Foundation Announces 23rd Annual National Memorial Weekend

FEMA Offers Multi-Hazard Building Design Summer Institute for College and University Faculty

USFA and the National Fire Protection Association Initiate Project Examining Behavioral Mitigation of Smoking Fires

The Winter EENET Schedule is Available

Upcoming Events



FEMA

leave lit candles unattended, never put candles on a Christmas tree and never leave the house with candles burning.

More information is available on the FEMA Web site at www.fema.gov and on the USFA Web site at www.usfa.fema.gov.

National Fire Service Credentialing System

Congress has mandated that DHS and USFA establish a national fire service credentialing system for federally declared disasters. The goal is to improve multi-agency coordination and response effectiveness.

The USFA supports establishing a system that allows agencies to identify the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to perform critical fire and rescue tasks, and to identify who has or has not been summoned to a federally declared disaster.

The participants in the first credentialing meeting limited their focus to personnel affiliated with a fire department (as defined in the National Fire Protection Association standards) with the understanding that the framework they developed should be applicable to other emergency services personnel. The fundamental operating principle for the national credentialing system is that it should operate within the framework of the existing state firefighter certification procedures rather than imposing an additional bureaucratic structure on that process. The system would be voluntary, not mandatory. Fire departments have the authority to

determine if their members will participate.

The process of credentialing involves the following elements:

- Identifying the standards that would be used as the basis for the credentials issued
- Certifying the individuals against these standards
- Reviewing the certifying bodies to ensure that their processes are valid
- Maintaining a record system that allows for identification of the individual and verification of the information contained on that identification

The purpose of the second meeting was to build on the framework laid out in the previous meeting. The expectation was that, at the conclusion of this second meeting, the concept of the fire service member national credentialing system would be fully described, such that it could be presented to state fire service training directors and representatives of other fire service organizations at the third meeting.

The final credentialing meeting was held on Dec. 11, 2003. The credentialing working group concentrated on reviewing reactions to the concept, determining what needs to be done regarding the reactions and determining how to move the concept forward. A report is being developed with about nine recommendations. It will be reviewed and eventually presented to U.S. Fire Administrator R. David Paulison.

Noble Training Center Offers Healthcare Leadership and Administrative Decision Making Course

The Noble Training Center is holding a Healthcare Leadership and Administrative Decision-Making in Response to Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) Incidents course on Jan. 12, 2004. Those interested in attending can call John Doyle at 256-741-3600 or Linda Pressley at 256-741-3751 or should visit: www.training.fema.gov/emiweb/netc.

The course provides an exercise-based training activity to assist healthcare leaders and managers in developing the skills necessary for appropriate decision making in response to a WMD event. Among other things, participants will review and enhance their own emergency plans, particularly in regards to mass care/WMD, and will learn about the basic incident management framework for local, state, and federal response.

The Noble Training Center became part of FEMA's training efforts on March 1, 2003, with the creation of DHS.

National Fallen Firefighters Foundation Releases Large Format Book

The spirit and essence of the firefighting community is being celebrated in a new, large format book published with the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation.

The book was written by a team that included historians, authors and experts associated with firefighting, as well as several distinguished active and retired chiefs and officers, "Firefighters." In more than 360 pages, there are essays on urban, volunteer, wild land, military firefighting and information on history, training, trucks and apparatus, and more.

"This is a beautiful book that graphically depicts all that is firefighting now and in the past," said U.S. Fire Administrator R. David Paulison. "The pictures are compelling and the text will ring true to everyone who has ever called themselves a firefighter."

The book costs \$75 and can be ordered through www.hlla.com or by calling 1-800-788-3123. For more information contact James O. Muschett, jim@hlla.com

Training Course To Help Safeguard Seniors and People with Disabilities Being Distributed by FEMA

FEMA has announced the dissemination of a new training course that helps ensure the needs of the nation's most vulnerable residents are addressed during disasters. The course, G197 Emergency Planning and Special Needs Populations, will be available on CD Rom to assist local and state emergency planners, and organizations serving seniors and people with disabilities.

Specialists at FEMA's Emergency Management Institute developed the course, which is part of the Advanced Professional Series. The

CD Rom contains an instructor guide, student manual, visual aids, additional resources, related articles, and manuals on evacuating people with disabilities and emergency procedures for people with disabilities in office jobs. The CD Rom will be distributed to all state training officers and regional training managers. These materials will also soon be available on the Web. Check at www.training.fema.gov/emiweb for the materials.

Some Recent USFA Facts

As 2003 comes to a close, the U.S. Fire Administration has much to be proud of. Highlights include:

- During FY03, the National Fire Academy (NFA) trained more than 70,000 fire and emergency response personnel nationwide. The academy's wide range of specialized residential training programs were again filled to capacity at the Emmitsburg, Md., training facility.
- The NFA continues to garner high marks from both students and their supervisors. The academy gauges student reaction to its training after each course. Likewise, the academy's long-term/level three training evaluation program solicits input from both students and their

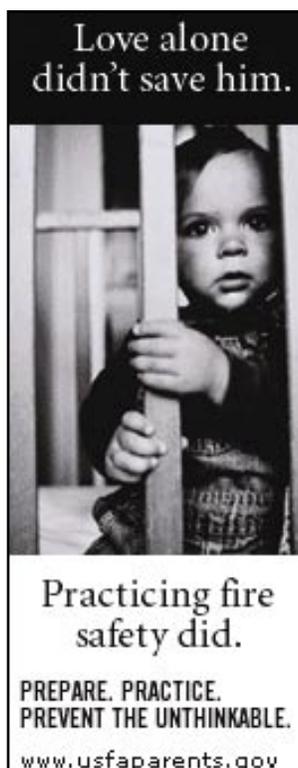


San Luis Obispo City Fire Department received \$412,200 from the 2003 Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program for the purchase of an enhanced communications system. Mayor Romero stated, "This grant will allow us to establish clear communications between our agency personnel and mutual aid resources throughout this county and the state". Pictured left to right are: Fire Chief Wolf Knabe, Council members Ken Schwartz and Christine Mulholland, Mayor Dave Romero, and the grant team - Viv Dilts, Jeremy Dold, Kerri Rosenblum, and Steve Schmidt.

- Since June, more than 7,300 fire departments have received over \$564 million to support their role as first responders in the neighborhoods and communities they serve as firefighters. Preparations are underway for the FY04 program and the \$750 million that will be awarded.

supervisors four to six months after the training. Recent data shows that 92 percent of supervisors who responded said the NFA's training had improved their employee's job performance, and 97 percent of these same supervisors said they'd recommend NFA training to others.

- The Emergency Management Institute's (EMI) Integrated Emergency Management branch is training 110 Customs and Border Protection (CBP) personnel on how to design, develop, conduct, and evaluate emergency management exercises. EMI and CBP are working together through an interagency agreement. CBP personnel have already completed two weeks of hands-on training and are implementing the training by conducting tabletop exercises at CBP facilities across the nation. The third week of training for CBP officials will be held at EMI in February and March 2004.
- USFA conducted several public education campaigns to reduce fire deaths, injuries and property damage, including the Infant and Toddler Fire Safety Campaign and the Holiday Fire Safety Campaign.



2005 USFA Training Catalog Slated for March

The 2005 USFA Training Catalog will include both the National Fire Academy and the Emergency Management Institute course and schedule information. The 2005 Catalog will mark the first year that the combined catalog has been published. The catalog is expected to be available for distribution by the middle of March 2004 and will be available in printed copy as well as on the USFA Web site.

Community Emergency Response Teams Respond

In recent months, Hurricane Isabel as well as wildfires, tornadoes and floods have struck communities across the country. Following these events, there were reports about the many positive actions taken by Community Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) to prepare for these hazards and to assist emergency responders and neighbors.

In Kansas, for example, CERTs from Olathe activated to help neighbors clean up after devastating tornadoes. In Arizona, CERTs in the Mount Lemmon Fire District helped with wildfire evacuations and then with reseeding burned out areas. Following Hurricane Isabel in Virginia and the District of Columbia, CERTs filled sandbags, directed traffic, evacuated residents, disseminated information to community members, identified and marked downed power lines, and performed damage assessment. In California, the Los

Angeles and Simi-Valley Fire Departments reported that CERTs were used extensively to support their efforts by working in the Emergency Operations Center and performing duties that freed career and volunteer firefighters for other activities during the wildfires. And in Washington State, CERTs activated and worked with the American Red Cross on community relations and clean-up activities after the floods.

President Bush and the U.S. Congress continue to support Citizens Corps of which CERT is a charter member. They have allocated \$40 million in the 2004 budget to support Citizen Corps programs and community volunteerism. States and territories are applying for these funds.

To further support the CERT program, look for a Web-based Independent Study course called "Introduction to Community Emergency Response Teams." This new course went on line in this month. Go to <http://www.training.fema.gov/emiweb/is/is317.asp>. This Independent Study course will introduce interested individuals to the CERT program and provide materials designed to prepare them for the classroom CERT training. It will also reinforce classroom lessons learned by those who have completed CERT training.

Area Warning System Dedicated in Emmitsburg, Md.

On Dec. 9, 2003, Maryland Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr., joined with Emmitsburg town

officials and other dignitaries at a formal ceremony at the Vigilant Hose Company, the community's all-volunteer fire/rescue department, to dedicate a new area warning system. The system, properly known as a Mass Notification High-Power Voice and Siren System, is made up of outdoor warning speakers that can provide pre-recorded messages, allow for live instructions and/or sound alert sirens indicating that citizens need to immediately turn on their radios or TVs for specific insights regarding a pending emergency. It operates on conventional or independent power and is radio-controlled.

U.S. Deputy Fire Administrator Charlie Dickinson gave remarks during the ceremony.

Stopping his speech to speak directly to the many Emmitsburg children in attendance, he said, "the reason you see all of us older folks up here talking about this system today is so that you are safe tomorrow. You are our



Deputy U.S. Fire Administrator Charlie Dickinson (left) and Maryland Governor Robert Ehrlich, Jr. (right) spoke to a large gathering of Emmitsburg, MD residents and dignitaries on December 9 at the announcement of a new early warning system installation for the town. USFA will also be installing a part of the early warning system at NETC to further protect and inform students, visitors and staff.

treasures, and today we have taken the steps to protect our treasures, the children of Emmitsburg and of this nation."

To supplement the warning system, the town is also developing a free Emergency Preparedness Guide for all area residents and businesses.

FEMA Supports Release of Carbon Monoxide Guidelines for First Responders

FEMA has joined with the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) in announcing a new document to help first responders being called to residential carbon monoxide incidents. The new document, titled: Responding to Residential Carbon Monoxide Incidents-Guidelines for Fire and Other Emergency Responders" is available at www.cpsc.gov and www.usfa.fema.gov.

"This CPSC guideline is designed to help emergency response personnel act quickly and accurately when responding to carbon monoxide emergencies," said U.S. Fire Administrator R. David Paulison. "Carbon monoxide is a real threat to all of us -- as events like the generator use during the recent blackouts and now the need for winter heating have demonstrated. I am pleased to share with the CPSC to ensure our first responders get this information."

The new document will help responders:

- ensure their own protection from carbon monoxide when entering an occupancy;
- confirm whether a carbon monoxide hazard exists;
- make a preliminary assessment of potential sources of elevated carbon monoxide;
- give advice to the occupants on how to prepare home for re-entry;
- promote carbon monoxide awareness and safe practices throughout a community.

CIP DisasterHelp.gov Initiative

For three years, the USFA Critical Infrastructure Protection (CIP) Program has published weekly INFOGRAMs to promote the protection of the critical infrastructures of emergency first responders. As a result of increased national demand, these documents containing relevant and consequential CIP information will continue.

In cooperation with the Federal Disaster Management E-Government Initiative, and to improve service to INFOGRAM subscribers, the weekly documents are now available on the DisasterHelp.gov website through a portal that is quick and user friendly. DisasterHelp is a single Internet-based portal using cutting-edge information technology to provide disaster information and services to government agencies and non-government organizations.

All members of the emergency management fields and our

nation's first responders are advised to register with DisasterHelp.gov and subscribe to the weekly documents. However, each fire/EMS department chief officer, the deputy/assistant chief officer, the state fire marshal, and the senior emergency manager at all levels of government are strongly urged to subscribe to the INFOGRAM. Those senior leaders who are registered and verified will automatically receive Sensitive CIP Information for official use from DHS, but only after their identity has been accurately confirmed.

To subscribe, follow the instructions available at: <https://disasterhelp.gov/usfacip.html>.

Please complete the required application as best as possible. If you have problems, please contact the DisasterHelp Help Desk at 800-451-2647.

DOT and USFA Initiate Research on Non-Blinding Emergency Vehicle Warning Lighting Systems with Society of Automotive Engineers

FEMA, USFA and the Department of Transportation's Intelligent Transportation Systems Joint Program Office have initiated a partnership with the Society of Automotive Engineers to research the disorientation of motorists caused by emergency warning lights. This research will also look at ways to mitigate the disorientation, and the effects of emergency lighting on impaired and drowsy drivers (also known as the moth effect). All emergency lighting systems

will be examined as part of this effort - including incandescent, halogen, strobe and light-emitting diode systems.

Further information about this research initiative can be found on the USFA Web site at <http://www.usfa.fema.gov/inside-usfa/research/vehicle.shtm>.

Cooperative Agreements Funds Mississippi Project

In October, USFA joined with NFPA in a cooperative agreement to fund a smoke detector project in Holmes County, Miss. According to the U.S. Census, this county has the highest poverty level in the state and over a 10-year period, Mississippi has experienced the highest fire death rate in the U.S. The town of Tchula was chosen for the launch of the project because six children there were killed in a 2002 residential fire where no smoke alarm was installed.

In all, 8,700 10-year lithium battery smoke alarms have been

purchased. In addition, materials to assist in the installation such as safety ladders, drills, and batteries have been purchased. An informational brochure with basic escape planning information has also been developed and distributed as part of the smoke alarm installation project. To date, 1,000 alarms have been installed.

US Fire Administration Hosts First PARADE Conference

The U. S. Fire Administration hosted the first national Prevention Advocacy Resources and Data Exchange (PARADE) conference on the National Emergency Training Center campus in November, with some 90 participants. Invitees to the conference included fire marshals, at the state and local levels.

The participants were provided the opportunity to attend professional development workshops, network and exchange fire prevention materials at the PARADE



Staff member John Brasko (left) provides information to PARADE attendees on USFA's Critical Infrastructure Protection Program.

Grounds, and hear presentations on a variety of topics ranging from fire prevention marketing management, college campus fire safety, and new international concepts in public fire education from recognized leaders in these areas.

“The 2003 PARADE conference was indeed an incredibly successful event. Whenever you bring together so many talented individuals from fire prevention, good things are going to happen,” U.S. Fire Administrator R. David Paulison said. “Preventing fires and fire deaths and injuries in this nation, can only be achieved through teamwork. Americans will be even safer in 2004 as a result of this team-building event.”

Deputy U. S. Fire Administrator, Charlie Dickinson opened the ceremonies and provided an overview of USFA programs and organizational mission planks. In addition, Ken Burris, Director or FEMA Region IV, and former U.S. Fire Administrator, gave keynote remarks.

A tentative date of November 3-7, 2004, has been set aside for the next National PARADE Conference at the NETC.

For more information regarding these conferences, contact Rebecca A. Ryan by at: becky.ryan@dhs.gov or by calling (301) 447-1128.

National Fallen Firefighters Foundation Announces 23rd Annual National Memorial Weekend

The 23rd annual National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Weekend will be held from September



National Fallen Firefighters Memorial

30 through October 3, 2004. A plaque with the names of the firefighters killed in the line of duty in 2003 will be added to the National Fallen Firefighters Monument, located on the National Fire Academy campus in Emmitsburg, Md., during the weekend.

For more information on the National Fallen Firefighters foundation visit www.firehero.org

FEMA Offers Multi-Hazard Building Design Summer Institute for College and University Faculty

FEMA has announced four seminars on hazard mitigation

in building design to be held during a two-week-long institute in July 2004. The institute covers protective design for earthquakes, fires, flood and wind.

The seminars, part of the Multihazard Building Design Summer Institute, are designed for active college or university faculty teaching undergraduate or graduate-level architecture and engineering courses in U.S.-based institutions. The seminars were developed by staff at EMI in conjunction with experienced architects and engineers. The sessions, free of charge to qualified applicants, are conducted by EMI. Qualified applicants are eligible for no-cost housing at the training center and are reimbursed for travel expenses.

During the summer institute, two seminars are offered each week. Flood Protection Design and Wind Engineering are offered the week of July 19, 2004. Earthquake Protective Design and Fire Design are offered during the week of July 26.

University faculty interested in attending one or more of the seminars should contact Joe Bills at 301-447-1356. Depending on faculty enrollment, limited slots may be available for architects and engineers who are not faculty members. Additional information about the course can be obtained at: <http://training.fema.gov/emiweb/MBDSI/>

USFA and the National Fire Protection Association Initiate Project Examining Behavioral Mitigation of Smoking Fires

The USFA has partnered in a project with the NFPA to develop sound, research-based recommendations for behavioral mitigation strategies to reduce smoking fire fatalities in the United States. Smoking continues to be the number one cause of residential fire deaths, which justifies a new look into what research can tell about the role of behaviors in causing these deaths.

In 1999, residential fires started by smoking materials claimed an estimated 776 lives in the United States and injured over 1,900 more people. Nearly half of the victims were in the USFA target age groups of age 14 and under or age 65 or older, with 40 percent of victims aged 65 or older. These national estimates were derived from the National Fire Incident Reporting System, USFA's national fire incident database, and the NFPA survey.

Further information on this research initiative can be found at: <http://www.usfa.fema.gov/inside-usfa/research/smoking-mitigation.shtm>.

The Winter EENET Schedule is Available

Starting in calendar year 2004, EENET is being "re- tooled" as USFA is now part of DHS. The first change will be noticeable in the January – March 2004 schedule. Not only will EENET

return to broadcasting every Wednesday during the 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time slot, but we will also be re-broadcasting the afternoon program each evening between 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. This is being done to accommodate those viewers unable to view the afternoon broadcasts. There may be exceptions to this schedule for special programs, but those subscribing to the e-mail list will still receive weekly updates with the changes.

This is the first of many changes that USFA will be making in the future to provide informative programming and new products. Check the EENET web site at: <http://training.fema.gov/emiweb/EENET> or for the most current news from the USFA, use www.usfa.fema.gov to subscribe to the e-mail list serve.

Upcoming Events:

Calendar Year 2004 Major Events Schedule

Selected Fire Service, Fire & Life Safety

Dates	Event	Location
January 22-24	Fire-Rescue East	Jacksonville, Florida
February 1-5	Firehouse World Exposition and Conference	San Diego, CA
February 1-7	National Burn Awareness Week	-----
March 2-6	EMSToday (JEMS)	Salt Lake City, Utah
March 18-21	TRADE Co-Chairs Conference	Emmitsburg, Maryland
March 23-26	American Burn Association 36th Annual Meeting	Vancouver, BC
April 16-18	EFOP Graduate Symposium	NETC, Emmitsburg, Maryland
April 18-23	55th Annual International Association of Arson Investigators (IAAI) General Meeting and Conf.	St. Louis, Missouri
April 20-24	International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) Annual Meeting	Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
April 26 - May 1	Fire Department Instructor's Conference (FDIC)	Indianapolis, Indiana
	National Terrorism Conference	NETC, Emmitsburg, Maryland
May 1-9	National SAFE KIDS Week	-----
May 2-9	National Arson Awareness Week	-----
May 5	Congressional Fire Services Institute (CFSI) Dinner	Washington Hilton Hotel, DC
May 6-8	National Volunteer Fire Council Spring Meeting	Washington, DC
May 16-22	National EMS Week	-----
May 21-23	Fire Expo.	Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
May 23-27	NFPA World Safety Conference and Exposition	Salt Lake City, Utah
June 3-6	International HazMat Response Teams Conference	Hunt Valley, Maryland
June 10-12	NY Chiefs 98th Annual Conference	Syracuse, New York
June 12-18	MD State Firemen's Assoc. Annual Conf. & Conv.	Ocean City, Maryland
June 26-28	FESHE Conference	NETC, Emmitsburg, Maryland
	IAFC Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Conference	
July 15-17	Firehouse Expo.	Baltimore, Maryland
	NASFM Annual Meeting	
August 12-15	IAFC Fire-Rescue International	New Orleans, Louisiana
August 15-20	IAFF Convention	Boston, Massachusetts
	NFPA's America's Fire Expo.	
	National Volunteer Fire Council Fall Meeting	
September 8-9	6th Annual Stakeholders Meeting	

	National 9-1-1 Day	-----
September 24-25	International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (FSAC) Fall Conference	
September 26-30	National Association of State Firefighters Annual Mtg.	Jackson, Mississippi
	Federal Fire Working Group (FFWG)	FEMA HQ, Washington, DC
	Nat'l Society of Exec. Fire Officers Annual Conf.	
September 30 - October 3	23rd Annual Fallen Firefighter Memorial Weekend	NETC, Emmitsburg, Maryland
	Nat'l Safe Kids Campaign Annual Leadership Conf.	
October 3-9	National Fire Prevention Week	-----
October 14-16	National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) Fall Meeting	Asheville, North Carolina
October 26-30	Fire Department Instructor's Conference East	Atlantic City, New Jersey
October 30 - November 3	TRADE Conference	NETC, Emmitsburg, Maryland
November 13-17	NFPA Fall Education Conference	Miami Beach, Florida
	PARADE National Conference	NETC, Emmitsburg, Maryland

Notes:

If you are not signed up for the USFA e-mail list, please take a moment to enroll. The most current grant, program and training information is always sent to your e-mail as it occurs. Visit <http://www.usfa.fema.gov> to sign up.

National Fire Academy Second Semester enrollment period is now open, but will close soon. Application must be postmarked on or before December 31, 2003. Visit www.usfa.fema.gov to take advantage of this free training opportunity.

The staff of the United States Fire Administration wish you and your families, a happy and safe Holiday Season. We are grateful for your continued support and your contributions to the safety of all first responders, and the people of this nation. So here's to looking forward to 2004.