

M The Ontario Fire Service Messenger

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Lessons to be learned

Inside:

OFM investigators return from France

Photoelectric vs. Ionization: is one better?



The Ontario Fire Service Messenger

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Comments, suggestions, questions and articles are welcome. Please send them to the attention of:

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Pat Burke, Ontario Fire Marshal

The importance of assessing risks and capabilities

Risk. This is a word that has been used repeatedly to describe the world of emergency services. In comparison, the word 'monitor' has not been so common, yet, it is just as important because it is a provision of the *Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997* (FPPA).

Under the provisions of the FPPA, the Fire Marshal is expected to monitor. As it pertains to municipalities, the FPPA specifically provides the power for the Fire Marshal to monitor, review and advise municipalities with respect to fire protection services and to make recommendations to councils to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of those services. Right now, my office is using the Municipal Fire Protection Information Survey (MFPIS) to address two of the three mandatory fire protection services required by the Act: fire prevention and public education. As of December 2008, every Ontario fire department had received a Certificate of Compliance through this program. This is an accomplishment of which the entire Ontario fire service should be proud.

The third requirement is that of fire suppression services wherever there is a fire department. These suppression services are to be provided according to the needs and circumstances of each Ontario community. And this is where the fire service needs to place greater emphasis on communicating their capabilities and needs to satisfy the level and types of risk that are present.

To manage and understand the types of risks in Ontario municipalities, risk assessments are required to help plan for disasters under emergency planning legislation. It's a requirement because Ontarians have a reasonable expectation that municipalities will have a plan to handle the large-scale emergency risks in their respective communities.

In Ontario communities every day, the fire service encounters fire emergencies at different types of occupancies and at different levels of risk. So in my mind, it's equally important to identify and assess response capability and, to plan for those events that are occurring on a regular basis in Ontario.

Understanding the needs and the capabilities of your fire department will allow solutions or alternatives to be developed to meet the municipal needs and to communicate those solutions or alternatives to the community. It is my office's intent to prepare a number of tools that will assist municipalities in assessing their risks and capabilities and to help municipalities arrive at solutions or alternatives.

We all know there is a lot more to being in the Ontario fire service than just putting on a uniform. It involves taking a hard look at the capabilities and at the risks in Ontario communities; and this is a tremendous responsibility as it pertains to the FPPA. It's good to know that it's not all on the shoulders of the fire service. Once we've worked together to create a model, the fire service will be able to confidently outline their needs and any alternatives to avoid these risks. Then it will be up to municipal council to decide.

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Update ONTARIO

News from around the province



Junior Fire Chief in Vaughan

In January, Vaughan Fire & Rescue Services had its first female chief, for a day.

Maple Creek Public School student Gabrielle Machado beat out 500 other applicants in Vaughan to be named Vaughan's junior fire chief. Machado entered the Vaughan Fire & Rescue Service contest to design an escape plan for her home. Out of all the other applicants, Machado's was the only one that included a residential home sprinkler system. It was for this important feature that Machado won the opportunity of being picked up in a fire truck from school, dining with the Vaughan Fire & Rescue Chiefs for lunch and getting a tour of a fire station.

Above, Machado poses with Ontario Fire Marshal Pat Burke for a photo at the *Stopthefire.org* launch.

Lessons learned from fires in vulnerable occupancies

On January 19, 2009, a fire occurred at the Muskoka Heights Retirement residence in Orillia. At that time, it claimed the lives of two individuals. As of March 10, five individuals still remained in hospital. The facility was home to 23 residents.

Inevitably questions such as 'Why did this happen?' and 'How can it be prevented from happening again?' continue to be raised. To these questions, Ontario Fire Marshal Pat Burke said "One of the priorities of the OFM [Office of the Fire Marshal] is to prevent a fire like this from occurring again. With this in mind, the OFM continues to take a comprehensive and thorough approach in all aspects of this investigation."

The OFM is now in the second phase of its investigation into the Orillia fire; the examination of results found at the scene and an analysis of all factors that may have impacted the fire. Meanwhile, lessons continue to be learned in vulnerable occupancies, such as nursing homes, where fires have occurred in the past. At the Mutual Aid Fire Co-ordinator's Conference at the Ontario Fire College from February 9-12, lessons about life safety issues in similar occupancies, as compared

to the Orillia fire, were shared.

On a warm summer's evening on July 1, 2008, Vaughan Fire & Rescue Service Deputy Chief Larry Bentley said a fire call came in for the 180 year-old Hayhoe Mills. With 21 silos, there was certainly the potential for the flourmill to collapse. Adjacent to the mill was Pine Grove Lodge, a three-storey care and treatment facility with 140 residents. Approximately 85 per cent of the residents required two people to transfer them out of the facility and were not ambulatory in an evacuation.

At the outset, initial advice was to be ready to evacuate within 90 minutes. In the end, the timeline was extended, with everyone being evacuated safely to other facilities or into the care of their families.

Some of the lessons learned from this situation for the fire service and the care facility included:

- Request more senior command officers to handle logistics at the scene.
- Establish a plan to handle two emergencies at once (in this case, the fire and the medical evacuation).

See 'Planning' on page 10

OFM urged fire safety in colder weather

In early January, the Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM) distributed a news release to all Ontario media urging the public to keep fire safety in mind when taking steps to deal with colder winter weather. The release provided timely tips on the safe use of woodstoves, fireplaces, space heaters and vehicle block heaters.

Some of the safety tips included:

- Burn dry, well-seasoned wood in fireplaces and woodstoves to reduce the risk of excessive creosote build-up in chimneys.
- Allow ashes from your woodstove or fireplace to cool before emptying them into a metal container with a tight-fitting lid. Keep the container outside.
- Keep intake and exhaust vents for furnaces and heating appliances free of ice and snow accumulations to reduce the risk of carbon monoxide build-up from inefficient combustion. Install carbon monoxide (CO) alarms to alert you to the presence of this deadly gas.
- Keep space heaters at least one metre (3 feet) away from anything that can burn, including curtains, upholstery, and clothing.
- Replace worn or damaged electrical wires and connections on vehicles and extension cords and use the proper gauge extension cord for vehicle block heaters.
- Consider using approved timers for vehicle block heaters rather than leaving heaters on all night.
- Ensure that vehicles are not left running inside any garage or building.
- Ensure there is a working smoke alarm on every storey of your home.

Click here to 'Stop the Fire'

That was the message at a February 12 news conference hosted by Vaughan Fire & Rescue Service and Uponor Ltd. to launch their new informative and interactive website called www.stopthefire.org. The site was designed to educate the public about residential fire safety and prevention with an emphasis on home fire residential sprinklers systems.

"In today's high tech society, it is imperative that the fire service makes use of new media to reach out to our communities to educate about fire safety," said Ontario Fire Marshal Pat Burke. "*Stopthefire.org* is a great tool that will allow Vaughan Fire to do just that. And it's not just this tool that is so important today, it's what the tool's about - residential sprinklers."

The website takes a proactive approach to education, awareness and participation. It provides a forum for visitors to access a range of information including the latest fire news stories, fire safety resources, testimonials and an interactive feature in which visitors can pose questions to Vaughan Fire Chief Greg Senay. The website also hosts an online petition where people can sign up anonymously in support of residential sprinkler systems.

Fire chiefs across the province are being encouraged by Chief Senay to take part in the site

by contributing weekly blogs. Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs President Richard Boyes attended the launch.

"The majority of fire deaths and serious injury from fires in Ontario continue to occur in residential settings," said Senay. "The number multiplies across Canada, yet can be minimized drastically by simply knowing the facts and enabling fire-protected standardized homes."

Last year, there were 108 people who died in fires across Ontario. The vast majority of these were in residential properties. Burke believes that is more than 100 people who could have been alive today had there been sprinkler systems in their homes.

While Burke spoke about residential sprinkler systems, he also emphasized the importance of smoke alarms. "While the benefits of residential sprinklers are clear, we must also remember that smoke alarms are absolutely vital to early warning of fire. Before a sprinkler will discharge to contain or extinguish a fire, working smoke alarms will provide that early detection to alert us to a fire in our home," continued Burke.

Uponor Ltd. is a leading supplier of plumbing, heating and sprinkler systems for the residential and commercial building markets across Europe and North America.

A picture of all those involved in the launch of *Stopthefire.org*.



Ontario fire service reaches milestone

BY CYNTHIA ROSS-TUSTIN
OFM PROGRAM SPECIALIST
FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES

The end of 2008 saw an important milestone for the fire service – all municipalities in the province of Ontario completed their initial Municipal Fire Protection Information Survey (MFPIS). This included all the teams within the Office of the Fire Marshal's (OFM's) Northern Fire Protection Program.

The collection of municipal fire protection information surveys began in 2001 and its purpose was twofold: to assist municipalities in the province to gain compliance with 2.(1)(a) of the *Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997* (FPPA) and to allow the OFM to meet its responsibility for monitoring levels of fire protection services. The primary focus of the survey was the portion of the FPPA that requires the delivery of fire prevention and public education services. That delivery includes inspections upon request and complaint, a simplified risk assessment, smoke alarm and home fire escape planning programs and the distribution of fire safety education materials.

The OFM worked cooperatively with every municipality to assist them in achieving their legal requirement for compliance. The

City of Belleville was the final stop for the OFM, and their survey was completed in December 2008. Additionally, the City completed their draft master fire plan and have since posted it on their City's website.

Even though all Ontario jurisdictions have achieved compliance, the original purpose of the survey remains: municipalities must deliver a level of service in accordance with the FPPA and the OFM is required to monitor that level of service. The next step in the process is the Annual Compliance Report and it will assist municipalities to provide proof of their continued compliance.

In the Spring of 2009, the OFM will launch the self-compliance form. The purpose of the form is to ensure fire departments continue to meet the minimum requirements of MFPIS on an annual basis. The form will be sent to each municipality prior to their compliance anniversary date. Once completed, the fire chief and the head of council

in each respective municipality will sign the form. Next, the form will be forwarded to the local adviser for review. A new simplified risk analysis is not required, but if there have been changes, it should be updated.

The continued compliance process does not



Ontario Fire Marshal Pat Burke presented Mayor Neil Ellis and Council with their Certificate of Compliance on February 4, 2009. Some of the initiatives that helped to achieve compliance with the FPPA in Belleville included the certification of fire prevention staff and an in-service smoke alarm campaign. On a door-to-door basis, full-time suppression crews checked almost 1,400 smoke alarms to ensure public safety.

involve the completion of an entirely new MFPIS, but it is meant as a structured review of what already exists and provides an opportunity to update information. For those who find that they have significant changes, to the point of now being non-compliant, contact your local adviser to assist.

A Communiqué outlining the process and a sample of the form will be available shortly.

“ In the Spring of 2009, the OFM will launch the self-compliance form...to ensure fire departments continue to meet the minimum requirements of MFPIS on an annual basis. ”

Fire Safety Awards
Will the next winner be from your community?

Nomination forms are due by April 30, 2009. The Fire Safety Awards ceremony is June 3, 2009.

Challenge them to think...

BY JENNIFER DELANEY
MUSKOKA LAKES TOWNSHIP
FIRE DEPARTMENT

Some of the fondest childhood memories are often things that have been learned while playing fun, but challenging, games at camp. Somehow, it didn't really seem like a lesson when prizes were involved.

These principles were applied for the first time recently in drumming home some important fire safety messages during Port Carling's winter carnival called Winterfest (February 6-8, 2009). It involved a junior firefighter challenge and used fire safety messages and 'fire fighter' skills that were fun for children aged 3 to 12 years old.

The challenge was divided into a number of stations for children. At the first station they had to "get low and go under the smoke" to escape. At the second station, they were asked to call for help on a telephone. It was an exercise to see if they knew to call 9-1-1 and give the dispatcher their address. Another station was **Stop, Drop and Roll**. Perhaps the most popular station was the 'spray the fire,' which was a wooden house with a window that had a flame target in the centre. The flame would

collapse when the child squirted it with water from a plastic poly pack (forestry) & hose.

Throughout the challenge, a firefighter walked the course with each child, encouraging and reminding them of what they were doing at each station and talking about the importance of what they were doing. At times they would ask "The smoke alarm is going off and the room is filled with smoke, what should you do?" or "If your clothes catch on fire what do you do?" Firefighters would also prompt "Tell them your address so that they can send help to your house." This kind of support helped to drive the messages home.

It was important to use the public education messages that the Office of the Fire Marshal uses in their messaging; this is what children already hear at school, on the radio and on television (e.g., "get low and go under the smoke").

Due to popular demand some children completed the course several times. However, most took about five minutes to go through it. Five firefighters facilitated the challenge for about 150 children. Once the child had finished the junior firefighter challenge they received a certificate of completion

and a fire department temporary tattoo. Most importantly, they learned valuable fire safety lessons and got to pick a prize for their great efforts in completing the course! The kids had lots of fun and came away with some good information and the parents were happy to watch their kids do things they hope they will never have to do in real life.



Above, a child demonstrates **Stop, Drop and Roll**.

From left, firefighter Jennifer Delaney teaches children what to tell a 9-1-1 dispatcher in an emergency.

Below, a child takes aim with a hose at a flame in a window.



Putting the pedal to the metal raises money for fire departments

BY GINA PONTIKAS
OFM PROGRAM
COORDINATOR

An enthusiasm for stock car racing at a very young age has turned into a creative method of fundraising for Ontario fire departments. Dean Robillard, a firefighter with Norfolk County Fire & Rescue Services, Station 9 in Port Rowan is also the owner of Rescue Motorsports, a business with a mission to help support and promote fire services in Ontario and eventually across Canada.

The idea to help raise funds for fire departments came to light after planning for a race at Delaware Speedway in the Super Stock class in 2009. To promote the fire hall he's stationed at, Robillard had his car painted fire engine red and the doors were decorated with decals of the Maltese cross with flames. The car is numbered STN 9.

Robillard named his racing team "Rescue Motorsports" and to fuel excitement for the race he had T-shirts screen printed to donate as door prizes at a fundraising event for the fire department. The T-shirts were such popular items that people requested to purchase them. With the money raised from selling T-shirts the fundraiser, Robillard made a generous financial donation to the local firefighter's association.

Fire departments interested in drawing additional attention and increasing attendance at their fundraising and other community events can contact Rescue Motorsports to request Robillard's attendance with his stock car. There

is no charge to fire departments.

A stock car racing circuit travels across Ontario and eventually a schedule will be available

can have their pictures taken in front of the car. T-shirts are also available to purchase and half of the proceeds are donated to the fire hall where Robillard works.

And it appears that racing can generate a great amount of exposure for a business or organization. In the United States, NASCAR racers recognize the National Guard and U.S. Armed Forces with decals on their cars. A recent article in the Boston Globe stated that NASCAR is the Army's top program for generating leads for its recruiters.

Robillard's ultimate dream is to one day represent Canadian Firefighters at the Daytona 500. It's not an impossible goal, but it is one

that will require lots of money and effort. Cars that participate in the Daytona 500 start at approximately \$200,000.

Visit <http://rescuemotorsports.com> for more information.



Dean Robillard of Norfolk County Fire & Rescue Services sits next to his car with children who attended a race show in London.

on the website currently being developed by Robillard. When the driver and car are in the area of an interested fire department, Robillard will coordinate a visit at the fire department's fundraising or community event. Families, children, and race car enthusiasts

IT'S THE LAW

to have working smoke alarms in your RV, trailer or mobile home. It could also save your life!

Failure to comply could result in a ticket for \$235 or a fine of up to \$100,000

OFFICE OF THE FIRE MARSHAL © 2008

Code violations not tolerated in Vaughan

On February 6, 2009, the owner of a single-family dwelling unit in the City of Vaughan plead guilty to failing to maintain a smoke alarm in operating condition Div B 6.3.3.2(1) and was fined \$750. The fine stemmed from a complaint received on October 1, 2008 of multiple families living in a single-family dwelling unit. When the Vaughan Fire & Rescue fire prevention division responded, they tested the smoke alarm on the main floor. They found it to be disconnected. At that time the tenant mentioned that when the family cooked, the alarm would activate, so the tenant had disconnected it. Charges were laid at that time.

In another case on February 6, 2009, four owners of a restaurant were convicted of four Ontario

Fire Code violations and fined \$10,000. Last June, Vaughan Fire & Rescue crews responded to a kitchen fire at a restaurant in the City of Vaughan. At the time, both the kitchen fire protection system and four ceiling sprinkler heads had been activated, and knocked down the fire on the stove. Subsequently the restaurant owners were charged with failure to maintain commercial cooking equipment exhaust and fire protection systems (2.6.1.13), failure to check and clean hoods, ducts and filters if subject to accumulations of fire hazard deposits (2.6.1.3), failure to maintain and test portable extinguishers (6.2.7.1) and failure to maintain and inspect the kitchen hood system.

On February 9, 2009 a homeowner was convicted of three Ontario

Fire Code violations and fined \$15,000. The charges date back to June 5, 2008, when Vaughan Fire & Rescue crews responded to a residential fire in the city. Once the fire was out it was quite clear that it was a marijuana grow-operation. At that time, the homeowner had rented the house out and was charged for allowing activities to take place that create a hazard (2.1.2.2), for using temporary electrical wiring where it presents a fire hazard (2.4.6.1) and for failure to operate and maintain heating, ventilating and air-conditioning systems (2.6.1.7).

Sarnia convictions

A numbered company has been convicted in Provincial Offences Court with six Fire Code violations and fined \$9,400 stemming from inspections conducted in May of 2008. The violations included failure to provide solid wood doors with closures, failure to repair fire separations and failure to maintain smoke alarms in operating condition. The owner of

the numbered company was also charged by a City by-law officer for operating an illegal rooming house and was fined an additional \$2,500.

In another case, a numbered company that owned apartment buildings in Sarnia had also been convicted for failing to repair a damaged closure. The company was fined \$1,130.

Building owner charged

A building owner in Lindsay has been convicted and fined under the *Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997* with three Ontario Fire Code violations. The violations and fines included failure to maintain a sprinkler system in operating condition (\$5,000), failure to remove accumulation of combus-

tible material in and around buildings where it constitutes a fire hazard (\$5,000) and failure to secure the building against unauthorized entry (\$5,000).

Information submitted by Matt Beacock, Fire Inspector with City of Kawartha Lakes Emergency Services.

Siblings violate Code

On January 13, 2009, two individuals were found guilty of violating the Ontario Fire Code and fined \$5,500 and \$2,000 respectively.

The property was a two-storey brick lodging house that was a group home licensed for 10 occupants. The property was subject to an annual inspection as per municipal licensing requirements.

The violations for which the pair were found guilty included failure to keep exit signs clearly visible and maintained in clean and legible condition (2.7.3.1.), failure to maintain and test the portable extinguishers in conformance with NFPA 10 (6.2.7.1.) and failure to inspect portable extinguishers monthly (6.2.7.2.) as noted by Bob Sproul, Fire Prevention Officer, Brantford Fire Department.

Planning for contingencies part of fire safety planning

“ It may be some time before lessons are learned in the Orillia fire as the investigation continues. ”

- Enhance training to all staff to prepare residents for evacuation, and assistance with resident transfer and relocation.

- Consistency is key when communicating about safe locations, type of emergency equipment that is available and policy and procedures (ensure everyone is kept apprised of important information).

- Prepare to care for residents at host sites (when care occupants are transferred to other facilities, their nursing staff are expected to follow as per Ministry of Health guidelines).

- Prepare to be a host when another occupancy faces an emergency situation (e.g., what resources will be required).

- Use Emergency Management Services (EMS) as a resource to review emergency plans and processes (e.g., inviting EMS to the planning phase to include their expectations will make things easier when they arrive for an emergency).

In another case, Huntsville Fire Department Fire Chief Stephen Hernen said two off duty police officers called in a fire on April 13, 2008 for the Rowanwood Retirement Home in Huntsville. Originally the facility had been a

hotel/bar until it was converted into a licensed retirement home under Section 9.4 in the Ontario Fire Code. Over time, additional renovations were made to the wooden structure, but did not require the installation of a sprinkler system. The 100-bed facility was located in a rural setting, with no hydrants nearby. It was home to 68 ambulatory and non-ambulatory residents on low incomes. The facility did practise regular fire drills and had an up-to-date fire safety plan.

Even as all the residents were able to escape safely in a very short period of time, some of the lessons learned from a fire service perspective included:

- Pre-plan ambulance and police parking (additional fire suppression crews may not be able to gain access to the building and others may not be able to leave if parking is not coordinated).

- Plan for contingencies within fire safety plans (the safe zone in this plan was the first area to be overcome with fire and smoke).

- Assign crew members to be outside to determine head counts and ensure control

among residents. Facility staff can be a great resource in this respect.

Consider those with dementia-related illnesses when evacuating (e.g., telling someone with dementia to ‘Get out’ means they will get out but not necessarily to the meeting place, wandering could be an issue).

- Consider using door name plates when there is an evacuation. (Once the room is searched, the name plate is dropped on the floor to indicate the room is clear.)

The final case was about Cavendish Manor in Niagara Falls where a fire occurred in May 2008. Originally built as a schoolhouse, the building had been converted in 1986 to accommodate 80 residents and provide optional supplemental care. When fire crews arrived on the scene, they could see flames coming from the second floor. They were told a number of people were trapped on the floor on both sides of the building. In some dramatic rescues, firefighters rescued 11

See ‘Sprinklers’ on next page



Ontario Fire Marshal Pat Burke speaks to a reporter during a news conference. In the background is an entrance to Muskoka Heights in Orillia.

Continued from page 10

Sprinklers have been recommended as a solution in some fires

people from the second floor via ground and aerial ladders, while police evacuated people from the first floor. Thankfully, everyone survived.

"The reason why we didn't have 11 dead bodies, was because it was 11:00 a.m.," said Niagara Falls Assistant Chief Jim Jessop. "Had this occurred at night-time, the staffing levels would have been inadequate...without everyone's assistance during the daytime, it would have definitely been more tragic."

The fire was determined to be the result of a resident refilling his lighter in his second floor room. A physiotherapist walking by saw a resident get some lighter fluid on the floor and chair. The resident then tested the lighter, which ignited the spilled fluid. At the time, the room door was wedged open, and fire and smoke spread into the hallway and adjoining suites.

Cavendish Manor had an approved fire safety plan. However, the daytime fire clearly indicated some of the inadequacies of the plan if a similar fire had occurred at night. In particular, the fire reached flashover conditions in one room in four minutes. Taking this lesson into consideration, Niagara Fire has now undertaken a review and audit of all the residential care facilities in Niagara Falls. This includes unannounced fire drills and inspections of unsprinklered occupancies in the evenings when the facilities have the lowest staff complement. Not one facility could complete the RSET (real

safe escape time) in single family homes equipped with smoke alarms as referenced and studies by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). This study concluded that building contents (i.e. upholstery furniture) and other factors lead them to argue that the RSET in a single family home with smoke alarms may be less than four minutes.

Niagara reviewed this study and considered the lack of mobility and other physical and cognitive challenges of seniors in care occupancies and, along with the evidence of the flashover time at Cavendish Manor, that a care facility would be required to evacuate a minimum of one fire zone, as well as being able to meet all other obligations in their fire safety plan (i.e. back-up call to the fire department) in order for Niagara to approve their fire safety plan. This standard is being applied to care facilities that are not equipped with sprinklers.

The other evidence that led to this time requirement was that the fire flashed over in the room of origin in Cavendish Manor in four minutes. Given that short time period, and even with 37 firefighters and the full complement of building staff (11), Niagara EMS still had to transport 11 residents (two critical) to three area hospitals.

As a result, Niagara Falls has now revoked the fire safety plans at these occupancies and refuses to authorize them.

"The present condition is not going to exist in this City," continued Jessop. Currently all

other buildings have appealed their Inspection Orders. The Niagara Falls Fire Service is prepared to exhaust all appeal options and exhaust all legislative avenues with respect to the Inspection Orders requiring the installation of sprinklers in those care facilities in Niagara Falls that currently are not sprinklered.

Niagara Falls Fire Service issued an Inspection Order to the owner of Cavendish Manor pursuant to Section 21 of the FPPA, requiring the owner to install a sprinkler system in the building. The Inspection Order was issued following the fire. The owner appealed the Inspection Order to the OFM and, upon review of all submissions, the OFM **upheld** the Inspection Order. Cavendish Manor has since completed retrofitting their building with sprinklers at a cost of just over \$300,000.

It may be some time before lessons are learned in the Orillia fire as the investigation continues. While other fires in vulnerable occupancies such as Extendicare Nursing home (25 fire fatalities) and Meadowcroft (eight fire fatalities) in Mississauga cannot be forgotten, residential sprinklers have been recommended as a solution. Sprinklers can control or confine a fire until help arrives or extinguish a fire completely. Sprinklers limit the smoke development and spread, giving occupants more time to evacuate. They can also significantly reduce the likelihood of injury and death due to smoke inhalation.

"It will take considerable time and resources, however, we will be working quickly to analyze what we have learned from this fire so that timely recommendations can be developed to improve public safety," said Burke.

OFM investigators provide training in France

In November, Pierre Yelle, Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM) Operations Manager and Stéphane Dubuc, Investigator, both of Fire Investigations, delivered a one-week fire investigation training seminar in France, a country that is without a mechanism in place to comprehensively investigate fires. Using the OFM's fire investigation model, the goal of the training was to improve the system for conducting fire investigations in France.

The following article, written by Yelle over the course of his training visit to France describes the fire investigations situation in France, the fire service, the OFM training and the relationships that were developed. To learn more about the interesting history of the training facility where the OFM investigators spent most of their time, turn to page 14.

BY PIERRE YELLE
OFM OPERATIONS MANAGER
FIRE INVESTIGATIONS

The current situation in France is such that the majority of fire investigation cases are not being investigated. As a result of inadequately trained personnel, the ability to comprehensively investigate fires is impeded. On occasion, high profile cases such as fatal fires have not been investigated due to a lack of knowledge and available resources to thoroughly investigate such incidents. This has allowed many crimes to go undetected.

Recognizing the need for fire investigation training, France is now reviewing changes to its legislation and policies as they pertain to fire investigations. Currently,

there is no specific “legislation that mandates the police and/or fire service to investigate fires in a comprehensive manner. As it stands, members of France's fire service and the national police are responsible for conducting fire investigations on an as-needed basis. They are called once observations and/or circumstances dictate the investigation has been deemed suspicious. At this point, a criminal code search warrant would be sought and the scene examination would begin. It is this authority that has been identified as a key component to support a comprehensive fire investigation system.

There are approximately 70 million people who live in France. While it's difficult to provide a detailed description of France's fire service, given the several different systems, it was learned that there are approximately 280,000 firefighters in France. The breakdown is about 40,000 full time fire fighters and 200,000 volunteers. The other 40,000 are broken down into a military component described as the “Brigade de Sapeurs Pompiers de Paris” (firefighters of Paris) and include the air force, navy and civil firefighters. In Paris alone there are 8,500 military firefighters who service a concentrated population of 10 million people.

When we arrived in France, we met with Gilles Rudolph, a fellow Canadian and former detective with the Sûreté du Québec Police Arson Unit. Throughout his tenure, he provided fire investigation training to police officers who

“ The current situation in France is such that the majority of fire investigation cases are not being investigated. ”

were involved specifically in fire investigations. Over the years, Rudolph has worked with high-level investigative personnel in France to establish a comprehensive fire system based on the model used in Quebec. He was also instrumental in facilitating the training session with French officials and the OFM to attend and deliver the fire investigation training.

When the training began in France, it consisted of an introduction about our roles and responsibilities at the OFM and topics such as the professionalization process, NFPA 921, NFPA 1033, Fire Investigation Standard, Certified Fire and Explosion Investigator program, fire scene safety, scientific method and the systematic approach. The training saw students learning about case studies and participating in practical cases (fatal, serious injuries, structure fires and explosions) where they had to document and process a complex fire scene. At the end of the training, students completed an exam. All students who participated in this training were provided with a certificate of achievement.

Prior to the OFM training session, an international exchange

See next page

Continued from page 12

opportunity had been established that saw Captain Hedy Elkazen of the city of Val-d'Oise Fire Service travel to Quebec on a job shadowing opportunity with Rudolph. When we met Captain Elkazen, he informed us that he had already travelled to Quebec on three separate occasions to gather information. As a result, the structure of the investigations system that France has now (as stated above) is similar to Quebec's system whereby firefighters are responsible for the incipient stages of an origin and cause investigation. Once the investigation is deemed suspicious, it is immediately turned over to the Quebec police, who will finish the investigation.

In addition to meeting Gilles Rudolph and Captain Hedy Elkazen, we met with several delegates from the France fire service, police, military and the Centre of Forensic Sciences.

As France heads down the fire investigation road, the difficulty will be to change the culture or philosophy as well as the direction of thought from senior officials when it comes to investing time, money and resources into fire investigations on a national level.

We would like to thank Gilles Rudolph, Captain Hedy Elkazen, the members of the Fort de Domont training facility for their wonderful hospitality and the opportunity to learn from each other. We would also like to thank the OFM for the opportunity to act as OFM ambassadors to deliver this training seminar in France.



Participants observe a fire intentionally set as part of a training exercise.



The OFM's Pierre Yelle works to create a fire scene.



French participants prepare to investigate.



The scene of a burned out mattress provides a training exercise for French investigators. All photos are courtesy of Pierre Yelle and Stéphane Dubuc.

'Wildfires Cost You'

April 19 to 25, 2009 is Wildfire Prevention Week, and this year's theme is *Wildfires Cost You*. The Great Lakes Forest Fire Compact (GLFFC) usually sets the theme for Wildfire Prevention Week, which occurs during the third week of April each year. The GLFFC is a formal international association whose goal is to promote effective prevention, pre-suppression and control of wildland fires in the Great Lakes Region of the United States and Canada. Ontario is a member of the GLFFC, as well as Manitoba, and the states of Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin.

The theme for Wildfire Prevention Week 2009 *Wildfires Cost You* is aimed at providing a broader understanding of the devastating effects of wildfires. If people have an appreciation for the scope and magnitude of damages caused by wildland fires, hopefully they will use extra caution when recreating and enjoying the outdoors.

As many communities in the wildland-urban interface share responsibilities for wildfire suppression with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR), the Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM), and the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs (O AFC) would like to encourage fire departments to get involved in promoting Wildfire Prevention Week. Proactive public education and awareness campaigns are the first line of defence against wildland fires.

The Messenger needs your news

If you have an item you would like to see published in Update Ontario, please send it to: The Editor, The Ontario Fire Service Messenger, Office of the Fire Marshal, Place Nouveau Building,

5775 Yonge Street, 7th Floor, Toronto, Ontario M2M 4J1.
Tel: 416-325-3138, fax: 416-325-3162 or email
carol.gravelle@ontario.ca

Historic French fort quite the find for fire investigators

In November, Pierre Yelle, Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM) Operations Manager and Stéphane Dubuc, Investigator, both of Fire Investigations, delivered a one-week fire investigation training seminar in France, a country that is without a mechanism in place to comprehensively investigate fires. The following article provides readers with a description of Fort de Domont, the location where the training was held.

BY PIERRE YELLE

**OFM OPERATIONS MANAGER
FIRE INVESTIGATIONS**

For the training session, the OFM investigators travelled to the Fort de Domont within the Val-d'Oise. The city was located approximately 10 kilometres north of Paris.

The Fort was built between 1874-1878 by approximately 700 prisoners. It was one of 60 forts constructed during that time to protect Paris in the event of an invasion.

The Fort has had an interesting history. During World War II, the Fort was home to several SS officers who utilized the place as a military prison. It was here that they practiced torture and carried out executions. A wall still bears the evidence of gouged concrete from the fired rounds of a firing squad.

Prior to their departure, the Germans destroyed many parts of the Fort rendering it inhabitable. For many years after, the Fort was abandoned and forgotten under layers of soil and foliage.

Today, the Fort is owned and administrated by France's Ministry of Agriculture. The facility is leased out to several different tenants, including special police task forces. Another tenant is the Val-d'Oise Fire Service who uses the facility to provide investigative training to the fire service. In 2007, Fort de Domont offered an

introductory investigations course, the first of its kind in France. By offering a product that is not available in many other European countries, the facility is quickly positioning itself as a leader in fire investigation. And this is the intent of the Fort de Domont facility: to become a nationally and internationally recognized training facility with a specific focus on fire investigation training. Services are also provided to all fire services for all types of firefighter training, much the same as the Ontario Fire College in Gravenhurst.



From left are OFM investigator Stéphane Dubuc, Colonel Jean-Yves Delannoy Val-d'Oise Fire Service and OFM Operations Manager, Investigations, Pierre Yelle.



The wall that still bears the evidence of gouged concrete from the fired rounds of a firing squad during WWII.



From left are OFM investigator Stéphane Dubuc and OFM Operations Manager, Investigations, Pierre Yelle.



A side view of the Fort de Domont. All photos are courtesy of Pierre Yelle and Stéphane Dubuc.

Wyoming FD gets \$5000



TD Canada Trust Wyoming Branch Manager, Marieta Smith presents a cheque for \$5 000 to Fire Prevention Officer, Wyoming Fire Department, Will Davidson. The money will be used to purchase smoke alarms and batteries for the fire department's smoke alarm program.

Principles of LRA still relevant 87 years later

The Lightning Rods Act of Ontario (LRA) and its regulation came into effect on January 2, 1922, six years after the creation of the Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM). At that time, the OFM was faced with an extremely high fire loss rate, a significant arson problem, a lack of fire prevention controls, limited fire suppression capabilities in the Province and significant losses to the agricultural economy from lightning strikes and fires. The introduction of the LRA positively contributed to the many life safety issues of the day by addressing concerns of inadequate installation techniques and materials that had been common in existing systems.

A little known fact is that today, by administering the LRA, the OFM has the authority to licence both the installers and sellers of lightning protection, in addition to the equipment and materials that are installed. The OFM also under-

takes inspections of lightning rods installations to determine compliance and enforcement with the regulations. And these inspections have been effective toward ensuring adequate installations: 93 per cent of the installation work fully complied in 2008, as compared with 24 per cent in 1922. In addition, the OFM has not been advised of any direct lightning damage to a fully protected building or structure where the protection was adequately maintained.

Since the late 1960's, the OFM has hired engineering or technical students on a part-time basis from Ontario colleges and universities to undertake the inspection of lightning protection installations. Inspections are conducted during the warmer months of the year and include an inspection of the installation to ensure materials and connections and the grounding resistance comply with the regulations. It is estimated that approximately 120 students have been hired during this time. To highlight to readers how the inspection program is administered by the OFM, the *Messenger* Editor spoke to Jamie Beurklian, one of three students hired during the summer of 2008. Conveyed through a question and answer format, readers will learn that Beurklian's experiences helped to enhance his foundation of knowledge about fire protection.

What is your background and how did it help prepare you for this position?

My background is in fire protec-



A picture of two lightning rods protecting cellular antennas atop a building.

tion. I have obtained a diploma in fire protection engineering technology from Seneca College as well as a bachelor's degree from the University of Cincinnati in fire sciences. Moreover, I have extensive work experience with various fire protection companies.

How did you find out about the program and why did you want to do it?

I found out about the lightning protection program through a friend who has applied for the position during a previous year. I pursued the position for the chance to work within the Office of the Fire Marshal.

What is involved in inspecting lightning rods?

Inspecting a lightning protection system involves various tasks. Gaining access to a roof deserves honourable mention: various investigative skills are needed to track down a superintendent or building manager to allow you onto the roof. Once access is gained, the inspector will document the entire system including creating schematics and taking pictures. A visual inspection of the system is

The historical perspective

The historical focus of lightning protection was originally on rural properties where a lightning strike frequently meant a total loss of a structure and contents. Today, protection is found on a wide range of buildings including tall residential and commercial properties, institutional buildings including hospitals, churches, prominent government buildings, universities, community colleges, airports and penitentiaries, high hazard or function critical industrial properties, tall stacks, most cell-phone antenna sites whether ground-based or roof-based, historic and high value buildings, vulnerable properties, livestock and horse stables.

See 'Lightning' on page 16

Fire and carbon monoxide safety in RVs

BY MICHAEL NG, P. ENG.
OFM FIRE PROTECTION
ENGINEER

This spring, municipal fire departments are encouraged to talk to their residents about the importance of ensuring recreational vehicles are equipped with smoke and carbon monoxide alarms.

Smoke alarms

The Ontario Fire Code requires every 'dwelling unit' in Ontario to have working smoke alarms on every storey and outside all sleeping areas. The term 'dwelling unit' includes seasonal homes such as trailer homes, motor homes and other recreational vehicles (RV).

While many new trailer and RV models may already meet a

construction standard requiring working smoke alarms, older models may not be equipped with any or they may not have been properly maintained. Occupants should be urged to test the alarms monthly and after any absence of more than a few days. The battery should be changed on an annual basis and any smoke alarms that may be more than 10 years old should be replaced. Finally, occupants should ensure that smoke alarms are located in areas that are not prone to nuisance alarms (i.e. away from the kitchen).

Carbon monoxide alarms

Carbon monoxide (CO) alarms monitor airborne concentration levels of CO and sound an audible alarm when harmful levels are present. Owners of RV models that are not equipped with a CO alarm should be strongly urged to install a new unit near the sleeping area.

CO originates as a by-product of incomplete combustion of fuels such as natural gas, propane, heating oil, kerosene, coal, charcoal, gasoline or wood. This incomplete combustion can originate from any device or other source that depends on burning for energy or heat. Common fuel burning sources in or in close proximity to RVs may include space heaters, stoves, grills, portable generators, camp fires and engine exhaust. When properly installed, maintained and vented, any CO produced by these devices will not stay inside or enter the RV. Although CO alarms are a good second line of defence, they do not eliminate the need for regular inspection, maintenance and safe use of fuel-burning equipment.

It is a RV owner's responsibility to keep themselves and their families safe from fire and carbon monoxide.

Continued from page 15

Lightning rod inspections necessary for continued compliance

then required to make sure that it complies with the many rules of the Lightning Rods Act of Ontario. Finally, a reading of resistance is required on each down conductor to ensure that the system is adequately grounded. When a deficiency is found, adequate documentation is required of the deficiency and must be included in the inspection report. The report is then written and sent to either the building owner or the lightning protection installer, based on who is at fault.

Is this work dangerous? Explain.

Inspecting lightning protection systems can actually be quite dangerous. Being on the roof of high-rise buildings can be quite the formidable experience. However, safety measures are taken such as wearing fall arrest harnesses when being near the roof edge. Often, safety glasses and a hard hat are required on certain properties as well. With many dangerous encounters that I have had as an inspector, the most dangerous of them all was during my inspection of the Burlington

Canal lift bridge. A hawk had recently nested near the top of the bridge and had four juveniles. The hawks were very protective of their territory and greatly threatened myself and my escorts (several escorts, and one armed with a broom, were needed in an attempt to overwhelm the hawks). Thankfully, no one was injured during this inspection, and I must admit that I have never been so thrilled by a bird previously.

What did you learn from the program that may help you in the future?

I have learned many skills from the lightning protection program...skills that were learned included safety, various roof systems, cellular systems and most certainly lightning.

Now that the program is over, what are you up to?

I've obtained a position with Arencon Inc., a local fire protection consulting firm.

In Detail:

BY MICHAEL NG, P. ENG.
OFM FIRE PROTECTION
ENGINEER

Case studies involving 'Immediate Threat to Life'

The following are synopses of recent and actual incidents in which the Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM) provided assistance to fire departments in addressing serious fire safety deficiencies in buildings that posed an immediate threat to life situation. The Messenger periodically publishes such case studies for educational purposes.

Dilapidated building apparently abandoned by owner

The residential/commercial property was two storeys in height and located in an old downtown core. There was a convenience store on the first storey and two residential units on the second storey. The building was equipped with hard-wired interconnected smoke alarms. The store had been closed for one month but merchandise stock was still present on the premises.

It was later learned that the local utility had cut the electricity to the building due to non-payment by the owner. As a result, the fire department had concerns relating to the inoperability of the interconnected smoke alarm and the tenants introducing inappropriate ignition sources for lighting, heating and cooking purposes. The fire department was unable to locate the building owner.

Section 15 of the *Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997* (FPPA) was applied to remove the two tenants and to install battery operated interconnected smoke alarms in the basement, main floor and apartments. During the course of this activity, both tenants

voluntarily agreed to move out permanently. The fire department provided assistance with finding alternate accommodation for both tenants.

Rooming house with no owner

The rooming house had eight dwelling units and had been without an owner, as he had passed away. The building was going through probate and the next of kin lived outside of Canada. Eight tenants lived in the building, none of which were paying rent. One tenant paid for electricity but the other seven had had their meters pulled. The tenants without power were stealing electricity from the paying tenant through the use of alternative wiring practices.

The fire department had numerous concerns with this building including the non-functional interconnected smoke alarm system, the accumulation of garbage and other combustible materials throughout the building including along means of egress, unsafe wiring practices, damaged fire separations, lack of emergency lighting/illuminated exit signs and no fire safety plan.

The fire department removed the tenants from the building under the authority of Section 15 of the FPPA and provided assistance with finding temporary alternate accommodation. Further, the fire department conducted drive-bys at the beginning and end of their shifts to ensure the tenants did

not return. Subsequently, the fire department decided that it was in their best interest, as a longer-term solution, to close the building using Section 21(2)(b) of the FPPA. The Authorization to Close was approved by the Ontario Fire Marshal. The fire department secured the building and continued their drive-bys to ensure that the tenants did not return. A copy of the authorization was provided to the estate of the deceased owner through his lawyer.

Single family dwelling closure with assistance from multiple agencies

The last case study pertains to a two-storey single family dwelling that had been occupied by up to six family members. Due to a small basement fire that resulted in smoke damage throughout the home, the fire department conducted a post-fire inspection and noted electrical wiring deficiencies, poor housekeeping, combustible accumulation near ignition sources and the absence of working smoke alarms in both the basement and main floor. With the assistance of the Technical Standards and Safety Authority (TSSA) and a Wood Energy Technology Transfer (WETT) certified inspector, it was determined that the wood-fired boiler and propane fired heating system located in the basement

See 'Threat' on page 18

A tribute to Reverend Aikman

BY ARNOLD MACKLER
WELLAND FIRE DEPARTMENT
RETIRED PLATOON CHIEF

With more than 30 years of service to the people and firefighters of Ontario, Reverend Douglas Aikman is resigning due to ill health.

Rev. Aikman, an ordained United Church minister became a volunteer firefighter in Strathclair, Manitoba in 1973. In 1975, he transferred to Meaford, Ontario. After a multi-family fatality in Meaford, he received his first Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) de-briefing. This encounter started

his interest in CISM and the effects of fires and incidents on firefighters and their families.

In 1990, Aikman moved to Welland and worked as a volunteer firefighter until 1997. He began his chaplaincy in Welland in 1992 and then for the Niagara Regional Police. This chaplaincy tenure would set the wheels in motion for other tenures including:

- St. Catharines chaplain from 1998-2009;
- Niagara Falls chaplain from 2002-2009; and,
- Niagara-on-the-Lake chaplain from 2002-2009.



A picture of Reverend Doug Aikman at Ground Zero in October 2001.

One of the most rewarding times of his career was when he attended Ground Zero in 2001 to offer assistance to the firefighters and to the people of New York City. He will always be remembered as a person that was sensitive to the feelings of others caught in a tragic event.

Continued from page 17

'Threat to Life' case studies con't

were improperly installed. The fire department felt that these concerns posed a risk to life safety and applied Section 15 of the FPPA to temporarily remove the occupants. Further, they requested the local utility to cut electrical power to the building due to the wiring hazards. As it was anticipated that it would take an extended period of time for the owner to complete these repairs,

the building was subsequently ordered closed under Section 21(2)(a) of the FPPA.

During the course of the closure, the owner was permitted supervised access to the building to perform the necessary repairs. Approximately five weeks after the Order was issued, the repairs were completed to the satisfaction of the fire department, Electrical Standards Authority, TSSA and

the WETT certified inspector. As a result, the Order to Close was lifted by the fire department.

For additional information on Immediate Threat to Life situations and closures of buildings, please refer to OFM guideline TG-02-2003, "Orders, Orders to Close and Immediate Threat to Life." Enquiries should be directed to the Applied Research Section at the OFM at 416-325-3100.

ONTARIO FIRE WATCH: Fatal Fire Summary

The OFM compiles statistics on all fatal fires that occur in Ontario. These statistics can assist the fire service to determine fire trends, plan fire prevention initiatives and target public education activities. Due to the methods and criteria used in reporting fire deaths, statistics are subject to change.

January 2009: 9 fatal fires resulting in 10 fire deaths			
Age Group	Male	Female	Total
0-15	0	0	0
16-64	4	2	6
65 and over	2	2	4
Total	6	4	10
Fire Cause	Time of Day		
Accidental.....	3	0001-0800.....	3
Undetermined.....	3	0801-1600.....	3
Under Investigation.....	3	1601-1800.....	1
Incendiary.....	1	1801-0000.....	3
Location of fatal fire: Waterloo (1), Toronto (2), St. Catharines (2), Southworld (1), Orillia (1), Dawn/Euphemia (1) and Chatham-Kent (1).			

February 2009: 7 fatal fires resulting in 7 fire deaths			
Age Group	Male	Female	Total
0-15	0	0	0
16-64	3	2	5
65 and over	1	1	2
Total	4	3	7
Fire Cause	Time of Day		
Accidental.....	1	0001-0800.....	2
Undetermined.....	0	0801-1600.....	3
Under Investigation.....	6	1601-1800.....	0
Incendiary.....	0	1801-0000.....	2
Location of fatal fires: Toronto (3), Thunber Bay City (1), North Bay (1), Laurentian Valley (1) and Greater Sudbury (1).			

New in the OFM Library

Check out our latest books, videos and web resources from the Fire Sciences Library & Audio-Visual Resource Centre. We provide current fire resources to support the Office of the Fire Marshal as well as fire departments, emergency services and fire related industries. The collection consists of 9,000+ books, standards, statute law, reports, 80+ journals, and over 1,300 audio-visual resources. A full listing of new resources is available on our website!

New Books

A Leadership Guide for Combination Fire Departments by Jones & Bartlett, 2008.

Fire Service Leadership: theories and practices by Jones & Bartlett, 2008.

Fundamentals of fire fighter skills: student workbook & skills evaluation workbook by NFPA, (2nd ed.) 2009.

Trench Rescue: awareness, operations, technician by Jones & Bartlett, 2008.

Fire News

Check out the latest news stories for fire incidents, Fire Code violations, arson & fire investigation and more. Current fire research from NRC, NFPA, NIST, and NIOSH. Access at www.ofm.gov.on.ca. Click on Resources, then Fire News.



The Fire Sciences Library & Audio-Visual Resource Centre is located in the Office of the Fire Marshal serving staff and residents of Ontario. We welcome visitors to come to the library and borrow from our collection: our address is 5775 Yonge Street, 7th Floor, Toronto, Ontario, M2M 4J1. We will also courier material directly to clients. Hours are Monday – Friday 8:30am to 4:15pm. Visit our website by clicking on Resource Centre at www.ofm.gov.on.ca Phone: (Library) 416-325-3235/3236, (Audio-Visual) 416-325-3121, Email: firesciences.information@ofm.ca.

New Videos and DVDs

School Bus Extrication (2001)

Reissued in 2007 on DVD, this program examines the different types of school buses, their design and construction and the various features. It covers incident preparation, considerations and tactics, the potential for mass casualties, and rescue and extrication techniques.

Taking the Heat: The First Women Firefighters of New York City (2005)

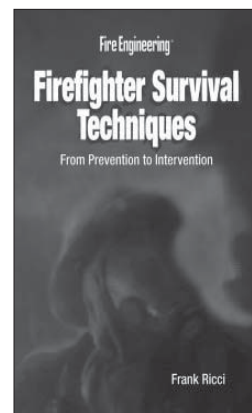
As NYC emerged from financial crisis, the New York City Fire Department lifted an 11-year hiring freeze and began advertising for new recruits in 1977. Brenda Berkman sued New York City and the FDNY for gender discrimination on behalf of women applicants and won.

Firefighter Survival (2007)

Covers firefighter survival by the implementation of proper skills and drills training. Topics covered include: developing a survival attitude, self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) knowledge, mayday management, SCBA low profile emergencies, SCBA entanglement emergencies, disorientation emergencies, wall breaching and ladder slides.

Firefighter Survival Techniques from Prevention to Intervention (2008)

Covers firefighter survival by the implementation of proper tactics in conjunction with adequate staffing. Discusses flashover, truss collapse, size-up, and air management. Touches on firefighter survival techniques such as self-rescue techniques, bail out kits and filter technology, as well as low profile and wall breaching, giving and receiving the mayday, firefighter packaging and the Denver drill.



Are photoelectric smoke alarms better than ionization smoke alarms?

BY BRUCE PATERSON PENG
& BETH TATE PENG
OFM FIRE PROTECTION
ENGINEERS

Within the fire protection and prevention industry, it is recognized that neither sensor type, photoelectric nor ionization, is universally better at detecting all types of fires. The following article is meant to provide a better understanding about why smoke alarms may respond differently to various conditions and to address concerns that have been raised about information from photoelectric smoke alarm proponents.

In the fire service it is known that an ionization smoke alarm uses a small amount of radioactive material to ionize air in the sensing chamber. As a result, the air chamber becomes conductive permitting current to flow between two charged electrodes. When products of combustion enter the chamber, the conductivity of the chamber air decreases. When this reduction in conductivity is reduced to a predetermined level, the alarm is set off. Many smoke alarms in use are of this type. In contrast, a photoelectric type smoke alarm consists of a light emitting diode and a light sensitive sensor in the sensing chamber. The presence of suspended products of combustion in the chamber scatters the light beam. This scattered light is detected and sets off the alarm. These smoke alarms are often used adjacent to cooking areas, to reduce nuisance alarms. Researchers, manufacturers and regulators generally

agree, based on laboratory and field testing, that photoelectric smoke alarms may respond slightly faster to smouldering fires, while ionization alarms may respond slightly faster to flaming fires.

Notwithstanding these differences, to achieve Underwriter's Laboratories of Canada (ULC) listing, both alarms must be tested to the same standard and meet the same requirements. Since no one can predict the type of fire that will occur, installing both types of alarms in Ontario homes can enhance fire safety. Both technologies will detect all types of fires that commonly occur in the home and signal an alarm early enough to provide time to escape.

Ontario statistics and anecdotal evidence do not support the notion that ionization smoke alarms have a high failure rate, to say nothing about what other credible agencies have to say on the issue (such as National Institute of Standards and Technology, National Research Council and findings from Kemano studies, Dunes tests etc.). In particular, the Kemano, British Columbia tests replicated close to real life scenarios and showed that the smoke alarms of the day (2001) worked well and provided ample time for escape. The Kemano burns specifically verified our understanding of the

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The use of ionization technology may slowly dwindle but not because of what they are saying. The global initiative is to do away with radioactive material in landfill sites and the cost of photoelectric units has dropped significantly enough so that people can now afford them.

”

technological differences and did not provide any concrete reason to have any changes made to the smoke alarm standard. These burns used real life materials in real homes, and the results were similar to those run in laboratory conditions.

The Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM) endeavours to stay current on evolving trends and technologies, and the testing procedures that are used in other jurisdictions. With this said, the OFM also works to tap into the expertise of others in the industry; such as the ULC and the National Fire Protection Association committees for smoke alarms. In addition, the OFM participates in the standards development process and has every reason to believe that both ionization and photoelectric smoke alarms, listed by a certification agency accredited by the Standards Council of Canada, will function appropriately and as intended.

Recently, there have been con-

See 'The' on next page

Continued from page 20

'The trend in smoke alarms is toward combination units...'

cerns raised about information that has been circulated about photoelectric smoke alarm proponents' theories. One could argue the validity of the testing, which is clearly graphic and not particularly scientific. Some of the Australian and American testing identified on a number of websites does not follow the same scientific research principles and rigors in their testing as is required by CAN/ULC-S531.

It is worth noting that the standards writing process in Canada is a democratic one and everyone is entitled to submit suggestions to the committee, similar to the Building, Fire and Electrical Codes. Each comment is reviewed and a response is sent to the submitter. To date, we are not aware of any submission of data or concerns to the committee to review on this topic. If there were, they would be reviewed and if changes were deemed necessary they would be proposed and voted on by the committee.

Proponents of photoelectric smoke alarms are free to suggest their preference, but the data they reference does not substantiate their claims.

The use of ionization technology may slowly dwindle but not because of what they are saying. The global initiative is to do away with radioactive material in landfill sites and the cost of photoelectric units has dropped significantly enough so that people can now afford them. The trend in smoke alarms is toward combination units and "Intelligent" units similar to that used in building systems so they will analyze the scene and

respond accordingly. Several manufacturers are working on this concept, which will be seen in the marketplace soon.

The Ontario Fire Code requires homes to have working smoke alarms that meet CAN/ULC-S531 on every storey and outside all sleeping areas. There is no harm in installing smoke alarms in every room, for maximum protection. Since no one can be sure what type of fire might occur in their home, everyone should consider installing both ionization and photoelectric smoke alarms, or dual sensor smoke alarms, which feature both sensors in one unit.

It is hoped this article has provided readers a better understanding of why different smoke alarms operate the way they do and to address some of the issues with the photoelectric proponents' theories. To fulfill its role in public education, the OFM continues to produce numerous articles and make information available on smoke alarms (e.g. types, placement, ionization versus photoelectric technology etc.) in the *Ontario Fire Service Messenger* and throughout public education materials to the Ontario fire service and the public. If your fire department would like more information about smoke alarms, please contact the OFM at (416) 325-3100.



Motel mattress fire caused by careless smoking

A fire that broke out in a motel room one afternoon in late January has been blamed on careless smoking. A 45-year-old man was smoking inside his room at the Horizon Motel in the Waterloo region when he fell asleep around 4:00 p.m. His cigarette ignited the mattress, causing the fire, Waterloo Regional Police said. The man suffered minor smoke inhalation and was treated at the scene. Firefighters put out the fire quickly. The motel had to be evacuated while emergency crews cleared out the smoke. The bed was destroyed. Careless smoking is the leading cause of fire deaths in Ontario.

This article appeared in the January 29, 2009 issue of the Waterloo Region Record.

Another successful water ice rescue

BY FIRE CHIEF STEVE KNOTT
PETAWAWA FIRE
DEPARTMENT

In early February, Petawawa Fire Chief Steve Knott announced that their newly formed water and ice rescue team was fully operational. With over \$30,000 worth of newly acquired equipment, the team of six ice rescue technicians is able to deploy within the municipality in minutes.

Early December 13, 2008 and on the evening of January 10, 2009, the Town of Petawawa Fire Department tested their state of readiness by conducting two large scale water and ice rescue exercises in the frigid waters of the Ottawa River.

The first scenario took place in the early morning near the Petawawa Marina. Braving arctic weather of -28 Celsius, six Petawawa Fire Department ice rescue technicians, assisted by Renfrew

County Paramedics, participated in the ice rescues. The ice rescue technicians have successfully conducted a total of 14 ice/water rescue exercises, involving 85 life saving evolutions. Together the fire chief and town councillor Joe Park braved the frigid Ottawa River temperatures and validated the ice rescue training.

The January 10 scenario took place at 6:40 pm. Four ice fishermen on snowmobiles went through the ice on the Ottawa River near the Petawawa Point. One person was reported missing and one was last seen going under the ice. One person made it to shore and two persons were believed to be in distress in the water. This mock scenario was well orchestrated in advance. The night rescue operation involved the Ontario Provincial Police, the Renfrew County Paramedics, firefighters from Canadian Forces Base Petawawa and the Town

of Petawawa Fire Department. From the time the alarm sounded, to loading the patient into the ambulance, 40 minutes had lapsed. Both patients made a full recovery.

The Town of Petawawa is in a unique area in which the town itself lies on one side of the Ottawa River and the Canadian Forces Base (CFB) lies on the other. Each have looked after their own side, even though shore-based rescues have been difficult for the Town in the past. Now, with their own equipment, the town of Petawawa can respond efficiently and effectively on water and ground to emergency situations in this popular tourist destination.

The Town of Petawawa has a population of 15,500 habitants and is nestled on the western shores of the Ottawa River, just 160 km west of Ottawa.



Above, an ice rescue technician tosses a rope to a victim in the chilly waters.



Above, ice technicians rescue a victim.



At left, an ice technician raises his arm to signal a rescue.

Climbing the Ladder: Education & Training

The objective of Climbing the Ladder is to keep you informed and up to date on issues related to education and training within the Ontario fire service, and to adequately address your questions and concerns. If there is a particular issue you want covered, send the topic to the Editor of The Messenger and it will be passed on to the appropriate person in the OFM Academic Standards and Evaluation section.

OFM to host IFSAC, receives ProBoard Accreditation

BY DOUG GOODINGS
EXECUTIVE COORDINATOR
OFM ACADEMIC STANDARDS
& EVALUATION (AS&E)

OFM to host Fall IFSAC Meeting

It is with great pleasure that Ontario Fire Marshal Pat Burke announces that the Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM) will be hosting the Fall 2009 International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) meeting in Niagara Falls from September 23-27, 2009.

More than 75 representatives from the United States, Canada and the Middle East are expected to attend this meeting. IFSAC is a peer driven, self-governing system that accredits both public fire service certification programs and higher education fire-related degree programs.

The IFSAC Certificate Assembly provides accreditation to entities

that certify the competency of and issue certificates to individuals who pass examinations based on the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) fire service professional qualifications and other standards approved by the Assembly.

The IFSAC Degree Assembly accredits fire science or related academic programs at colleges and universities. Accreditation is available for both two-year associate degree programs and four-year bachelor degree programs. An IFSAC accredited program indicates that course offerings, institutional support, and qualified faculty are working together in completing their educational mission.

OFM receives Certificate of Accreditation

On January 24, 2009, Doug

Goodings of the OFM's AS&E section attended the annual National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications (ProBoard) meeting in Houston Texas. The purpose of ProBoard continues to be focused on establishing an internationally recognized means of acknowledging professional achievement in the fire service and related fields.

At this meeting the OFM was presented their five-year re-accreditation certificate. The programs that have been accredited/re-accredited by ProBoard are:

- NFPA 1001- Firefighter Level I & Level II;
- NFPA 472 – Hazardous Materials Operation and Technician Levels;
- NFPA 1033 – Fire Investigator;
- NFPA 1035 – Public Educator Level I & Level II; and,
- NFPA 1035 – Public Information Officer.



Doug Goodings from the OFM's Academic Standards & Evaluation section stands with members of the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications (ProBoard) at a meeting in Houston, Texas.



'Check your alarms': fire family's mom

BY TIM WHITNELL
BURLINGTON POST

Operational smoke alarms are legally required and just smart things to have — facts not lost on a local family that had its home and most of its possessions go up in smoke.

Despite \$150,000 damage to their Isabel Court home of nine years, the LeGrees are counting their blessings as no one was hurt in a Jan. 16 fire that occurred around 1 a. m.

"We are very grateful to be alive and thankful for the help from the community," said mother Diana LeGree. "Check your alarms and get updated systems for them. Update your insurance policy to the current value of your home," she offered by way of advice to others.

"If we can just help one other family..." with that advice, their experience will have some value,

she said.

For the family of seven — three sons and two daughters aged 14-23, all but one of whom live at home — a combination of an unattended and forgotten pot of French fries left on the stove and no batteries in the house's two smoke alarms almost resulted in personal tragedy.

The family's three youngest children, Nick, 18, Karly, 17, and Thomas, 14, were lucky to escape the fire unhurt, suffering only some minor smoke inhalation. They were the only ones home when the blaze broke out. Diana and her husband, Keith, both GO Transit workers, were on shift at the time.

One of the family's two cats is being credited with alerting Karly, waking her from a sleep.

"She told me she heard the cat make a weird meow and turned the light on and saw the smoke," Nick said of Karly's fortunate encounter with the family feline,

Toffee. "I heard her banging on something saying, 'Help me', so I thought maybe someone had broken into the house so I jumped out of bed," Nick said of his initial reaction to Karly's screams.

In the end, the three managed to safely escape the fire and the Burlington Fire Department gave the LeGrees a \$235 ticket for not having operational smoke alarms. Fire Prevention Officer Ben Rotsma said they could have issued multiple tickets and/or charged the homeowner under the Ontario Fire Code, which can result in fines of up to \$50,000 upon conviction.

The family had an inspection of the same home done by the fire department about five years ago and they did not have working smoke alarms then. They were not fined but given some batteries to install in their units.

This article appeared in the Burlington Post on Jan 25, 2009.

CAFC names Stewart Chief of the Year

In September 2008, Toronto Fire Chief William Stewart was named Full Time Fire Chief of the Year by the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs (CAFC).

The award was announced at the closing ceremonies of the CAFC's annual Fire-Rescue Conference in Whitehorse. The award recognizes outstanding contributions made to the betterment of the individual's community and of the fire services industry.

Incoming CAFC President Bruce Burrell, Fire Chief of Calgary, congratulated Chief Stewart and noted, "On this, the 100th anniversary of the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs, we are particularly pleased to be able to recognize as Fire Chief

of the Year, a man with such impressive credentials in Canada and the world."

"This is indeed an honour and I'll remember this for years to come," said Chief Stewart. "I want to thank the president of the CAFC, members of the board and the membership for bestowing this upon me."

Chief Stewart began his professional career with the former City of North York fire department prior to amalgamation of the City of Toronto on January 1, 1998. He began his 36-year career with fire services as an operations firefighter, climbing the ranks to assume the role of fire chief on May 1, 2003. He leads the largest fire service in

Canada and fifth largest in North America, with 82 fire stations and more than 3,100 personnel.

Among his many responsibilities, he has served as a member of the Professional Standards Setting Body, Ontario Fire College, in the review of all standards for firefighter training in Ontario; is Chairman of the Fire Apparatus and Equipment Committee, Underwriters' Laboratories of Canada; is President of the Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Association; International Association of Fire Chiefs/National Fire Protection Association; and is the International President Elect of the Institution of Fire Engineers.

Answers to smoke alarm questions

Recently, the Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM) received the following questions from a member of the fire service:

We have smoke alarms in stock (never been used) with a manufacture date of October 2000 on them. Should we still use them in our smoke alarm program or should we dispose of them? Also, if a smoke alarm, which was installed by the fire department, is found to be faulty subsequent to a fatal fire, could the fire service be held responsible or investigated? (Investigated by who? The OFM or someone else?)

The OFM believes these to be very timely questions and asked two OFM staff to weigh in on the answers. Their responses are below.

BY BETH TATE PENG
OFM FIRE PROTECTION
ENGINEER

Question - *We have smoke alarms in stock (never been used) with a manufacture date of October 2000 on them. Should we still use them in our smoke alarm program or should we dispose of them?*

The 2002 version (second edition) of ULC S531 has a requirement that addresses replacement: "5.4 A smoke alarm shall be permanently marked in English and French at a location readily visible after installation, with the year or expiry as follows: "Replace in *" * = Year"

The first edition of the standard did not have this requirement. Neither version of the standard has life expectancy/expiry/replacement terms, aside from the battery, which must be good for one year.

The manufacturer may specify an expected life time, or have a warranty period, and may clarify when the "clock starts ticking" for the lifetime. If a smoke alarm is

not activated, and has been stored safely, it may be acceptable to begin the warranty period when the battery is connected, unless the owner's instructions say otherwise (unlike CO alarms where, depending upon the sensing technology, the sensor may lose sensitivity due to humidity (or lack of it) or exposure to other gases).

While smoke alarm technology itself has not changed, some of the smoke alarm options have, such as the hush feature, the ease of accessing the battery, the mounting brackets etc. In this respect, it is easy to see why newer products would be preferable versus older smoke alarms. In keeping with the latest smoke alarm options to eliminate nuisance alarms, fire departments should not use older smoke alarms in their smoke alarm programs, and should seriously consider disposing of them.

BY NANCY MACDONALD-DUNCAN
PROGRAM SPECIALIST -
PROSECUTIONS

Question - *Also, if a smoke alarm, which was installed by the fire department, is found to be faulty subsequent to a fatal fire, could the fire service be held responsible or investigated? (Investigated by who? The OFM or someone else?)*

Legally, the owner (as defined in the Ontario Fire Code) is responsible for compliance with the Fire Code and more specifically with respect to the installation and maintenance of smoke alarms.

It is not the fire department's legal obligation to give away or install smoke alarms whether free or on a cost recovery basis. Many fire services have programs and policies in place which result in the provision of smoke alarms to homeowners and tenants. If smoke

alarms are given away whether for free or on a cost recovery basis, there should be a reasonable expectation that the product is safe and reliable both by the fire service and by the person receiving the smoke alarm.

For a fire department to determine if a smoke alarm is working, they would have to test it. Without a test being conducted, neither the fire service nor an individual who has purchased a brand new smoke alarm would be able to determine if the smoke alarm is working. The fire department is not in a position to give out assurances as to the life expectancy of the smoke alarm.

As for the 10 year old smoke alarms being installed: it would be prudent at a minimum to obtain a written assurance from the smoke alarm company that the 10 year warranty does not commence until the battery is installed.

Responsible/investigated

The fire department followed policy and procedure in installing the smoke alarm, they tested it, they gave the testing instructions to the person living in the home and that is really all they could reasonably do.

Responsible for damages, injuries?

Any civil law suit is based on two things: (1) cause of action (2) damages.

Any person can be named in a lawsuit whether they have any personal liability or not. Before anyone can commence a lawsuit however there must be a "cause of action" and there must be "damages."

If a fire department was named in a civil suit for damages resulting

See 'Smoke' on page 26

Australia's day of mourning

BY KRISTEN GELINEAU
ASSOCIATED PRESS

On February 22, Australians held a national day of mourning for the victims of wildfires that killed hundreds in February, and survivors were promised the nation would support them in the massive task of rebuilding.

Tears flowed as Prime Minister Kevin Rudd said the hellish blazes of "Black Saturday" on Feb. 7 — which killed more than 200 people

— had tested the nation's character, and the response was courage, compassion and resilience.

Rudd said governments at all levels had failed communities hit by tragedy in the past, and this must not be allowed in the fire-devastated towns.

He promised "a solemn contract with each of these communities to rebuild, brick by brick, home by home, school by school, church by church, street by street."

Forensic investigators in the

disaster zone took a break from their grim search for more bodies among the ruins. The confirmed death toll stood at 209 but officials said they were still finding bodies in the rubble and the tally would rise.

Helped by years of drought and furnace-like conditions, the Feb. 7 fires ripped across more than 3,900 square kilometres, burning all before them. More than 1,800 farms and homes were destroyed.

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Fire departments are not obligated to give away or install smoke alarms

from a fatal fire because of a faulty smoke alarm which was provided by the fire department, the court would, among other things, consider the following:

1. If the smoke alarm was working would the outcome have been any different? Although that may seem rather obvious, in many cases, there are other elements or factors that can contribute to or be the direct cause of the outcome. For instance, a person is killed in a car accident due to negligent driving by another driver. During the autopsy it is determined that the person died from a heart attack, not the minor injuries sustained in the accident. Although the other driver may have caused the accident, did the person die as a result of the accident or heart failure?

2. Who is legally responsible

for installation and maintenance of the smoke alarm in a home? Legislation and common law dictate legal responsibility.

3. Did the fire department know or ought to have known that the smoke alarm would not work in the event of a fire? The smoke alarm had never been removed from the package, it was stored safely prior to installation and it was tested and working.

Protection from personal liability

Section 74(1) of the *Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997*, confers protection to fire department personnel from personal liability if the act was "done in good faith in the execution or intended execution of his or her power or duty or for any alleged neglect or

default in the execution in good faith of his or her power or duty."

Section 74(2) "does not relieve the Crown or a municipal corporation or liability in respect of a tort committed by a person referred to in subsection (1) to which they would otherwise be subject."

Any act done which would not be considered part of the duties and powers of the fire department might not be protected as provided for under this section.

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New Risk Watch trailer in Kawartha Lakes

Late last year, the Kawartha Lakes Risk Watch coalition received a Trillium grant to assist them in promoting the injury prevention program, Risk Watch throughout their region. The coalition worked with local businesses to purchase the trailer and affix signage with some of the grant money. The trailer provides a way

to store materials. The coalition also plans to use the trailer as a static display at fire halls, the upcoming bicycle rodeo, during Fire Prevention Week and at an event called *Ski with Sparky* at Devil's Elbow in the area. The rest of the money went toward buying Canadian edition resource kits to replace other worn kits.

OFM manager gets Premier's Award

On February 23, 2009 the Premier's Awards for Ontario College Graduates were held in Toronto. Presented annually to six recipients, the Awards celebrate the outstanding contributions made by graduates and their colleges towards the success and sustainability of Ontario.

This year, Carol-Lynn Chambers, Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM) Operations Manager/Chief of the Emergency Planning & Strategic Development unit received an award within the Community Service category. In this role, she helps to advise over 400 fire departments on emergency preparedness and managing fire and public safety risks.

Nominees are submitted from each of Ontario's 24 colleges in six categories: Business, Creative Arts and Design, Community Services,

Health Sciences, Technology and a Recent Graduate category.

Carol-Lynn Chambers, a graduate of Lambton College's industrial hygiene technology program in 1986, is a pioneer for Canadian women in the field of fire fighting. One position she held was deputy fire chief for the City of London, making Chambers Canada's highest-ranking female firefighter.

Recipients of the Premier's Award are college graduates who have surpassed the expectations of their peers and colleagues by demonstrating exceptional commitment to their careers and communities. Each recipient receives a bronze medal designed by renowned sculptor Dora de Pédry-Hunt and is privileged to direct a \$5,000 bursary to his or her graduating college.



Carol-Lynn Chambers, OFM Operations Manager/Chief of the EPSD unit, accepts her certificate and medal for the 2008 Premier's Award for Graduates of Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology from Minister, Training, Colleges, and Universities John Milloy, and Keith Farlinger, CEO, BDO Dunwoody LLP. Photo courtesy of Gary Rourke Photography.

OFM News Update

Jana Dozzi was the successful candidate in the competition for a financial officer in Corporate Services. She is working from the Sudbury office and began on January 5.

Peter Hamilton was successful in the competition for the position of fire investigator and began on Jan. 26. Hamilton has served as a police officer for twenty years.

Dawn Heath was the successful candidate in the competition for an administrative assistant in the Deputy Fire Marshal's area.

Judy Humphries retired from the Ontario Fire College's resource centre on Feb. 28. All the best Judy!

Michael Redmond was successful in the competition for the position of fire investigator. Prior to joining the OFM, Redmond was previously with the Ontario Provincial Police.

Jeff Tebb was the successful candidate for the position of fire investigator and began on Jan. 26. Tebb arrived at the OFM with more than 28 years' experience with policing.

Tatyana Kurilov, started working for Academic Standards and Evaluation as program coordinator, certification and testing, in early February. The OFM is happy to have Kurilov back while Karyn Lewis-Haughton is on a medical leave.

Fire Service Calendar 2009

April 17	Canadian Fire Safety Association Education Forum	Markham, ON
May 2-6	Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs 57 th Annual Conference & Trade Show	Toronto, ON
June 1-4	Ontario Professional Fire Fighter's Association Convention	Guelph, ON
June 3	Fire Safety Awards	Toronto, ON
June 14-18	53 rd Annual OMFPOA Training and Educational Symposium	Toronto, ON
Sept. 17-19	Fire Con	Thunder Bay, ON
Sept. 20-23	Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs 2009 Conference	Winnipeg, MB

OPP celebrates 100 years

BY GINA PONTIKAS
OFM PROGRAM
COORDINATOR

The Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, the Honourable Rick Bartolucci, and Ontario Provincial Police Commissioner Julian Fantino launched the Ontario Provincial Police's (OPP's) 100th Anniversary in January.

Although the anniversary date that officially marks 100 years of service by the OPP isn't until October 13, 2009, a series of signature events leading up to the anniversary are scheduled to take place across the province in Niagara Falls, Caledon, Kenora, Maxville, London, Oshawa, Cobalt and Orillia.

"The Ontario fire service works very closely with the OPP when responding to emergency calls and in provincial training exercises. We are partners in community safety and it is my profound pleasure to congratulate the OPP on this great milestone," said Ontario Fire Marshal Pat Burke. "Given the many challenges in past years and the modern ones we face today, the OPP can be applauded for their brave, dedicated and outstanding service to the people of Ontario."

To celebrate this year's achievement the OPP Museum has announced the OPP Time Capsule Project. The public and members of the OPP are encouraged to contribute items of a personal experience including letters and photographs. Donated records will be stored in the time capsule for 50 years and then opened.

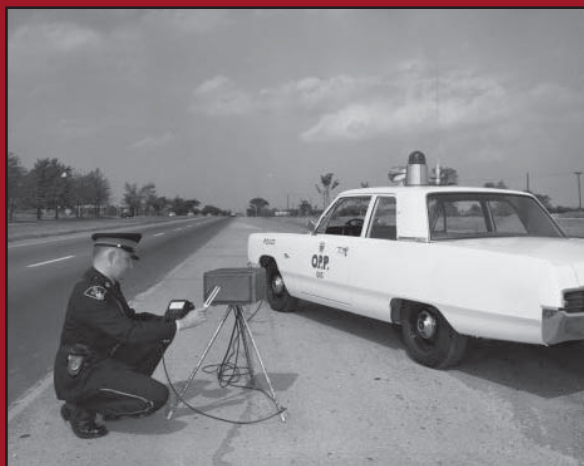
Other events to commemorate

the OPP's 100th anniversary have included the OPP Commemorative Patrol in which two current OPP officers tested their resourcefulness and endurance in a three-week patrol in Northern Ontario.

Throughout their journey, OPP Constables Guy Higgott and Erik Howells had to employ wilderness survival skills and could rely only on traditional equipment and means of transportation (dog sleds,

snowshoes and rail) to navigate their way over approximately 1,000 kilometres.

Everyone, not only history buffs, will enjoy the additional interesting facts about the origins of policing, historical photographs and information on the various events taking place throughout the province on the OPP's special 100th Anniversary website at www.opp100.ca.



How times have changed!
Above, an OPP officer sets up a radar machine near a roadside.

To the right, an officer holds a radar gun on a busy highway in 2007 to determine how fast vehicles are travelling.

Photos courtesy of the OPP Archives.

