

M The Ontario Fire Service **essenger**

Volume 18, Issue 4
August/September 2009

a publication of the Office of the Fire Marshal



Barn fires - an increasing problem for Ontario farmers

Inside:

Ontario & Azores fire officials sign MOU

What's Cooking - for Teens! - the latest program



The Ontario Fire Service Messenger

Published in the interest of fire protection and fire prevention in Ontario.

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

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ISSN 1188-7524

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this issue, particularly Bev Gilbert, Janice Johnstone, Ryan Betts, Chris Slosser, Denise Wallace, Gina Pontikas, Tony Pacheco, Penny Goddard, Ian Davidson, Fred McLennan, Wendy Krebsz, Brittany Tanner, Al Suleman, Beth Tate, Mike Ng, Martha Murphy, Doug Goodings, Denis Maurice and Doug Atkins.

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Commissioner of Community Safety

Ian Davidson

It is a pleasure for me to introduce myself and to share some thoughts about fire prevention and safety in Ontario.

In my new role as Commissioner of Community Safety I am accountable for a number of organizations within the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, including, the Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM), the Public Safety Division and Emergency Management Ontario. I am grateful for the opportunity to serve in this capacity and to everyone who has helped me adapt to the various issues we collectively face.

As you are well aware, our Ministry is led by the Honourable Rick Bartolucci and our Deputy Minister John Burke, both of whom have a keen interest in public safety and the people that help ensure fire safety in Ontario.

In my former role as a police officer I held a special interest in the investigative process. As such, I arrive at my current position excited about the duties of the Ontario Fire Marshal with respect to investigations and eager to learn more about how best to contribute to fire safety in Ontario. As you know very well, fire investigations into cause and origin are often lengthy and detailed; yet contribute significantly to stronger fire prevention and the safety of all Ontarians.

Firefighting is a noble calling and recently, the challenges faced by fire fighters was brought home to us all as we watched news reports of a massive fire at a furniture plant in Ancaster, Ontario. And only two days earlier, we learned of the tragic deaths of two fire fighters combating a blaze in Buffalo, New York. I know I can speak on behalf of our Fire Marshal Pat Burke, members of the OFM, and indeed all emergency workers in expressing both our sadness and our gratitude for the sacrifices made by these brave people. In both cases a thorough investigation will reveal details that ultimately will help minimize the risk to fire fighters and communities in the future.

I would also like to comment on my recent visit to the Ontario Fire College. I was very impressed by the dedication of our staff and with the men and women volunteering their time to train as firefighters. United by their passion to protect our respective communities, the Ontario Fire College, these volunteers, and the professional fire fighters truly makes a difference in fire safety across our vast province.

Ontarians will have an opportunity to show their gratitude during the Ontario Firefighter's Memorial Ceremony at Queen's Park on October 4 and Fire Prevention Week (October 4 to 10th). These are important times to raise public awareness of fire prevention, and thank those who have dedicated their lives to keeping us safe.

For your professionalism and commitment to the OFM please accept my congratulations. Over time, I look forward to meeting with many of you, engaging your expertise and hearing your ideas as we continue to move forward.



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Commissioner visits Ontario Fire College

Commissioner of Community Safety Ian Davidson visited and toured the Ontario Fire College (OFC) on July 9 and met with Ontario Fire Marshal Pat Burke, OFC Principal Fred McLennan, OFC Facilities Manager Larry Williams, and Emergency Planning and Strategic Development (EPSD) Operations Manager Carol-Lynn Chambers. Commissioner Davidson was keen to learn about the college's programs, courses, facilities, equipment, and apparatus and the services it provides to the Ontario fire service. Following an overview presentation on the staffing and operation of the college, an in-depth question and answer session brought focus to some of

the challenges and opportunities that exist for the college in meeting the demands of its fire service stakeholders. During the tour of the college, OFC, Fire Investigation Services (FIS) and EPSD staff members described and demonstrated a number of services, projects, programs, and provincial emergency response capabilities to the Commissioner. The visit highlighted the integration and support of all OFM sections in college programming and in delivering programs, courses and services to the municipi-



Attending a Hazmat demonstration. From left are Ontario Fire College Principal Fred McLennan, Office of the Fire Marshal Larry Crang, Commissioner of Community Safety Ian Davidson and Ontario Fire Marshal Pat Burke. Photo courtesy of Emergency Planning and Strategic Development (EPSD) Operations Manager Carol-Lynn Chambers.

pal fire service in Ontario. Commissioner Davidson plans to return to the college for further focused visits and to participate in selected seminars in support of the OFM and the municipal fire service.

Smoke alarm charge nets \$5,000 fine

A Blue Mountains resident pleaded guilty in provincial offences court on May 25 to charges laid by the fire department for not installing working smoke alarms on all storeys of a home. A fire in the home earlier this year prompted an investigation, which showed the Ontario Fire Code violation.

This non-compliance came with a \$5,000 fine, something

the Justice called an individual and general deterrent for failing to follow proper installation and maintenance requirements of smoke alarms.

The Blue Mountains Fire Prevention Officer A.J. Lake, in light of this recent charge, urges residents to ensure their home is equipped with working smoke alarms outside of sleeping areas

and on all storeys including the basement.

Excerpted from the May 28, 2009 issue of the Blue Mountain Courier Herald.

For more Ontario Fire Code violation stories, turn to page 7.

Ontario & Azores fire officials sign MOU to enhance public safety

On July 13, 2009, Ontario Fire Marshal Pat Burke and President Vasco Garcia of the Humanitarian Association of Voluntary Firefighters of Ponta Delgada (PDFD), signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to improve public safety in their respective jurisdictions.

In particular, the MOU will enhance the exchange of information between the two parties through personnel exchanges and help in the development of collaborative training and education opportunities.

"In the spirit of international cooperation, this MOU will help to break down barriers and form a successful partnership for the future," said Burke. "The OFM is excited about this partnership and its added public safety benefits for the people of Ontario."

In the past, the OFM has worked with delegates from China, South

Korea, Japan and Israel to share expertise and enhance community safety in their respective countries.



Ontario Fire Marshal Pat Burke and President Vasco Garcia of the Humanitarian Association of Voluntary Firefighters of Ponta Delgada sign the Memorandum of Understanding at Toronto Fire Services' Harbourfront fire station.

"Improving the fire department's firefighting capabilities, is of the utmost importance," said Garcia of the PDFD. "This MOU will help us to enhance our capabilities through a continuous education program and exchange of in-

formation on the latest firefighting techniques and equipment available."

After the signing of the MOU, the Azores fire officials were escorted by Burke and Toronto Fire Chief Bill Stewart on the Ontario Provincial Police boat to see To-

ronto Island and the Toronto harbourfront occupancies that must be protected by Toronto Fire Services. As the boat headed out of

the islands and around to the Royal Yacht Club, the engines sprang to life and headway was made for the Club. The boat operators had received an emergency call for a nine-year-old boy who had been injured on the tennis courts at the Club and the water taxi designated for the Club had just ventured out on another trip. As the boat slowed to come into the dock at the Club, the skies became grey and the water very choppy: it was difficult to dock. With care, Chief Stewart and Fire Marshal Burke helped the boy and his father on board. Then it was full-speed to the shore where the pair was unloaded to wait for an ambulance. Although it was a very dramatic ending to the morning, it

See 'PDFD' on page 6



As a gift of goodwill, President Garcia presented Fire Marshal Burke with a hand-embroidered wall hanging.

**October 4-10, 2009
is**

Fire Prevention Week

**and this year's theme is
Stay Fire Smart! Don't
Get Burned**

**For more information visit
www.nfpa.org**

Continued from page 5

PDFD has a rich history

was also an educational opportunity for the Azores fire officials to experience first-hand how a water emergency could be handled in the province with the assistance of partners in fire and life safety.

QUICK FACTS

- The Azores Regional Government has undertaken the development of a new marine port to accommodate modern cruise ships. In addition to an existing international airport, Toronto's harbourfront commercial waterway and Pearson International Airport were of significant interest to the Azores fire officials as they pose similar challenges to firefighting capabilities.

- The trip by the Azores delegation included visits to the Greater Toronto Airport Authority's fire department, the Toronto Fire Services training facilities and finally to the Ontario Fire College, where the delegation learned more about Ontario's fire service, training and education programs.

Background

The city of Ponta Delgada is located on the isle of São Miguel in the Azores, an autonomous region of Portugal, some 2100 miles (3360 kilometres) off the coast of Newfoundland and 800 miles (1280 kilometres) West of Lisbon. There are a total of nine islands in the archipelago, with an approximate landmass of 2,350 km² and a European Economic

Zone (EEZ) of nearly one million km².

Due to progressive urban sprawling in the early 1800's, the city fathers found it necessary to establish the first fire brigade, when in 1836, one fire-emergency post was established within each of the three city districts.

“
...Toronto's harbourfront commercial waterway and Pearson International Airport were of significant interest to the Azores fire officials...
 ”

Forty-three years later, on August 5 1879, city alderman Manuel Teixeira Soares and a group of citizens founded the Associação Humanitária de Bombeiros Voluntários de Ponta Delgada (AHBVPD), hereafter referred to as PDFD. In 1902 an agreement was struck between City Hall and the PDFD, where two distinctive groups of firefighters were established: municipal paid employees and volunteer.

Since its inception 173 years ago, the PDFD has occupied five headquarters, the most recent of which, a modern facility complex, was inaugurated on the 3rd of September 2002. The PDFD is



All ready to tour the Toronto harbourfront. From left are Roberto Manuel Cabral Amorim - Ponta Delgada Airport Security and Firefighter Officer, Toronto Fire Services Fire Chief Bill Stewart, PDFD President Vasco Garcia, Ontario Fire Marshal Pat Burke, Fire Chief Joao Ferreira Melo and Aires Whytton da Silva.

administered by an elected board of directors, whose current President is Professor Vasco Garcia, the retired president of the University of Azores.

At the core of its foundation is strong commitment to sports, education and health. Other social projects include daycare and Kindergarten. As such, the PDFD goes far beyond the indispensable firefighting services for the District of Ponta Delgada, including both the international air and seaports, in addition to paramedics, the transport of the sick, road accident assistance, and other emergency situations.

Hamilton lodging house owner fined \$17,000

The owner of a 2-storey lodging house, occupied by six student lodgers, has been found guilty of seven Ontario Fire Code violations and fined \$17,000.

The violations included Retrofit Section 9.3 violations involving failure to construct a fire separation having a 30-minute fire resistance rating between a first floor sleeping room and the adjacent stairs, failure to construct a fire separation having a 30-minute fire resistance rating between the basement and first storey, failure to install exit signs, and Parts 2

and Part 6 violations involving failure to remove combustible storage from under the basement stairs, failure to install portable fire extinguishers on the second and basement storeys, failure to maintain the portable fire extinguisher on the first storey and failure to prepare and submit a fire safety plan.

Hamilton conviction stories submitted by Robert Simpson, Fire Safety Officer with Hamilton Emergency Services – Fire.

Second-time offender in Hamilton

The owner of a bar/tavern in Hamilton has plead guilty to violating the Ontario Fire Code by failing to retain at the premise for examination by the Chief Fire Official records of the monthly tests of the building's fire alarm system (Div B Sentence 1.1.2.1.(1)). The owner was fined \$4,000. This is the second time the owner was cited for

the same infraction in a Fire Safety Inspection Report issued in September 2006. A notation within the report indicated that any future infractions involving failure to maintain/provide written records would result in immediate charges being laid.

Ajax landlord sent strong message about smoke alarms

In late June 2009, an Ajax landlord plead guilty to two counts of failing to ensure that at least one smoke alarm be installed on each storey that does not contain a sleeping area in a dwelling unit.

The judgment stemmed from a 9-1-1 call that Ajax Fire and Emergency Services responded

to on December 12, 2008 as a result of a fire in a bedroom. The investigation revealed that the owner did not provide smoke alarms on the basement or ground storeys. The landlord was fined \$2,500 for each smoke alarm offence totalling \$5,000.

Another Ajax landlord convicted and fined

In early June, an Ajax landlord plead guilty in Provincial Offences Court to one count of failing to maintain working smoke alarms, two counts of failing to provide working smoke alarms and one count of operating an illegal basement apartment. The individual was fined \$1,000 for each smoke alarm offence and \$5,000 for creating a hazardous situation not originally designed for in the construction of the single family dwelling. The fines totalled \$8,000.

The judgment stemmed from a 9-1-1 call that Ajax Fire and Emergency Services responded to on January 16, 2009 as a result of a fire in the garage. The subsequent investigation revealed that the owner did not provide or maintain required smoke alarms throughout the dwellings and that the required permits and approvals to create a second residence within the single-family dwelling unit had not been obtained.

"There is no question that working smoke alarms save lives," says Fire Prevention Inspector Kevin Vaughan adding, "This 9-1-1 call could have ended with a very tragic outcome if it were not for the quick action of our responding firefighters. With no working smoke alarms, there was no early warning for the residents. Thankfully the basement apartment tenant was rescued before they succumbed to the fire conditions."

Multiple convictions for Fire Code violations in Waterloo

Over the summer, the owner and co-owner of a two-unit residential property each plead guilty to six counts of violating the Ontario Fire Code.

The property consisted of self-contained units; one on the first floor and the other in the basement, with shared laundry facilities in the basement. The owner resided in the first floor unit and rented out the basement apartment.

The initial inspection was pre-arranged for January 20, 2009 with the co-owner. While conducting the inspection, the co-owner informed the attending fire prevention officer that the property was operating as a single family dwelling, that the basement was rented to a friend of the owner and that all cooking was done in the main floor kitchen. The basement kitchen did not contain a stove or cooking utensils, and there wasn't a door separating the first floor unit from the shared basement laundry/furnace room. The tenant residing in the basement unit was not present at the time of the inspection.

Shortly after conducting the inspection, the fire prevention officer received a phone call from a friend of the tenant in the basement. The friend stated that the property contained a full self-contained unit in the basement, that the owners had removed the stove, all cooking utensils, and the door separating the first floor unit from the basement. The owner had arranged to take the tenant out for coffee during the inspection. A follow-up phone call was made to the tenant, and this arrangement was confirmed.

The day after an entry warrant was obtained, another inspection was undertaken. The inspection revealed a stove and cooking utensils in the basement unit, and the door separating first floor unit from the basement was re-installed.

The owner and the co-owner were respectively convicted on numerous violations under Part 9 Retrofit in the Ontario Fire Code and one charge each of hindering, obstructing or interfering with an assistant to the Fire Marshal in

exercising his or her duties FPPA 28(1).

As a result of convictions, the owner who resided at the property, received a total of \$5,000 in fines with additional victim surcharge and court cost fees: \$2,500 for hindering and obstructing, and \$500 each for the five Fire Code violations.

The co-owner, received a total of \$3,500 in fines with additional victim surcharge and court cost fees: \$1,000 for hindering and obstructing, and \$500 each for the five Fire Code violations.

Submitted by Pat Lago, Fire Prevention Officer with Waterloo Fire Rescue.

Smoke alarm violations

On June 30, 2009, two Brantford homeowners were each convicted of failing to install a smoke alarm in the basement of their single storey family dwelling.

The convictions were the result of a fire that occurred in the main floor living room. No one was home at the time of the fire. During the course of a subsequent fire investigation, fire prevention officers discovered that there was no smoke alarm installed in the partially finished basement of the home. There had been a working smoke alarm installed on the main

floor. As a result of the missing smoke alarm the homeowners, a husband and wife, were both charged with a violation of the Ontario Fire Code.

Prior to sentencing, the homeowners spoke to the Justice of the Peace and explained that they had suffered a \$200,000 loss and great personal losses as a result of the fire. Each was fined \$50 plus victim surcharges.

Submitted by Darren Zettler, Fire Prevention Officer, Brantford Fire Department.

Playing with fire sparks big fines

In early June, the homeowner of a single storey dwelling unit with a completed basement plead guilty to two Ontario Fire Code violations. The judgment stemmed from a 9-1-1 call that Ajax Fire and Emergency Services responded to on January 27, 2009 as a result of a child playing with a lighter. The subsequent investigation revealed that the owner failed to install a smoke alarm in the basement and failed to maintain the smoke alarm on the main floor. The homeowner was fined a total of \$5,000.

Ajax convictions submitted by Kevin Vaughan, Fire Prevention Inspector with Ajax Fire and Emergency Services.

Chatham-Kent restaurant owner pleads guilty

An owner of a Chatham-Kent restaurant plead guilty in Provincial Offences Court to a violation of the Ontario Fire Code and was fined \$1,000, plus court costs.

The business owner was convicted of failing to maintain the commercial cooking equipment exhaust and fire protection system in conformance with NFPA 96 Standard for "Ventilation Control and Fire Protection of Commercial Cooking Operations".

The requirements of the Ontario Fire Code for which the business owner of this premises was convicted are crucial to public safety in this site and are intended to limit fire spread by extinguishing the fire to ensure the patrons and employees of the restaurant are protected.

Submitted by Barb Dawson, Public Fire & Life Safety Educator, Chatham-Kent Fire & Emergency Services.

Another Burlington rental apartment owner convicted and fined

A representative for the owner of two Burlington rental apartment units entered a guilty plea in a provincial court in Burlington on June 9, 2009 in relation to a charge for failing to comply with the requirements of the Ontario Fire Code.

The charge was filed in connection with a Burlington Fire Department response to a fire on October 12, 2008 at 5:00 a.m. When fire crews arrived, they found smoke and flames showing from a second floor balcony of one of the rental apartments. The two tenants at home at the time of the fire were alerted by the noise of the fire outside and were able to safely escape without incident prior to the fire extending in to the building. Crews later found that at least one of the two apartment units did not have adequate working smoke alarms.

A subsequent investigation led to charges being laid against the owner for failing to maintain the smoke alarm in operating condition. The owner was fined

\$1,200, plus victim surcharge of \$300.

The Burlington Fire Department continues to work with apartment owners and property managers to educate them on their responsibilities to provide and maintain working smoke alarms in their rental units. Coupled with that is the important aspect of maintaining records of their smoke alarm installations and maintenance. In addition to working with the owners and managers, Burlington Fire continues to educate tenants of rental units, as to their responsibilities to report problems with the smoke alarms in their units to the owner or property managers. Tenants are also informed that they can be ticketed or charged for contravention of the Ontario Fire Code if they intentionally remove or disable a smoke alarm in their unit.

Burlington Fire Department news release submitted by Ben Rotsma, Fire Prevention Officer.

Another owner of rental units convicted in Pickering

On June 1, the owner of a Pickering two-unit residential occupancy was fined \$15,000 for violating the Ontario Fire Code. A tenant occupied the basement unit and the owner occupied the main floor apartment.

The owner had failed to install proper fire separations and closures, failed to ensure the furnace was operating safely and had failed to have an electrical inspection. The smoke alarm in the

basement had been disconnected from an electrical circuit. As a result, the owner was charged with one count under 2.1.2.2. Div B of the OFC for "activities that create a hazard not allowed for in the original design" and one count for failing to maintain a smoke alarm in operating condition (6.3.3.2.(1) Div B).

This was a first offence for the owner. A pre-trial inspection showed property had finally

been brought into compliance. Despite being aware of the trial the owner did not attend or send a representative.

This is the third fine of \$10,000 or more handed down by the courts to Pickering basement apartment landlords in the past eight months.

Submitted by Steve Fowlds, Fire Inspector, Pickering Operation and Emergency Services Department.

Barrie bar fined \$10,000

In June, a downtown Barrie bar plead guilty to charges of obstructing emergency exits during a St. Patrick's Day event. The bar was fined \$10,000, after pleading guilty in provincial court to charges of blocking and locking emergency exits on March 17, 2008; the Barrie Fire and Emergency Services responded to a public complaint that day, as revellers enjoyed the Irish-themed festivities.

"Fire departments across Ontario have taken a zero-tolerance position when they discover Fire Code violations that directly impact public safety," said fire prevention officer Jeff Holmyard. "These fines serve as a punitive measure to the owner

and (as) a general deterrent to other owners of assembly occupancies, thereby sending the message that Fire Code violations, including improperly maintained exits, will not be tolerated."

On Feb. 18, 2003, 21 people were crushed to death while attempting to escape from a Chicago nightclub. Two days later, 100 people died in another nightclub fire in Warwick, Rhode Island. After those two events, the Barrie fire department sent letters to downtown bars to explain the importance of properly maintaining emergency exits.

Excerpted from the June 24, 2009 issue of the Barrie Advance.

Charges laid against Orillia retirement residence owners

The two owners of Muskoka Heights Retirement residence in Orillia, where four people died as a result of a January fire, have been charged with seven violations under the Ontario Fire Code.

"This fire demonstrates the importance of ensuring that these facilities comply with the Ontario Fire Code," said Ontario Fire Marshal Pat Burke. "The Code provides the minimum level of fire safety in existing buildings to ensure they are safe places in which to live and work."

After a comprehensive fire investigation, the Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM) has concluded that the cause of the fire has been classified as undetermined and that there were contraventions to the Ontario Fire Code. As a result of these findings, Orillia Fire Department has charged the property owners with:

- Failure to ensure original or a copy of records be retained at the building premises;

- Failure to ensure exterior passageway or fire escape in occupied building be maintained;
- Failure to ensure supervisory staff be instructed in the fire emergency procedures as described in the fire safety plan before given any responsibility for fire safety;
- Failure to implement the fire safety plan provisions for conducting the required monthly tests of the building's fire alarm system;
- Failure to prominently post and maintain on each floor area at least one copy of the fire emergency procedures;
- Failure to implement the fire safety plan provisions for conducting fire drills for supervisory staff; and,
- Failure to conduct annual maintenance and testing of portable extinguishers.

"The Orillia Fire Department is committed to the safety of its citizens," said Orillia Fire Department Chief Ralph Dominelli. "We will

More smoke alarm violations

On May 19, 2009 the owner of a residential four-plex plead guilty to failure to maintain a smoke alarm in operating condition as per Division B Article 6.3.3.2. The Brantford owner was fined \$500.

Submitted by Jeff McCormick, Fire Prevention Officer with the Brantford Fire Department.

Got conviction information?

Let's hear about it!

The Ontario Fire Service Messenger would like to inform all readers about recent convictions and other successful enforcement initiatives in Ontario.

Visit www.ofm.gov.on.ca, then click on the **Prosecutions & Convictions Form** link in the *Legislation* box. Please send information to carol.gravelle@ontario.ca.

continue to work with building owners and operators to ensure they understand their responsibilities with respect to fire safety and emergency planning."

The OFM's investigation looked at many factors that contributed to the fire including building performance, fire prevention records, staff and occupant behaviour and fire safety planning and evacuation. Based on these findings, an investigative report will be sent to the Ontario Fire Marshal for review. Once reviewed, the Fire Marshal will provide his recommendations to enhance fire safety in these facilities to the Ontario government.

Saugeen Shores celebrates another successful Junior Firefighter's program

BY WENDY KREBSZ

FIREFIGHTER & PUBLIC FIRE &
LIFE SAFETY EDUCATOR
GREY HIGHLANDS FIRE &
EMERGENCY SERVICES

On May 20, 2009 Saugeen Shores Fire Department celebrated the completion of another successful Junior Firefighter's Program by hosting a graduation ceremony that was held at the Port Elgin Station. Friends and family gathered for the program that included demonstrations of their knowledge and skills with individual recognition as they received their certificates followed by refreshments.

The Saugeen Shores Junior Firefighter's program is a much-anticipated annual spring event that is open to children in the community who are aged 10 to 12 years old. Every Wednesday evening for six weeks children arrived at the fire station and split up into their designated squads to rotate through the modules in the program. The participants were taught the importance of home fire safety and how to properly use a portable fire extinguisher. They also learned about auto extrication with basic first aid and fire truck operations. This provided junior firefighters with the hands on experience of using tools and equipment that firefighters rely on when responding to calls. During the graduation ceremony, each squad was responsible for presenting one of the four modules: home fire safety information, how to properly use an extinguisher to put out a fire, demonstrating procedures for connecting to a water source and manning attack lines. They also showed how to



From left in the back row are Capt. Lorne Currie, Capt. Jeff Ackert, Matt Carr, Chief Phil Eagleson, Capt. Randy Shular, Jenna Underwood, Peter Eagleson, Rob Blue and Ken MacDonald. In the front row from left are Scott McMeekin, Blace Craig, Capt. Terry Chappell and John Campbell. Photo submitted by Wendy Krebsz, Grey Highlands Fire & Emergency Services.

stabilize a vehicle in a collision, the appropriate patient care for trapped victims and extrication from the vehicle using the necessary tools. This program is in its 22nd year and has become a tradition for some families with younger siblings following in their older brothers' and sisters' footsteps and for one family, it has included a second generation. For others, it's a new opportunity to learn about fire safety and important skills to stay safe thanks to Captain Randy Shular and the other dedicated members of the Saugeen Shores Fire Department. Their professionalism and dedication to providing this outstanding program is creating a safer community for everyone by empowering young people to make a difference when seconds count.

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OFM & MNR share mandate when it comes to fires

BY BRITTANY TANNER
FIRE INFORMATION OFFICER
SUMMER ASSISTANT
MINISTRY OF NATURAL
RESOURCES

One match, a campfire, sparks from a train or lightning bolt can ignite a grass or forest fire. Depending on weather, topography and fire location, a devastating outcome can follow. The majority of municipalities in Ontario have signed municipal agreements that dictate how a fire will be actioned. However, the responsibility of protecting forests and communities when a forest fire occurs, lies with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) and their highly skilled workforce of pilots, administration staff, managers and Ontario FireRangers.

Ontario FireRangers are professional firefighters trained in emergency response and forest fire suppression. They are experts in fire behaviour and the operation of fire suppression equipment such as pumps and hand tools. Forest fire suppression started in the early 1900's and centralized fire control tactics were adopted by the MNR in the 1970s, evolving since then. Today, there are 197 four-member crews in Ontario, strategically located in 23 districts.

Each day FireRangers are assigned a level of alert status according to the forest fire hazard. Crews on alert must be prepared for a dispatch to a fire for as long as 19 days, where working the fireline from dawn to dusk and

living a rugged lifestyle are all part of the job. Crews also work to promote fire prevention programs, conduct school seminars, and assist with MNR tours and open house events. When not practicing skills, or completing mandatory training, crews are busy maintaining equipment and assisting with other resource management tasks. To protect communities and structures from the threat of forest and brush fires, Ontario FireRanger crews and



A picture of a forest fire and some of the devastation it had caused. Picture courtesy of the Ministry of Natural Resources.

“ The majority of municipalities in Ontario have signed municipal agreements that dictate how a fire will be actioned. ”

municipal departments frequently carry out joint training exercises to ensure they have the capabilities needed to prevent fatalities and losses.

The Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM) and the MNR share a mandate to protect private property and human life. Both the OFM and the MNR have adopted the principle laid out in the national FireSmart program. The FireSmart property manual provides advice to municipalities, firefighters and property owners on how to protect their forest homes.

The province of Ontario averages over 1,200 fires a year. The long term trend indicates that

fire seasons will be longer in the future and due to the changing weather patterns fires will burn more intensely and be harder to extinguish. By working together, the MNR and OFM can continue to provide the citizens of Ontario with a highly qualified fire management program that they have come to expect.



Barn Fires: an increasing problem for Ontario farmers

BY AL SULEMAN P. ENG.
FIRE PROTECTION ENGINEER
OFM FIRE SAFETY STANDARDS

"10 horses die in Woolwich blaze; Firefighters arrive too late to combat fierce barn fire that also leaves three dogs, one pig dead," "Barn fire causes \$300,000 damage," "Farms feel heat from fires" – such headlines appear on an almost weekly basis in Ontario and across Canada. In Ontario alone, these losses amounted to more than \$57 million in 2007, up from \$37 million in 2006. Fortunately no human lives were lost. However, the impact of such fires on the livelihood of farmers cannot be overstated. In many cases, entire barns are lost along with valuable livestock, agricultural product and equipment.

Over the past five years, barn fires and fires in large farm structures have become an increasing concern. The evolution towards larger livestock and greenhouse operations has further heightened the need to address the fire problem.

In response to concerns raised by farmers, the insurance industry and the fire service, the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) struck a Technical Advisory Committee on Farm Fires to review and identify best practices to address the fire safety risks to farm workers, farm property and emergency responders. Members of the committee include representatives from the fire

service, municipal building officials, insurance industry, farming associations and government.

The following questions and answers are reproduced from an OMAFRA publication, *Barn Fires – An Increasing Problem for Ontario Farmers*, which serves to further explain the farm structure fire problem and the role of the Advisory Committee. The publication is available directly from OMAFRA's website at: www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/engineer/structures.htm.

Question: Why are there increasing concerns about barn fires?

As farms have grown larger, associated farm buildings have increased in size and value. As a result, when the large structures catch fire they prove more difficult to extinguish and the financial losses are significantly greater. Data from the Ontario Office of the Fire Marshal indicate the following structure fire incidents for the period 2004 - 2007:

- 2004 - 196 (\$30.1 million loss)
- 2005 - 223 (\$25.3 million loss)
- 2006 - 205 (\$34.4 million loss)
- 2007 - 241 (\$57.6 million loss)

These costs include those associated with building structures, but not equipment, agricultural product and livestock. Luckily, to date, there has not been loss of human life associated with any of these fires.



Historic barn on fire. Picture courtesy of John Johnson.

Question: What are the primary causes of preventable fires?

The Ontario Office of the Fire Marshal has provided data for the cause of fires for the years 2004-2007. In each year, the leading causes for preventable, determined fires were:

- mechanical/electrical failure
- misuse of ignition source/equipment
- design/construction/maintenance deficiency.

Question: What are the primary sources of ignition?

The data suggest that the primary sources of ignition fall within the following classes:

- miscellaneous (chemical reaction for example: spontaneous combustion, lightning etc.)
- electrical distribution equipment (circuit wiring, distribution equipment, extension cords etc.)
- heating equipment (central heating, flue pipe, space heater etc.)

Continued on next page

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

Continued from previous page

...the impact of such fires on farmers cannot be

- open flame (cutting/welding, blow torch, smokers articles etc.).

Question: Why is electrical distribution equipment such a common cause of ignition?

The insurance industry, along with the Electrical Safety Authority (ESA) has investigated this matter. The corrosive environment found inside livestock barns, has been determined to be the leading cause of degradation or failure of electrical equipment. The degradation is typically corrosion of the exposed metal components, i.e. wires, connections, etc. The corrosion increases the resistance at these points reducing the flow of electricity through the circuit. More importantly, the increased resistance results in more of the electrical energy being converted to heat. As the corrosion levels continue to increase the heat generated can rise to ignition temperatures of materials surrounding the equipment.

current devices be installed in locations separated from the livestock confinement areas and supplied with clean, dry temperature controlled air. See www.esainspection.net for more information.

The construction of separate electrical/mechanical rooms to house electrical service panels and similar equipment is a best practice because it achieves the following:

- protects equipment from corrosive humid barn environment



After the fire. This picture appears courtesy of Randy Drysdale.

Question: What steps can be taken to minimize or eliminate the leading causes of ignition in new and expanding livestock barns?

The Electrical Safety Authority (ESA) issued Bulletin 22-3-1 in July 2008 requiring all electrical equipment installed in animal confinement areas in barns meet the requirements of Category 1 locations (high humidity) and Category 2 locations (corrosive liquids and vapours). Their bulletin also specifies types of material required in these locations, for example; copper conductors and cable assemblies.

The ESA is also requiring that all non-essential equipment and equipment incorporating over

- allows equipment to be housed in a fire proofed room to minimize flame spread should a fire occur.

Question: What equipment maintenance steps can be taken within existing livestock buildings?

Regular inspection of electrical and mechanical equipment by a qualified electrician to check for signs of deterioration and/or corrosion of equipment in livestock confinement buildings. All items that are deemed to be unsafe or questionable should be repaired or replaced immediately.

Question: What general

maintenance steps can be taken around existing livestock buildings?

Regular housekeeping activities around buildings to remove potential combustible materials. Examples include; mowing of vegetation around buildings, regular removal of rubbish inside and around buildings, etc. As well, all trees that are in close proximity to the structures should be trimmed or removed.

Proper siting and management of on-farm fuel storage facilities away from buildings. This ensures flammable vapours released during refuelling of vehicles or filling storage are not drawn into the farm buildings but dissipate into the atmosphere.

For information on other general maintenance/fire prevention steps that can be taken in and around farm buildings, refer to the following Communiqué from the Office of the Ontario Fire Marshal:

www.ofm.gov.on.ca/english/publications/communiques/2007/2007-11.asp.

Question: What steps can be taken to minimize fire spread in large farm buildings to aid firefighters in containing and extinguishing the fire?

The inclusion of effective fire stops in large farm buildings and the provision of an all season road around the entire building site to allow good access for fire fighting equipment are two initial steps that can be taken.

The National Farm Building Code of Canada (NFBCC) specifies a maximum floor area for farm buildings with low human occupancy. For a single storey barn, the maximum floor area is 4,800 m²

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overstated...

(51,600 sq ft). For a two-storey barn, the maximum floor area is 2400 m² (25,800 sq ft). Compartment size must be restricted to these sizes by incorporating appropriate fire separations having a rating of at least one hour.

The NFBCC (1995) also specifies that concealed spaces in ceilings, roof or attics shall be separated by fire stops so that no dimension of such space exceeds 30 metres (100 feet).

The Ontario Building Code prohibits the use of exposed foamed plastic insulation on interior surfaces of buildings. This combustible material must be covered or protected by an appropriate fire rated material if it is employed in a building.

An all season roadway capable of supporting weight of heavy equipment should be constructed around the farm-building site and maintained so that it is accessible 365 days of the year.

All buildings should be equipped with a minimum five-pound ABC fire extinguisher at each exit and in all mechanical and feed rooms. If there is a standby generator housed in the building, the room housing the generator should be equipped with a minimum 10-pound ABC fire extinguisher.

Please refer to the following OMAFRA fact sheets for additional information on building code regulations:

- *Constructing a Farm Building in Ontario;*
- *Building Permit Requirements for Livestock Operations;* and,
- *Structural Aspects of Renovation.*

Question: Will the committee produce more information? And if so, what can I expect them to be about?

Information produced by the committee will explain several

best practice options that you can implement during new construction or renovation of farm buildings to:

- minimize the potential for fire. For example; construction technique, material selection and regular maintenance and/or house keeping activities
- prevent the spread of fire within a structure and allow the firefighters a better chance to fight the fire should one occur.

For useful information on other general maintenance / fire prevention steps that can be taken in and around existing farm buildings, please refer to *Communiqué 2007-11 Farm Fire Safety*.

Editor's note: Research and experience from across North America and various parts of the world show that automatic sprinkler systems can significantly reduce life and property loss due to fire. The fire service continues to recommend that sprinklers be installed wherever practicable.

Toronto Fire Chief gets international role

As of July 1, 2009, Toronto Fire Chief Bill Stewart assumed the position as the International President of the Institution of Fire Engineers (IFE) at an Annual General Meeting and Conference held in Glasgow, Scotland. IFE has more than 12,000 members in 39 branches around the world.

The IFE provides both education and examinations in fire engineering disciplines and bestows internationally recognized professional designations. In his new role, Chief Stewart will write a monthly column in the *Fire Risk Management* magazine, published in the United Kingdom. In his first column in this magazine he emphasized the importance of life and fire safety from a North American perspective to an international audience. The following is an excerpt of his column:



Toronto Fire Services Fire Chief Bill Stewart. Photo courtesy of Toronto Fire Services.

"It is an honour and privilege to serve the Institution of Fire Engineers as the first Canadian to hold the esteemed office of international president. Our common goal is to ensure life safety from fire through the science of fire engineering. Simply put, this can be achieved by public education, community safety awareness, fire engineering design and operational response.

Clearly, our work on public education, building design and operational response must continue if we are to be successful in reducing deaths and property loss from fire. We must be assisted by various levels of government to ensure building regulations and fire safety codes are enacted to protect the public.

In the event of a fire in the home, the window of opportunity for a resident to escape is reduced by the combustible fire load and human behaviour. Therefore, legislation that includes mandatory installation of smoke alarms on every storey of a home is essential to moving forward with early warning and detection, while enhancing legislation to include residential sprinklers would also truly assist in reducing fire loss."

To learn more about the IFE, visit www.ife.ca.

Automated propane cylinder exchanges coming soon

BY BETH TATE, P. ENG.

FIRE PROTECTION ENGINEER
OFM'S APPLIED RESEARCH
SECTION

Coming soon to a location in your community! 24 hour self serve automated propane cylinder exchanges - A new way to get propane for your home barbeque.

The concept of a propane cylinder 'vending machine' has been around for a few years, and the reality is that these cylinder exchange units are now in the marketplace, for a trial run.

Technical Safety and Standards Authority's (TSSA) Fuel Safety Program administers the *Technical Standards & Safety Act 2000*, providing fuel-related safety services associated with the safe transportation, storage, handling and use of propane, as one of several hydrocarbon fuels (such as gasoline, diesel, and natural gas). Under this authority TSSA will oversee the use, operation and safety of these automated propane exchange units through a variance process.

In general, variances from the regulations are granted in certain circumstances. They allow for flexibility to accept installations that would not comply with some of the requirements of the regulations but would be equivalent in safety. This particular initiative is considered a "Field Development Project," for which TSSA has granted a variance. This allows new and/or uncertified equipment or systems to be used for a limited

period of time. Applications are only considered where safety is not compromised in any proposed installation.

The automated propane cylinder exchange project will run for a period that ends March 31, 2010. It is expected that the requirements established for this project will be assessed at the end of this timeframe, with the intention of developing a document to which



A picture of a 24-hour self serve automated propane cylinder exchange.

the manufacturer can obtain certification for this unit.

The propane cylinder exchange kiosk units can hold up to 23 full 20-lb propane cylinders on a three level, rotating carousel housed in a locked steel cabinet. The kiosks have a number of safety features, including:

- Kiosks are ESA approved for Class I Division 2 hazardous locations, and bear appropriate marking to this effect.
- Cabinet ventilation is interlocked with a propane sensor, using mechanical ventilation to vent any propane vapours out of the cabinet at the back top.

- Carousel design can only accept propane cylinders in an upright position.

- The carousel rotation is interlocked with the door, to prevent operation of the carousel when the door is open.

- Door locks and carousel rotation are pneumatically controlled by an internally housed nitrogen cylinder.

- Wireless modem communicates inventory levels, propane leak detection and low nitrogen level in real time to the propane operator.

There are a number of terms associated with appropriate placement of these vending machines:

- Kiosks must be located outside.
- Minimum distance of three feet (one metre) from any building opening.
- Minimum distance of five feet (one and a half metres) from its electrical outlet.
- A minimum of 10 feet (three metres) from anything immediately combustible.

- Not more than four adjacent cabinets may be located against a noncombustible building wall.

- Currently these units are only located at outlets of one major chain of stores in the province.

Should you have any fire safety concerns or become aware of any incidents with one of these exchange kiosks, please contact your local TSSA inspector.

In Detail:

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

Portable oxygen systems are medical products designed to facilitate the mobility of individuals who are on oxygen therapy. Requirements relating to the storage, handling and use of portable oxygen systems used for medical purposes were introduced in the Ontario Fire Code (OFC) in 2005. Section 2.15 of the OFC requires these systems to be in conformance with the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) standard, Z305.12, "Safe Storage, Handling, and Use of Portable Oxygen Systems in Residential Buildings and Health Care Facilities."

The need for a set of portable oxygen system requirements originated in the early 1990's when the Ministry of Health expressed fire safety concerns to the Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM) over unsafe practices observed in health care facilities. These concerns included issues such as patients smoking while on oxygen, inappropriate oxygen transfilling practices, and excessive quantities stored in inappropriate locations. Recognizing that this was not simply a local issue, CSA's assistance was sought to develop a national standard that could provide guidance on dealing with these concerns.

The first edition of this CSA standard was developed and released in 1998 with the participation of a diverse stakeholder group. The OFC currently references the second edition of the standard, which was updated and released in 2006. At this time, Ontario is the only Canadian jurisdiction that has adopted this standard as a Fire Code requirement.

Portable oxygen system requirements in the Ontario Fire Code

To assist the fire service with their inspections of health care and residential facilities, the following set of questions and answers was developed to provide insight into the requirements of portable oxygen systems under the OFC.

1. What are some relevant physical properties of oxygen?

The two important properties of oxygen are its ability to support life and support combustion. Oxygen's normal concentration in air is 21%. When cooled down to its boiling point of -183°C , oxygen condenses into a liquid state. Liquid oxygen has an expansion ratio of 860:1 at 20°C .

2. Is oxygen combustible?

Oxygen is non-combustible, but its oxidizing properties accelerate the combustion of other materials. An oxygen-enriched environment in excess of 23% concentration causes materials that normally do not readily burn, to burn vigorously. Materials that normally burn well, such as petroleum-based products, can burn with explosive violence under these conditions. Common examples of these materials include hand/face creams, grease, petroleum jelly, rubbing alcohol and cosmetics. Alternative water-based products are safer to use in an oxygen-enriched environment.

3. What are the different types of portable oxygen systems?

There are three types of portable oxygen systems. Oxygen is delivered from each of the

following systems to the patient via a regulator/valve, plastic tubing and a nasal cannula:

- *Compressed Gaseous Oxygen Cylinders*

These are steel or aluminum cylinders that contain gaseous oxygen under very high pressure. The cylinders vary in size, with the portables ranging from 1 to 6 liters in capacity. This allows the patient to carry these in a backpack or wheeled cart during short trips. A full cylinder can store well over 100 times its container volume of expanded gaseous oxygen.

- *Liquid Oxygen Cryogenic Containers*

These are double-walled and vacuum insulated containers that store liquid oxygen at (or below) its boiling temperature of -183°C . Its 860:1 expansion ratio allows a very high volume of gaseous oxygen to be stored in a relatively small container. Base units, which have a capacity of between 20 to 45 L of liquid oxygen, serve as reservoirs for transfilling the smaller portable units. These portable units range from 0.33 to 1.25 L in volume.

- *Oxygen Concentrators*

These are electrically powered units that deliver concentrated oxygen extracted from the ambient air to the patient. The air that we breathe consists of 78% nitrogen, 21% oxygen, and 1% other gases. The concentrator filters out the air's nitrogen component and delivers a final product that has an oxygen concentration of approximately

Continued on next page

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“Since 2001, the OFM has investigated nine fires involving portable oxygen systems.”

85-95%.

4. What has been Ontario’s fire loss experience relating to portable oxygen systems?

Since 2001, the OFM has investigated nine fires involving portable oxygen systems. All of these incidents occurred in residential buildings, of which eight resulted in single fatalities. Smoker’s articles were determined or strongly suspected to be a contributing factor in all of these cases.

5. Do the portable oxygen system requirements under the OFC apply to all applications?

The OFC requirements only apply to portable oxygen systems used for medical applications in health care facilities and residential occupancies.

6. What are health care facilities and residential occupancies?

The term “health care facilities” is not defined in the OFC but is defined in the CSA standard as “buildings or portions of buildings used for regulated or unregulated health-related services, including, but not limited to, public and private hospitals, long-term care facilities, homes for the aged, custodial care facilities, supervisory care facilities, clinics, medical and dental offices, nursing homes, and ambulatory care facilities.” They are essentially Group B2 and B3 occupancies, but also include some Group D medical offices. “Residential occupancy” is a term that is defined in the OFC.

7. What are some of the key requirements in this standard?

Some of the highlights of this standard include:

- Prohibiting smoking during

oxygen use

- Keeping other ignition sources at least 1.5 metres away from portable oxygen systems
- Providing warning signage where oxygen is stored, used or filled
- Limiting storage quantities to specified locations (see questions 9 to 11)
- Providing adequate ventilation to prevent oxygen enriched atmospheres
- Keeping oil-based and other flammable/combustible liquids away from oxygen systems
- Storing the systems in locations that do not block exits and egress routes
- Locating concentrators away from obstacles to ensure proper air intake
- Prohibiting the use of extension cords and plug adapters with concentrators
- Restrictions on who can perform transfilling operations
- Restrictions on where transfilling operations can take place

8. Besides Section 2.15, are there any other Sections in the OFC that are applicable to portable oxygen systems?

The compressed gas cylinder requirements under Section 5.6 of the OFC are applicable to compressed oxygen cylinders. This Section contains requirements relating to both outdoor and indoor storage (i.e. valve/cylinder protection, temperature limits and ventilation rates).

9. Where can oxygen be stored in residential buildings and health care facilities?

Oxygen can be stored in four locations in health care facilities.

These include the patient’s room, common areas, supervised/monitored areas and storage rooms.

Oxygen can be stored in three locations in residential buildings. These locations include the patient’s room, common areas, and storage rooms. Supervised/monitored areas are not recognized in residential buildings.

10. What are “common areas” and “supervised/monitored areas?”

Common areas are places of assembly in health care facilities and residential buildings, including dining rooms, lounges and recreation rooms, etc. for general occupant use. In a residential multi-unit building, common areas can be located both outside and inside dwelling units. Common areas within a dwelling unit include all rooms outside the patient’s bedroom.

“Supervised monitored areas” in a health care facility are enclosed areas for medical personnel including, emergency departments, respiratory therapy areas, training rehabilitation areas, ambulatory care areas, operating rooms, and recovery areas. This term is not applicable to residential building.

11. How much oxygen can be stored in residential buildings and health care facilities?

The following two tables summarize the locations and maximum quantities of gaseous and liquid oxygen that can be stored in total. It should be noted

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Table 1: Maximum Storage Quantities-Gaseous Litres

that these quantities exclude those that are in use.

Facility Category	Storage Room	Supervised/Monitored Area	Common Area	Patient Room	Corridor
Hospital	Unlimited	8000 L	1500 L	8000 L	0
Other health care facilities	Unlimited	8000 L	700 L	8000 L	0

Table 2: Maximum Storage Quantities-Liquid Litres

Facility Category	Storage Room	Supervised/Monitored Area	Common Area	Patient Room	Corridor
Hospital	Unlimited	150 L	50 L	50 L	0
Other health care facilities	Unlimited	150 L	50 L	50 L	0
Residential buildings	Unlimited	N/A	50 L	50 L	0

12. What other conditions need to be met when storing oxygen in the aforementioned specified locations?

All rooms and areas that permit storage are required to be well-ventilated to prevent oxygen enriched environments. Common areas and supervised/monitored areas need to be separated by a ¾ hour fire-rated separation or be sprinklered. However, common areas within dwelling units are exempt from these requirements. Storage rooms are required to be enclosed by a one hour fire-rated separation. Although the CSA standard references a minimum ventilation rate of 6 air changes per hour, it also recognizes that existing local code requirements take precedence. Indoor storage requirements under Articles 5.6.1.6. and 5.6.2.4 of the OFC requires a minimum mechanical ventilation rate of only 1 air change per hour

or natural ventilation to the outside through appropriately located louvered openings. Section 5.6 of the OFC also requires storage rooms to be kept dry and at an ambient temperature below 52° C.

13. Are fire departments expected to inspect and enforce all portions of the CSA standard?

Fire departments are only expected to inspect and enforce those sections of the standard that relate to fire safety. This includes requirements relating to the prevention of oxygen-enriched environments.

14. Where can a copy of the CSA standard be obtained?

Hardcopy and downloadable electronic versions of the standard can be purchased through CSA's online store at www.shopcsa.ca.

**The OFM & the Ontario Fire College present:
Role of the Public Information Officer**

This one-day course is offered to anyone who graduated from any of the following courses prior to 2007:

- Public Fire and Life Safety Educator Certificate Program
- FPO 603, Public Fire and Life Safety course
- FPO Update course

Courses are scheduled on the following dates at the Ontario Fire College (OFC):

Date: Dec. 15, 2009 **Course No.:** Public Info-09-3

Fax an OFC registration form to the OFC Registrar citing the course number and date to 705-687-4611. **There are only 11 spaces left in this course!**

***Note:** Participants will be required to complete a post course assignment. Successful graduates of this course can acquire certification to NFPA 1035, Public Information Officer, from the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications.*

For more information contact OFC Instructor Jana Gillis (705) 687-9687, Jana.Gillis@ontario.ca or OFM Program Specialist Janice Johnstone (416) 325-3151, Janice.Johnstone@ontario.ca

Save the date!

The 17th annual Fire and Life Safety Educators' Conference will be held November 4 to 6 in Niagara Falls, Ontario.

The registration form and more details are posted at www.ofm.gov.on.ca.

17th annual Fire and Life Safety Educators' conference takes it to the edge

The Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM) and Niagara Falls Fire Services, along with the Fire Marshal's Public Fire Safety Council, are pleased to announce the 17th annual Fire and Life Safety Educators' Conference. Titled "Educating on the Brink", the conference will be held in the city of Niagara Falls, November 4 to 6, 2009.

This year's optional pre-conference workshop on Wednesday, November 4 will address the use and impact of social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, to reach audiences with fire safety information. We know that while older people may still depend on traditional media such as television and newspapers for their information, younger people are much more likely to turn to the web or other alternative media.

It's important that fire service educators keep current with this trend and adapt their traditional educational approaches to these emerging technologies. One feature of this segment will be Niagara Region's new direct-to-web fire injury prevention program.

Other featured topics at this year's conference include:

- Fire Marshal's Address: "Smoke on the Water"
- Fatal Fires in Retirement Residences: What can be done?
- It's all in the Delivery: What's Cooking – for Teens!
- Media Partnerships that Work for All
- More Lessons Learned: a fire investigator's point of view
- Important Considerations: Working with People with Disabilities

• Urban Fire Safety Project

The conference will be held at the Doubletree Fallsview Resort and Spa, 6039 Fallsview Blvd, Niagara Falls, Ontario L2G 3V6. The pre-conference session begins at 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 4. The conference begins at 8:30 a.m. on November 5 and ends at noon on November 6.

The conference fee is \$200 for those who register before October 1, 2009 and \$250.00 for those who register after this date. This fee includes all seminars and workshops, as well as lunch and banquet dinner on November 5. Breakfasts are included in the room charge. Additional banquet tickets can be purchased for \$55.00 at the time of registration.

Accommodation is available at the conference hotel at a cost of \$109.00 per night, plus applicable taxes. For reservations, call 905-358-3817 and mention the Fire and Life Safety Educators' Conference group code: FLS. For online reservations, visit <http://doubletree.hilton.com/en/dt/groups/personalized/IAGDSTD-T-FLS-20091103/index.jhtml>

A registration form for the conference can be printed from the OFM website: www.ofm.gov.on.ca. Please fill out the form and fax it to Niagara Falls Fire Services at 905-356-1583 as soon as possible.

To obtain further information on the Public Fire and Life Safety Educators' Conference contact Ben Trendle, Niagara Falls Fire Service at 905-356-1321, ext. 2211 or e-mail at btrendle@niagarafalls.ca or Gina Pontikas, Program Coordinator, OFM at 416-325-3155 or email at gina.pontikas@ontario.ca.

South Frontenac Fire Chief receives honour from OPP

BY MARK KERR
FRONTENAC EMC

In July, South Frontenac's Fire Chief learned that he is to be the recipient of an Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) commissioner's citation for lifesaving. The OPP will be recognizing Rick Chesebrough for his actions on the night of January 27, 2009.

"I was quite surprised to receive the letter," he said. "This award is just another indication of the strong working relationship we (South Frontenac Fire and Rescue) have with the OPP."

Although few details are available because the incident is still before the courts, Shelley Nemeth, the co-ordinator of the OPP's awards and recognition unit, provided some details in a letter to Chesebrough.

"You are being recognized for acting in a calm and compassionate manner and putting yourself at risk when a suicidal male held a knife to his throat and poured an accelerant around his person, threatening 'suicide by cop,' on January 27, 2009."

"It is certainly an honour, but to be very honest with you, I will be accepting the citation on behalf of the entire fire department not as an individual," said Chesebrough. "It's an honour to be nominated and stand with the rest of the OPP."

Chesebrough will accept the award at a ceremony in October.

Excerpted from the August 13, 2009 issue of the Frontenac EMC.

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

Forensic Fire Scene Reconstruction by David Icove and David DeHaan. Prentice Hall, 2009.

Hazardous Materials Incidents by Chris Hawley. Thomson Delmar Learning, 2008.

Hazardous Materials Handbook: awareness & operations levels by Chris Hawley. Thomson Delmar Learning, 2008.

Web Resources

Fire News – weekly media monitoring of Ontario & Canadian newspapers and current research from NRC, NFPA, NIST and NIOSH. Access at www.ofm.gov.on.ca Click on Resources => Fire News

NFPA Firewise Generation to help young persons understand dangers of wildfire. Access at www.firewise.org/fw-generation/

NFPA Fire Prevention Week Blog October 4-10, 2009 Stay Fire Safe Don't Get Burned <http://nfpa.typepad.com/fpw/>



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

HAZMAT Awareness: Hazmat Recognition (2008)

Disc one of a two-part series. Outlines the seven threats posed by hazardous materials as well as the clues to watch for when responding to any incident. Provides a detailed review of common locations and containers where hazardous materials are stored.

HAZMAT Awareness: Hazmat Identification (2008)

Final disc of two-part series. Explains the nine DOT hazard classes and details each corresponding placard requirement, including color, symbol, hazard class enumeration and descriptive wording. Provides directions on how to use the 2008 Emergency Response Guidebook in responding to chemical hazards.

HAZMAT Decontamination: Why Decontaminate? (2009)

Program one of a four-part series. Discusses the importance of removing and/or reducing contaminants to a safe level; discusses acute and chronic health risks; describes primary and secondary contamination and exposure routes and explains the need for a “no exception” policy on decontamination.

Hazmat Decontamination: Decontamination Procedures (2009)

Program two of a four-part series. Demonstrates emergency decontamination procedures and importance of avoiding cross-contamination; outlines critical setup factors prior to operations; demonstrates decontamination site setup and operation zones. Explains the nine-step technical decontamination process and discusses environmental concerns including runoff.

HAZMAT Decontamination: Handling Contaminated Victims (2009)

Program three of a four-part series. Shows how victims become contaminated at hazardous materials incidents and outlines symptoms of exposure. Demonstrates decontamination for ambulatory and non-ambulatory victims, including injury decontamination and discusses victim packaging and transport procedures.

HAZMAT Decontamination: Mass Decontamination (2009)

Final program of a four-part series. Discusses multiple casualty planning and demonstrates mass decontamination operations setup methods, including apparatus use. Covers remote decontamination; demonstrates mass decontamination of ambulatory and non-ambulatory victims.

HAZMAT Decontamination: Instructor's PowerPoint Presentation (2009)

This is a teaching companion to the HAZMAT decontamination series.

Students awarded for their role in fire incident

BY SARAH MCDONALD
NEWS-RECORD STAFF

Six students at Central Huron Secondary School were recognized in June by local OPP and the fire department for their swift reaction to signs of fire at a house in Clinton earlier this year.

OPP inspector Dan Grant, and Central Huron Fire Chief Steve Cooke were on hand at the school's year end assembly to present Bryce Lebold, Sky Hendrickson, Bethany Fisher, Rebecca Johnston, Dylan Cronin, and Dylan Williston with fire chief's citations, letters of congratulations and certificates of appreciation from MP Ben Lobb and MPP Carol Mitchell.

The students, who were returning to school from lunch when they noticed smoke coming from a house on May 8, acted quickly to ensure no one was in the house. 'We could smell smoke and heard the fire alarm [in the

house] and noticed the smoke coming out of the window and then we went up and knocked on the door," said Williston. "We kept knocking just to make sure no one was in there. The one guy was sleeping in the back of the house, and he came out with two dogs. There was a police officer cruising by so we waved him down and called the fire department."

"These students demonstrated sound judgement and a commitment to their community safety. Too often teenagers are bashed for the mistakes they make, and all too seldom are they recognized properly for the good things they do. I am proud to be able to recognize them for their responsible actions," continued Cooke.

Excerpted from the June 24, 2009 issue of the Clinton News-Record.

Kurz gets Prevention Award

On May 2, 2009, the City of Dryden's Deputy Fire Chief, Ken Kurz was presented with the Great Lakes Forest Fire Compact Prevention Award.

The Great Lakes Forest Fire Compact is a partnership between the states of Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota and the provinces of Ontario and Manitoba. The compact serves as a forum for the exchange of information on common wildfire issues in the Great Lakes region and as a means for initiating prevention and education programs. This award recognizes the dedication and commitment of an individual as it relates to wildfire prevention and education.

In conjunction with his duties



In the photo from left are Regional Fire Advisor Malcolm Robertson, Prevention & Information Coordinator Dave Cleaveley, City of Dryden's Deputy Fire Chief Ken Kurz, and Fire Management Supervisor Rod Kellar.

as a municipal Deputy Fire Chief with the City of Dryden, Deputy Kurz has spent countless hours involved in public education, awareness and prevention initiatives. Kurz's comprehensive commitment to fire programs demonstrates how fire safety and



In the photo from left are Walpole Island Fire Chief Charles Wright Sr., Tatiana Day and OFM Fire Protection Adviser Nelly Green. Photo courtesy of Larry Cross, FFAO.

Tatiana Day receives her Fire Safety Award

Tatiana Day of Walpole Island First Nations Territory received her Fire Safety Award at a ceremony on June 27 in Walpole Island.

Tatiana received the award for her actions in the early morning hours of January 29. It was then that the nine-year-old Tatiana awoke to the smell of smoke and observed a fire in the corner of her mattress. Immediately, Tatiana escaped from the room and alerted the other sleeping occupants of the home by yelling "Fire." As a result of Tatiana's quick thinking, she and three other occupants were able to safely escape the residence. It was later determined the fire was started by the electric baseboard heater.

"Tatiana was very brave to have taken control of this situation," said Ontario Fire Marshal Pat Burke. "Her action helped to ensure everyone got out of the home safely and prevent a tragedy from occurring."

Tatiana had been unable to attend the awards ceremony in Toronto which took place June 3.

prevention messages can be integrated into an effective education program useful to all levels of government.

Who are we?

BY WENDY KREBSZ

FIREFIGHTER & PUBLIC FIRE & LIFE SAFETY EDUCATOR
GREY HIGHLANDS FIRE & EMERGENCY SERVICES

We are your neighbours and co-workers, maybe even your boss at work. We live and work in the community with you. We are on call 24/7 and without question we drop what we're doing in an instant to respond when our pager goes off. Our commitment to serving and protecting our community and everyone in it is supported by our understanding family, friends and workplace who keep our dinner plate warm, cover our responsibilities and continue on until we get back from the call. We are dedicated individuals who are part of one of the largest essential services in Ontario: we are volunteer firefighters and we are here to serve you when you need us the most.

Of the 478 fire departments in Ontario, 282 are volunteer departments, 165 are composite and 31 are full-time. Of the 29,993 firefighters in Ontario, 19,028 are volunteer, 10,823 are full-time and

142 part-time. Volunteer and full-time departments respond to the same types of calls, operate the same equipment and apparatus, take the same health and safety risks and are held to the same level of accountability on the job. The fire service has dramatically changed over the years and it is no longer just about fighting fires. The modern fire service and the calls we are now responding to create new challenges that require continuous training that is necessary to adequately perform our duties. In addition to fighting fires, our responses have evolved to include auto extrication, natural disasters, hazmat, terrorism, farm rescue, high angle and water rescues. With the growing demands placed on the emergency services many fire departments respond with paramedics for life threatening medical emergencies to assist with patient care. And, depending on the circumstances, firefighters may be the first on scene providing initial care until paramedics arrive. More than ever before in the history of the fire service, there is also a growing emphasis on the

importance of public education and fire prevention through code enforcement. As our world continues to change, the fire service continues to evolve and firefighters from both career and volunteer departments are adapting to meet the needs of their communities.

Volunteer firefighters, like our full-time brothers and sisters, run toward what everyone else runs away from. So then what is the main difference? As volunteers we are always "on call" and we juggle our schedules between our jobs, our families and our passion for the fire department and serving our community.

They say firefighting gets in your blood and if it does you're usually hooked for life. It's not just a job, it becomes part of who we are and it defines our lives. Firefighters are men and women of all ages and from all walks of life who share in the common goal of helping people and making a difference in the lives of others. With courage, honour and a servant's heart, on their worst days, we are always there to help.

** Data current as of February 6, 2009, as per the OFM website*

OFM manager appointed Chair of NFPA's Educational Messages Advisory Committee

In late June, the National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA's) Educational Messaging Advisory Committee meeting was held in Boston. The Office of the Fire Marshal's Bev Gilbert, Manager of Public Education and Media Relations attended as the Canadian representative.

Some of the goals of the committee include:

- Prepare proposed fire and burn safety educational messages;
- Prepare and/or process com-

ments to amend existing or add new educational messages;

- Maintain NFPA philosophy of good messaging including clear, simple, accurate, technically sound positive messaging; and,
- Produce an Education Messages Document to be made available on



A picture of those involved with the committee.

the NFPA website (www.nfpa.org).

As the Chair of the Committee, Gilbert will be serving a three-year term.

Tiny Fire generates smoke alarm awareness at campgrounds

BY DENIS MAURICE
FIRE PREVENTION OFFICER
TOWNSHIP OF TINY FIRE
DEPARTMENT

As a result of last year's public service announcement from Ontario Fire Marshal Pat Burke regarding smoke alarm requirements for RVs, trailers and motor homes, the Township of Tiny Fire Department in cooperation with the area campgrounds conducted a smoke alarm blitz of the recreational vehicles on their lots.

The project began in early April 2009 when both the private campgrounds within the Township were contacted regarding the possibility of conducting such an event. Management from the organizations quickly bought into the idea.

Copies of Fire Marshal Burke's letter were distributed to all the campers and notification was given that this project was going forward as part of their seasonal registration packages. It was decided to hold

the blitz on a weekend during the month of July in order to visit as many camping units as possible. Once the date was set, the fire department provided notices to the campgrounds, which were literally plastered throughout the camps.

Assistance was recruited to conduct the smoke alarm checks from within the department. Procedures for the checks were discussed with the team and goals were set for the project. The main goal being that of EDUCATION! This was seen to be important since most owners probably did not realize that recreational vehicles fall under the definition of a "dwelling unit." The second goal was to gather statistics in order to gauge our efforts if this was to be an annual event to eventually obtain 100 per cent compliance.

A total of 308 sites were visited during the blitz and unfortunately, due to the poor weather we've been experiencing so far this summer, only 121 sites were occupied. Unoccupied sites were left with

"Check Your Smoke Alarm" door hangers. Of those who were "home," 81 per cent were compliant with the smoke alarm requirements. Those not meeting the requirement were given a modified "Smoke Alarm Notice of Violation" and informed of a follow-up visit by the fire department. It was interesting to note that the major reason for non-conformance was the disabling of the smoke alarm when cooking and were corrected immediately. Given the small area in which smoke alarms are located and the proximity of the cooking area in these recreational vehicles, it is little wonder that the main topic of discussion was nuisance alarms. Fortunately, we included the "Make It Stop" card as part of our blitz package.

All in all we deemed this to be a very successful campaign and it will now become part of our smoke alarm program.

The Township of Tiny Fire Department would like to recognize the management of Lafontaine Camping and Wasaga Dunes/Parkbridge Campgrounds for their assistance and commitment to making their guests safer.

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.

May 2009: 10 fatal fires resulting in 10 fire deaths

Age Group	Male	Female	Total
0-15	0	0	0
16-64	6	0	6
65 and over	2	2	4
Total	8	2	10

Fire Cause

Time of Day

Accidental.....	4	0001-0800.....	4
Undetermined.....	2	0801-1600.....	5
Under Investigation.....	3	1601-1800.....	0
Incendary.....	1	1801-0000.....	1
Location of fatal fire: Toronto (4), St. Thomas (1), Saugeen Shores (1), Nolalu (1), Haldimand (1), Greater Sudbury (1) and Amherstburg (1).			

June 2009: 3 fatal fires resulting in 4 fire deaths

Age Group	Male	Female	Total
0-15	0	1	1
16-64	2	1	3
65 and over	0	0	0
Total	2	2	4

Fire Cause

Time of Day

Accidental.....	1	0001-0800.....	0
Undetermined.....	0	0801-1600.....	0
Under Investigation.....	1	1601-1800.....	1
Incendary.....	1	1801-0000.....	2
Location of fatal fires: Toronto (1), North Grenville (1) and Huron East (1).			

Smoke alarm saved couple

BY HAROLD CARMICHAEL
THE SUDBURY STAR

A working smoke alarm was the difference between two lives being saved and a tragedy occurring in a house fire on August 16, says a Greater Sudbury Fire Services platoon chief.

"It saved their lives," said George Lalonde. "There is no doubt in my mind. It woke (the husband) up at 4 a.m. They would have perished for sure."

Fire caused an estimated

\$150,000-\$200,000 damage to the couple's old farmhouse. All that remains of the structure are three walls. The home's contents were destroyed.

A nearby barn where horses are housed was not damaged, noted Lalonde.

There were two people in the home when the fire broke out, said Lalonde. The man, awakened by the smoke alarm, woke up his wife.

"She attempted to get back in

and get the pets – three dogs -- but there was too much smoke," said Lalonde.

"The husband pulled her out."

The woman received first-degree burns to her upper back during the pet rescue attempt. Both the man and woman had to be treated for smoke inhalation.

A cause has not been determined.

Excerpted from the August 19, 2009 issue of the Sudbury Star.

Family testifies to importance of working smoke alarms

"Working smoke alarms save lives" isn't just a line fire departments offer to residents because they have to – it's a fact. George Bergen is happy to testify to this as his family of four escaped unscathed from a fire at their Millbrook Drive home.

At around 4 a.m. on July 29, George and Helen Bergen awoke to a strange noise coming from the basement. This was followed by a hissing noise and ultimately, their smoke alarm.

"We both jumped up and in an event like this we were each to grab a child," explained George. As he scooped up seven-year-old Katelyn, Helen grabbed five-year-old Adam.

"There was already smoke coming into Katelyn's room," recalled George of that harrowing morning.

The safest option for the family to escape was through the patio doors adjoining the master bedroom. Once outside, George was able to dial 9 1 1 and put in a call for the fire department.

What helped make the escape

go more smoothly was a visit by firefighters to Jack Miner Public School last year. Katelyn recalled many of the important messages provided by firefighters and wasn't afraid to see a firefighter in full gear.

Kingsville Fire Department Inspector Jason Suchiu stressed the importance of working smoke alarms and the Bergens are a testament to their necessity.

He noted that in newer homes, the walls are air tight offering little room for smoke to escape. Both he and Fire Prevention Officer Jeff Dean couldn't stress enough the importance of the alarms.

"Absolutely, one-hundred per cent smoke alarms saved their lives. When all four people are sleeping like that, there isn't a lot of time," said Dean.

George is thankful every day for his alarms. "If it wasn't for those alarms, we wouldn't be here right



A picture of the Bergen family and their boarded up home in the background. A smoke alarm alerted them to a fire in their home one early morning in July. Photo courtesy of The Kingsville Reporter.

now."

Damage to the Bergens' home is estimated at \$180,000 and renovation work is currently ongoing. They hope to return to the structure by Christmas.

While many contents may have been lost, they recognize that they escaped with something you can't put a price on – their lives. Without operating smoke alarms, they wouldn't be around today to share their story.

Excerpted from the August 11, 2009 issue of The Kingsville Reporter.

Fire Prevention Week is coming!

BY GINA PONTIKAS
PROGRAM COORDINATOR
OFM PUBLIC EDUCATION &
MEDIA RELATIONS

This year's Fire Prevention Week theme, "Stay Fire Smart – Don't get Burned" focuses on burn awareness and prevention, as well as keeping homes safe from the leading causes of home fires. This broad theme offers fire departments the opportunity to tailor their Fire Prevention Week activities around specific fire safety concerns they have identified in their communities.

Fire departments are encouraged to develop partnerships in their communities – teaming up with local organizations can help to reach a larger or hard-to-reach

audience.

The Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM) has resources available on the web to assist fire departments with their Fire Prevention Week activities. The resources can be found at www.ofm.gov.on.ca. Click on "Public Education Resources" under "Fire Safety & Public Education" then follow the links. The resources include:

- Fire safety reference cards that address 20 common fire safety topics.
- News release templates that can be modified and personalized to suit local needs.
- Public service announcements (PSAs) for television, radio and print. There are PSAs available that address just about every major

fire safety topic. For example, PSAs relevant to a safe cooking campaign may include:

- Up in Smoke (video PSA)
- Cacophony (video PSA)
- Stand by your Pan (print PSA and radio script)
- Dinner's Ready (print PSA)
- A Dangerous Mix (print PSA)
- Cool a Burn (print PSA, in English only)

These PSAs and many others are available in English and in French.

Enquiries regarding the Fire Prevention Week theme or activities should be directed to Gina Pontikas at (416) 325-3155.



OFM News Update

Pasqua Cantacessi has joined Emergency Management Ontario (EMO) as an HR assistant. Previously she was a program assistant with the OFM's Academic Standards & Evaluation section.

Jean-Marc Dos Santos has accepted a five and a half month temporary assignment as the administrative assistant HR services, effective July 21.

Carol Gravelle, Public Relations

Officer/Messenger Editor will be taking maternity leave as Oct. 9.

Gord Roesch was the successful candidate in the competition for an instructor at the Ontario Fire College and began on September 8.

Stephanie Taylor has accepted a five and a half month contract as the receptionist at the Toronto office beginning July 21.

Ted Wieclawek will remain as the acting Assistant Deputy Fire Marshal, Fire Protection Services

until the end of October or until a successful candidate has been recruited.

Marjorie Wright of Corporate Services began a five and a half month secondment on July 13 with the Ministry of Education in Human Resources.

Jamie Zimmerman was the successful candidate in the competition for program specialist in Fire Protection Services.

Fire Service Calendar 2009-2010

Oct. 4	Ontario Firefighter's Memorial Ceremony	Toronto, ON
Oct. 4-10	Fire Prevention Week - 'Stay Fire Smart: Don't Get Burned'	Ontario
Nov. 4-6	17 th annual Public Fire & Life Safety Educators' Conference	Niagara Falls, ON
May 1	Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs 58 th Annual Conference & Trade Show	Toronto, ON

What's Cooking - for Teens!

BY DENISE WALLACE
FIRE & LIFE SAFETY
EDUCATION OFFICER
OFM PUBLIC EDUCATION &
MEDIA RELATIONS

During their teen years, young people learn many life skills that will prepare them for the years ahead, such as how to manage their finances, drive competently and behave appropriately in the workplace. However, a critical skill that many teens don't acquire is how to cook safely to prevent devastating fires and injuries. As most teens likely have some cooking responsibilities at home and, within a few short years, will be moving into homes of their own, this is the perfect time for them to learn the basics of safe cooking.

What's Cooking - for Teens! is an interactive presentation intended to be delivered by fire service educators. It focuses on the leading causes of kitchen fires and also includes important information about smoke alarms and home fire escape planning. The presentation is designed for high school students in grades 9 through 12, although it can be easily adapted to other groups,

such as guides/scouts, 4H clubs, babysitting courses or community youth groups. The most logical setting is the Grade 9 or 10 *Food and Nutrition* course, or Grade 12 *Food and Nutrition Sciences* course. Each class is 72-75 minutes long. Many of the classrooms used for these courses have kitchen set-ups, which make them an ideal venue, however the presentation



is designed to be equally effective in classrooms without kitchens. Teachers are required by Ontario curriculum to incorporate an element of safety into *Food and Nutrition* courses, which makes this session an ideal "fit." Adapting to different grade levels will require only minor adjustments in delivery.

This fall, every Ontario fire department will receive a **What's Cooking - for Teens!** CD that includes:

- Kitchen hazard identification activity
- PowerPoint presentation with video clips
- Slide-by-slide presentation guide
- Teaching outline
- Student knowledge quiz
- Teacher feedback form
- Educator information

The fall is the ideal time to approach local high schools and request classroom time to deliver this important program. Cooking is the number one cause of home fires in Canada, so it is critical that young people be aware of the dangers and how to prevent them. **What's Cooking - for Teens!** will help fire service educators teach them the skills and knowledge they need to practise safe cooking habits—now and throughout their lives.

For information about **What's Cooking - for Teens!**, contact Denise Wallace, Fire & Life Safety Education Officer, 416-325-1911, email Denise.Wallace@ontario.ca.

OFM Colour Party/Honour Guard

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

On June 15, 2009 the newly formed Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM) Colour Party/Honour Guard was presented to Ontario Fire Marshal Pat Burke at the Ontario Fire College. The Colour Party is comprised of 10 OFM members from Fire Investigation Services, Fire Protection Services, Ontario Fire College and Academic Standards. Since October 2008 these

members have dedicated many hours towards their training.

The newly formed Colour Party/Honour Guard will be performing at various events throughout the year to represent the OFM along side the Ontario Fire Service Pipe & Drum Band.



A picture of the OFM Colour Party/Honour Guard.

Crystal Beach Waterfront Park to get unique playground

On September 19, 2009, volunteer firefighters from the Fort Erie Fire Department and community volunteers will be working together to construct a children's playground with a fire department theme at Crystal Beach Waterfront Park on the shores of Lake Erie.

"The beach site is a popular place for weekend concerts, boat launches and family picnics," said District Chief Doug Atkins. "The only issue was that it did not have any activities to occupy children. It wasn't until we contacted the town to see about putting in a playground that we found out that part of the site had actually been zoned for a children's playground already."

In addition to creating a place where children can play, the playground will be of significant importance to the Town of Fort Erie. It will be built in memory of Corporal Albert Storm, a soldier who grew up in the Crystal Beach area of Fort Erie and was tragically killed by a suicide bomber while serving in Afghanistan.

"Through the construction of the playground,

it is hoped that Storm's life and sacrifice will be honoured and remembered for generations to come," said Atkins.

With a goal of \$42,000, the firefighters began their fundraising in May. The kickoff was an event at a fire hall and included posters of the proposed playground. All the children who attended were given dots to place on the pieces of equipment they would most like to play on. Once completed, these posters were sent to Belair, the playground equipment manufacturer. From the beginning, the focus of this project has been a playground created by children, to be used by children.

"Initially we thought this fundraising project would take about

four years. It ended up being about four months," continued Atkins.

One of their first sums of money came from an organization called Let Them Be Kids. The organization also agreed to give the firefighters 40 cents for every 60 cents raised. Many other sponsors assisted too including Kool-Aid, The Town of Fort Erie and the community.

The project has helped to bring the community together toward the creation of a playground that everyone can be proud to be a part of now and into the future.

For more information about the project visit <http://ltbkforterie.blogspot.com/> or www.ltbk.ca/kids/



A picture of the fire department-themed playground. Courtesy of Belair Recreational Products Inc.