



*"Serving the Chief Fire
Officers of Colorado
since 1968"*

CSFCA Member Update

March 19, 2007

Legislative Update

A legislative update has been posted on the Legislative Page of the CSFCA Website at:
www.colofirechiefs.org/legislative.htm.

Fireworks Bill Passes Senate Committee

On March 14, 2007, Senate Business, Labor, & Technology Committee amended and passed HB07-1092, Concerning the Authority of County Governments to Regulate Fireworks on a 4-0-3 (excused) vote.

HB1092 as passed by the Committee would allow a county to prohibit or restrict the sale, use, and possession of fireworks, including permissible fireworks, within the unincorporated areas of the county. However, it includes an exception that any such ordinance shall not be in effect between May 31 and July 5 of any year unless the ordinance includes an express finding, based on competent evidence, that the danger of forest or grass fires is high in the areas of the county in which the ordinance applies.

The measure now moves to the full Senate for 2nd reading, which is calendared for Monday, March 19, 2007.

Firefighter Presumptive Cancer Awaits House Floor Action

House Bill 07-1008, Concerning Workers' Compensation Coverage for Firefighters Who Contract Certain Types of Cancer, was taken up again on March 8, 2007 by the House Business Affairs and Labor Committee. The bill was amended and passed to the Committee of the Whole for 2nd Reading on a 6-5 vote. Floor action on the bill has been laid over daily and is currently scheduled for Monday, March 19, 2007.

Chain Law Compromise Passes House Committee

HB 07-1229, Concerning an Enhancement of the Penalties for the Operators of Commercial Vehicles Who Fail to Comply With Inclement Weather Restrictions (Gibbs) was heard by House Transportation & Energy Committee on March 15, 2007. The bill was amended and was passed unanimously to House Appropriations. The amended bill raises the fine from \$100 to \$500 for truck drivers caught disobeying the chain law. If they block a lane, the fine doubles to \$1,000. The driver's license points provision was amended out of the bill.

See Denver Post Article at: http://www.denverpost.com/legislature/ci_5444669.

For a copy of the "Preamended Bill" which includes Committee amendments that have not yet been adopted on Second Reading, click [here](#).

Bill to Authorize Counties to Levy a Sales Tax for Public Safety Improvements Introduced

HB07-1344, Concerning the Authority of a Local Government to Levy an Increased Increment of Sales Tax to Finance Local Improvement Expenditures, by Rep. Merrifield, has been introduced and assigned to House Local Government Committee.

Bill Summary: Authorizes the board of county commissioners of a county to levy a sales tax of not more than a specified percentage to be used for public safety improvements. Defines "public safety improvements" to include capital expenditures and operational costs associated with specified public safety organizations. Prescribes procedures for the board to propose and seek voter approval for the tax.

For a copy of HB1344, click [here](#).

Volunteer Chiefs Section Organizational Meeting

As a means to better serve the needs of the volunteer chief fire officer in Colorado, the decision was made to explore the creation of a Volunteer Chiefs Section of the CSFCA devoted to this need. Chief Don Chapman of the Alamosa Fire Department has agreed to chair the effort, with the assistance of Chief David DeTray of the La Veta Fire Department.

The Volunteer Chiefs Section organizational meeting has been set for Saturday, March 24, 2007 at 9:30 a.m. at Alamosa Fire Station 2 at Craft Drive and Vigil Way in Alamosa. At this meeting we will be discussing the structure of the new section, its mission, goals and objectives, how and when to hold meetings and the content of the meetings, and specifically how the Section will reach out to the volunteer chief officers in the state.

All are welcome to participate. Please RSVP to Paul Cooke at paul@coloradofirechiefs.org.

Apparatus/Equipment to be Donated

The Arvada Fire Department is looking to donate a 1985 Sutphen Pumper to a deserving department within the State of Colorado. The truck is in good condition and has passed pump test every year without any problems. The details on this vehicle and the donation offer can be found on the CSFCA website or by clicking [here](#).

12 Lead Cardiac Monitor Needed

Indian Hills Fire/Rescue is in desperate need of a twelve lead cardiac monitor in order to allow a member paramedic to serve in that capacity instead of being limited to BLS services. Is there anyone who might be upgrading their equipment and would have a twelve lead cardiac monitor available at a less than new, retail price?

Please contact Chief D. J. Himstedt, Indian Hills Fire/Rescue at chief@indianhillsfirerescue.org or (303) 697-4568.

Make Your Reservations Now for June Meeting in Glenwood Springs

The Colorado State Fire Chiefs Association General Membership Meeting of June 1, 2007 will be located at:

AmericInn at Glenwood Springs
52000 Two Rivers Plaza
Glenwood Springs, CO

Make your reservations now by calling Toll Free (888) 411-8188.

Rates: \$89.00 (Government Rate) on Thursday the 31st of May, and \$109.00 on the Friday and Saturday, June 1st & June 2nd for a 2 queen standard room. They also have a few suites available that they will offer to us at the rate of \$150 per night for a basic suite and \$175 for a deluxe suite, subject to availability.

To receive the special rates, our members must CALL the hotel prior to May 16, 2007 and identify themselves as being with the State Fire Chiefs Group. They are not able to receive these reduced rates over the Internet.

The Americalnn is a brand-new hotel on the site of Glenwood Caverns Adventure Park. The hotel is fully sprinklered and has a lot of amenities. Their website is: <http://www.americinnglenwoodsprings.com/>.

Note: The Combo Chiefs Meeting will be held in Glenwood Springs on May 31, 2007. This is a change from the schedule posted on the website and will be the subject of a separate E-mail message from Chief Bruce Mygatt. The General Membership Meeting will be held on June 1, 2007 beginning at 9:30 a.m., and a meeting of the new Volunteer Chiefs Section is being proposed for Saturday, June 2, 2007, also beginning at 9:30 a.m.

Fire Service Award for Excellence 2007

The 2007 application period for the Fire Service Award for Excellence is now open. This award, co-sponsored by U.S. Safety Fire Technologies and the IAFC, recognizes innovations and achievements in managing resources to reduce the loss of life and property from fire and other emergencies. This prestigious award was conceived in 1989 by Chief Ronny J. Coleman, IAFC President 1988-1989; and sponsoring partner, Mr. Wayne Boyd, President of U.S. Fire Safety Technologies. Over the years, nominations have come from nearly every conceivable program area: management, fire prevention, personnel accountability systems and minority hiring practices, to name a few.

Seven finalists are recognized at Fire-Rescue International (FRI) each year during a reception hosted by the Center for Public Safety Excellence. The international champion is selected from the seven finalists and presented with the grand prize during a general session at FRI.

Please share this message with your division and association members and other fire service colleagues to encourage participation in this most prestigious recognition. There are a great many programs out there that deserve to be showcased!

Application forms are available for download at: [Fire Service Award for Excellence](#)

The deadline for applications is 1 June 2007.

Experts Condemn Many Cities' Fire Codes

By David B. Caruso, Associated Press Writer

March 16, 2007

NEW YORK- Fire fatalities have steadily declined in the U.S. since the late 1970s, thanks partly to improved building codes requiring safety measures such as sprinkler systems, multiple fire exits and fire-resistant construction materials.

But a deadly blaze in the Bronx served as a ghastly reminder that many of the country's big cities are packed with homes that have none of these safety features.

The March 7 inferno claimed 10 lives when flames ignited by a space heater ripped through a century-old town house inhabited by two immigrant families from West Africa.

Investigators sifting through the ashes found a bunch of things they wish had been different about the building.

The three-story house lacked a fire escape and had only one stairwell, giving residents no way out once those steps were blocked by flames. There were no sprinklers. The house had only two smoke detectors, neither of which had working batteries or was hard-wired to the electrical system.

The modest home also was crowded with 22 residents, most of them children.

And yet, none of those deficiencies appeared to violate the city's building code.

As is the case in most cities, one- and two-family homes in New York are more lightly regulated than larger dwellings. At the doomed Bronx house, neither a sprinkler system nor a fire escape was required, city officials said.

There are thousands of homes just like it throughout the city, building experts said Wednesday.

"In most cities, there will be a stock of buildings that don't meet the current standards, and they are accidents waiting to happen," said Richard Custer, a fire safety expert at Arup, a global design firm. "The problem is, a lot of owners don't want to spend the money to bring these things up to speed."

That wasn't the case in the Bronx.

Homeowner Moussa Magassa had recently filed an application with the city to divide his house into three apartments and install sprinklers and a metal fire stairwell. The project had yet to be approved at the time of the fire.

Architect John Ellis, who drew the plans for the work, said Magassa was intent on improving the building—something many owners of the crowded dwellings that house immigrant families never bother to do.

An unknown number of one- and two-family homes have been illegally chopped up into a warren of one-room apartments and rented to poor families struggling to deal with New York's astronomical housing costs.

"You go into these homes, you see the attic occupied. You see the basement occupied," Ellis said. "People are packed into these homes, the place is classified as a one-family."

City building inspectors served 4,256 violation orders for such illegal apartment conversions in 2006, up from 3,142 three years earlier, according to the Department of Buildings.

Glenn P. Corbett, an associate professor of fire science at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, said similar violations occur in the suburbs surrounding the city. "There's this much larger group out there that is not following the law," he said. "Believe me, there is no incentive for a building owner to say, 'Yes, Mr. Building Inspector, come in and enforce the code and make me install these stairwells and sprinklers.'"

Corbett called the illegal use of single-family homes as apartment houses a "gigantic problem" for fire safety, and he cited recent fatal blazes elsewhere, including one that killed two people last summer in Englewood, N.J.

The National Fire Protection Association, a public safety advocate, said 2,570 of the 3,675 civilian deaths in fires in 2005 occurred in one- or two-family homes.

Those deaths are down considerably from 1978, when 7,710 civilians died in fires, including 4,945 in one- and two-family homes.

Source: <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2007/03/16/ap/national/main2577144.shtml>

Fire Chief Keeps His Job

March 15, 2007

Debbie Bell, Canyon City Daily Record

COTOPAXI — Emotions ran high here Wednesday night as area residents vehemently defended embattled Fire Chief Todd Bell against an effort to fire him.

Rumors about the ongoing battle between Bell, the Station 1 chief, and the Deer Mountain Fire Protection District Board raged throughout the day and included claims the board planned to lock Bell and his entire crew out of the station house. That did not happen.

Other reports said the board planned to fire Bell at Wednesday's meeting, but almost 200 emotional residents crowded into the Cotopaxi High School cafeteria to vocally defend their fire chief. Many of Bell's volunteer firefighters attended the meeting and reportedly were prepared to stage a walkout if he was dismissed.

In the end, board member Byron Alsup rescinded his original motion to fire Bell and replaced it with one to place the chief on a six-month probationary period. That action was approved unanimously by the board.

Board chairman Ron Carter patiently and repeatedly called for order throughout the two-hour meeting. Carter, who was hoarse from battling illness, allowed Alsup to direct much of the meeting.

Alsup gave Bell the choice of discussing the personnel matter in public forum or behind closed doors.

"Todd, do you want to do this in open session?" Alsup asked.

"Yup," Bell answered simply.

Alsup began by reading a letter from the board to Bell, specifying several allegations against him, including insubordination, dishonesty, defiance and creating a hostile work environment. The charges were openly booed by many in attendance, leaving Carter to repeatedly call for order.

Bell was allowed to verbally respond to the letter, which he had not seen in advance, and gave direct answers to many of the charges against him. He reminded the board he already had been reprimanded for several of the charges and said he was told the events would be forgotten.

"Most of this stuff here, in my personal opinion, is nit picking," Bell said to loud cheers and catcalls to the board. Many of those in attendance repeatedly shouted for the board's resignation during the meeting.

"I think this is a personal attack upon me," Bell said. "I think this is really ridiculous."

Carter allowed open discussion from attendees and went beyond the call of duty by allowing many of them to continue speaking well beyond their allotted two minutes. He also permitted several to sign up to speak as the meeting progressed, rather than cutting them off since they had not signed up before the session began.

Steve Senger was the first to stand in defense of Bell.

"I lost everything in the Iron Mountain fire," Senger said. "Our fire district after that fire was in complete shambles. These two guys (Bell and his assistant fire chief, Roger Bell — no relation) rebuilt that station."

Senger said personalities should not be the issue, a sentiment that was repeated by many throughout the night. Others recounted tales of Bell's personal actions in saving lives, as well as providing training and organization for the department as a whole.

Donita Davis said Bell had a hand in rescuing her several times because she is disabled and is forced to call on Station 1. She commended him for his lifesaving actions and said he should stay to continue the good work he had done.

"We can't not have a fire department, but I'd sure like to try it without a board," Davis said.

The fire department's lead dispatcher, Kathy Vineyard, used her time to rebuke most of those in the audience.

"I am appalled at the disrespect shown by you to this board that you elected," Vineyard said. She was not alone in showing dismay toward the crowd, which was called "disrespectful" by another dispatcher.

"We have never had such a mess," said Mike Creacy. "All of you ought to be drawn and quartered. It's not just the board vs. Todd. Deal with this like adults and not as children."

Finally, Alsup said he was swayed by public opinion.

"If I see this many people say they want to keep Todd as fire chief, I withdraw my motion," Alsup said as the room erupted in deafening cheering.

Alsup's subsequent motion to place Bell on probation without specific conditions was approved by all board members, Carter, Alsup, Pat Donnelly, Robert Parker and Tom Fellows.

Fellows, the District 1 representative on the board, stood in defense of Bell throughout the meeting.

He asked to act as liaison between Bell and the board during his probationary period, a move also unanimously approved.

Besides the fire chief's job, the other issue debated during the evening was the possibility of District 1 withdrawing from the Deer Mountain Fire Protection District to form its own department. Alsup asked for a show of support for that idea and seemed surprised by the positive response.

"I am going to make every effort to pursue that," Alsup said.

The district is separated into three distinct stations. Station 1, Bell's realm, is located on Copper Gulch Road and serves almost 3,000 people with 24 firefighters and eight trucks.

District 2 is the Coaldale area with 12 to 14 firefighters and five trucks, while District 3 is the Cotopaxi area. It has about six firefighters and four trucks.

All Deer Mountain Fire Protection District firefighters are volunteers.

Source: <http://www.canoncitydailyrecord.com/Top-Story.asp?ID=6406>

Upcoming Workshops & Conferences

4th Annual Western Colorado All-Hazards Conference
Mar 26-30, 2007
Montrose, Colorado

Colorado Mitigation & Wildfire Conference
Apr 13-15, 2007
Pueblo, Colorado

Utilizing Computer-Aided Management of Emergency Operations (CAMEO) in WMD
Apr 23-25, 2007
Berthoud FPD, Colorado

Colorado Emergency Services, Safety and Prevention Conference
April 25 -27, 2007
Beaver Run Resort, Breckenridge, Colorado

Colorado Wildland Fire & Incident Management Academy
June 2-8, 2007
Alamosa, Colorado

For more information on these workshops and conferences, including links to conference websites and registration information, visit the Training and Conferences Page on our website at: <http://www.colofirechiefs.org/trainingconf.htm>