



**North Carolina State  
Firemen's Association  
Gateway Conference 2012**

January 30 - 31, 2012  
Concord, North Carolina

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## Executive Summary

Gateway began in 2000 as a meeting of state Fire/EMS organizations to talk about legislative issues, regulations, health and wellness, and industry changes to ensure that everyone was on the same page with regard to North Carolina legislative initiatives.

The published Mission Statement for Gateway is:

**Established to foster a consensus on key issues facing the fire service in NC and develop solutions to those issues and present an opportunity for the leadership of NC fire/rescue organizations and agencies to address issues facing the fire service and work together on resolutions.**

In February of 2011, The North Carolina Fireman's Association asked Buddy Martinette, Fire Chief, Wilmington Fire Department and Deborah Dunford, Independent Consultant, to facilitate discussions during the 2012 Gateway Conference. The desired outcome for the conference was to:

**"Identify potential process design changes that will ensure the (Gateway) model remains viable, contemporary, and fits the needs of the state's fire and emergency services."**

Thirty-six individuals representing fifteen (15) organizations attended.

Using the Focused Conversation strategic planning method, a series of questions was developed to elicit responses to the "Rational Aim" and "Experiential Aim" method of inquiry. The Rational Aim answers the question: What do we need to know, learn, or decide by the end of this conversation? The Experiential Aim answers the question: How do we need to be different or feel different at the end? Additional discussion, observation, and questions were designed to determine:

In the Beginning:	Why Gateway?
The Early Years:	Accomplishments and hurdles
Current Reality:	What do we look like right now?
The Future:	Today forward...

The Gateway concept began in 1994-95 when a group of fire service professionals met to discuss and potentially determine what direction to give the State Fireman's Association for a legislative agenda. Previous attempts to lobby for fire service issues were only marginally successful because, as a profession, efforts appeared to members of the General Assembly to be disjointed.

The circumstances surrounding the development of Gateway as a leadership group centered on creating one voice, identifying common issues, building better relationships, creating better communications, and creating a vision and mission for emergency services in North Carolina. One potential misstep identified was that the Gateway effort lacked a formal structure, was not formally chartered, and did not do a good job of identifying all process stakeholders.

As a group, the members of Gateway did have many successes over the years. Chief among the successful efforts were Safe Cigarette Initiative, Seat Belt Initiative, the initiative related to heart attacks and firefighter wellness, Chief 101, Legislative Day, NFIRS, and the Junior Firefighter program. In each of these efforts, the common factors that led to success were completed staff work, concentrated effort, and achievable and common goals among all stakeholder groups.

Where there were questions as to successful outcomes for legislative goals, it was attributed to lack of cooperation from all agencies, lack of focus due to day-to-day work responsibilities, agencies not being on the same page, agencies not projecting a unified front, and/or a general unwillingness on behalf of some agencies to accept an incremental success towards the goal. If members could do anything differently they would identify the stakeholders, develop charter/rules of order, determine whether outcomes are initiated based on vote or consensus, and define labor vs. management and firefighters vs. volunteers.

In a discussion regarding branding, the group worked through an exercise to determine a "slogan" for Gateway. The slogan with the highest number of votes was "Moving Forward Together". Additionally, the group decided that core values were best represented by Honesty, Integrity, True to Self, Respect, Fairness, Inclusiveness, Ethics, Outcomes, Benefits Others, Compassion, and Necessary. A future exercise would be to determine the key decision-making values of Gateway, and weight and define each to ensure consistency in decision-making.

With regard to current reality, the group articulated its greatest strengths as the diversity of organizations represented, varying viewpoints, members that represent multiple organizations, sheer numbers of people in the fire service, and the desires of those people. Some areas related to current reality that need to be addressed are: we have opportunity to improve as a group; we need personal commitment when we leave the meetings; we need to address Gateway's structure and improve networking, communication, and branding.

Where the group experienced the most difficulty in accomplishing the goals of the organization was related to economic factors, follow through, commitment, individual goals that trump organizational (Gateway) goals, transferring passion

to troops, and having personnel to drive initiatives. These frustrations led to discontent among some, not accomplishing goals, lack of direction, and divisiveness.

The assumptions on the part of the group is that Gateway is designed to bring an organization's views forward, take decisions back through proper communication, develop ownership in that each organization commits to working on what is decided to work on, make a choice to communicate, and to communicate with one voice. It was agreed that the Gateway effort by and large has had a positive impact on North Carolina's fire service.

As a general rule, the group feels that member fire service organizations in North Carolina are not as familiar with the Gateway process as would be desired. Reports are issued although ultimately engagement on behalf of individuals and organizations is a personal decision that requires commitment. Focusing on fewer, more important issues and better marketing could help improve goal attainment.

There is some confusion among Gateway participants as to whether Gateway is a formal or informal organization. Some believe that Gateway is nothing more than a "think tank" meeting and that the informal nature of the organization is hampering further success. It was generally agreed upon that most successful organizations are somewhat formal in structure, hold themselves to a high standard, and share a set of like core values.

The core group's commitment and energy to Gateway is developed and nurtured based on a sense of obligation to the organizations they represent, and not necessarily Gateway itself. This may be a function of lack of structure as opposed to commitment on the part of attendees.

Attendees of the conference suspect that the greatest hurdles facing Gateway's future are determining the appropriate structure, working together, sustaining energy between meetings, legislative climate, identity issues, egos, time commitment, marketing, attitudes, and strategic direction. The things most important to consider with regard to changing Gateway is to have the NCSFA send out invitations along with ground rules for the meeting, establishing a defined structure, accountability, defining the participants, focus, branding, clarity, rules of engagement, stability, and sustainability. It was felt that creating a charter for the Gateway group would greatly aid in accomplishing these objectives.

For Gateway to continue as a successful model in the future, it was determined that leadership, whoever that is decided to be, needs to set the focus and provide direction for future meetings. It was also determined that it would be

beneficial to bring in subject matter experts based on the agenda topics. There also needs to be better communications, marketing, and measurement of established goals.

Since Gateway is still relevant to the North Carolina fire service, there are many opportunities for future success. Chief among these would be to position Gateway as a mechanism to funnel issues through the group for problem solving and mitigation. This would mean that Gateway would become a significant portal to North Carolina's fire service. The collective effort of member organizations could maximize opportunities in a limited opportunity world. Positioning Gateway as the voice of the collective North Carolina fire service and then being aggressive in action, however measured in approach, would create synergy that is collectively envisioned by Gateway stakeholders. It is agreed upon by all that creating and maintaining a positive relationship with the North Carolina General Assembly is both necessary and preferable.

Beyond addressing the desired outcome of this meeting, group members offered potential goals for 2012. These potential goals are listed in the report and prioritized in no particular fashion. Each of them will need to be studied, grouped, defined, and ultimately run through a decision-making criteria filter.

This report also contains facilitator research into what politicians want from groups like Gateway and what other Gateway-like organizations are doing to remain relevant and successful. In addition, several recommendations concerning next steps in the continued maturation of Gateway were discussed. These steps include developing outcome/goal statements, developing measures of success, identifying specific tasks that need to be accomplished, assigning task(s), communicate, communicate, communicate, stepping back and taking a deep breath and putting structure to the process, continuing the process to move forward and engaging the fire service, getting assistance from other organizations, rethinking and retooling, and talking with member organizations regarding alignment with what is ultimately decided concerning Gateway.

A final question that was offered to the group concerned Gateways highest potential as an organization. It was determined that Gateway could create synergy to help us communicate to elected officials and provide a platform of consensus among stakeholder organizations.

In conclusion, and considering whether the Gateway conference met its goal as outlined in the desired outcome statement: **"Identify potential process design changes that will ensure the (Gateway) model remains viable, contemporary, and fits the needs of the state's fire and emergency services"**, the following is offered by the facilitators:

- **Yes**, the discussion lead to recommending multiple design changes to the Gateway model, and
- **Yes**, if these changes are adopted, they will most certainly lead to a viable and contemporary model that not only will meet the needs of the state's fire and emergency services, but will make NC a leader at the national level to demonstrate how forward thinking administrators come together to lead an organization of nearly 50,000 to ensure the highest level of customer safety and satisfaction.

Based on information gathered from all participants the following specific design changes are recommended:

- Bring together one representative from each of the twenty-six (26) different professional Fire and EMS related entities (specifically the President or Chair and, if not available, their designee who can speak for and represent their organization).
- Develop a CHARTER to include:
  - Mission/Purpose
  - Team Composition
  - Interrelationships & Roles
  - Performance Challenge
  - Guidelines and Boundaries
  - Processes
  - Resources & Support
  - Accountability
- Identify decision-making weighted criteria based upon values.
- Develop communication tools and strategies.
- Develop an annual strategic plan with clearly articulated goals, roles, and success indicators/measures.
- Develop a brand/slogan and the marketing strategy to go with it.
- Once the strategy is set with the identified goals, conduct a "call for assistance", advertise the clearly articulated goals, and ask for those who have interest and/or expertise to volunteer their time and commitment to advancing the strategy. Tap those whom you know will remain enthusiastic, have a willingness to work with others, and possess the technical, research, and/or writing skills necessary to do completed staff work.
- Champion the Completed Staff Work model as a Gateway goal (similar to Chief 101) and develop the Train-the-Trainer program.

## Attendance

Thirty-six (36) individuals representing fifteen (15) organizations attended, as listed below, along with the number represented.

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Member</b>	<b># Represented</b>
Piedmont NCFA	Ron Fowler	154 departments
NC Society of Fire Rescue Instructors	John White	
NC Society of Fire Rescue Instructors	Jim Hanline	
NC Association of Fire Chiefs	Ken Mullen	1,550 Members
NC Association of Fire Chiefs	Len Needham	
NC Association of Fire Chiefs	Ken Briscoe	
PFFPNC	David Anders	
PFFPNC	Richard O'Brien	
PFFPNC	William Gillette	
Western NC Association of Firefighters	David Vullins	295 Depts./13,028
Western NC Association of Firefighters	Scott Burnette	
Western NC Association of Firefighters	William Hunt	
Eastern NC Firefighters Association	Tracy Mosley	
Eastern NC Firefighters Association	Barry Overman	
Eastern NC Firefighters Association	Jamie Fulk	
Eastern NC Firefighters Association	Carnie Hedgepath	
NC Fallen Firefighters	Joey Webb	
NC Fallen Firefighters	Ronnie Hayes	
NC Div. of Forest Resources	Gary Wood	
NC Community Colleges	Winfield Abee	58 Comm. Colleges
NC Community Colleges	Phil Batts	
NC Community Colleges	Chris Raynor	
NC Community Colleges	Tracy McPherson	
NC Assoc. of Hazardous Material Responders	Glenn Clapp	20 Hazmat Teams 12 Associate Mbrs.
NC Assoc. of Hazardous Material Responders	Greg Collins	
OSFM	Tim Bradley	
OSFM	Larry Hughes	
Fire & Rescue Commission	Harley Cook	
NCSFA	Bill Jones	54,000 firefighters
NCSFA	Phil Welch	
NCSFA	Tommy Cole	
NCSFA	John Grimes	
NCSFA	Kevin Gordon	
NCSFA	Brian Cox	
NCSFA	Derrick Clouston	
NCSFA	Paul Miller	

## Conference structure

Discussion, observation, and questions were designed around:

- **In the Beginning:** Why Gateway?
- **The Early Years:** Accomplishments, hurdles, etc.
- **Current Reality:** What do we look like right now?
- **The Future:** Today forward...

## Methodology and Method

Conference facilitators chose the Focused Conversation Method where questions are designed to elicit responses around the “Rational Aim” or the “Experiential Aim”. The Rational Aim answers the question: What do we need to know, learn, or decide by the end of this conversation? The Experiential Aim answers the question: How do we need to be different or feel different at the end?

**Rational Aim:** To discern root issues, possible solutions, and opportunities.

**Experiential Aim:** Thoughtful input from all participants will create a model that is viable, contemporary, and fits the needs of the organization.

*Following are the questions and dialogue. The questions are bold and in italics.*

## **In the Beginning...**

### **What is the Gateway Model?**

- In 1994-95 met in Bowling to determine what direction to give SFA for legislative agenda.
- Met for two to three (2-3) hours, argued, and got nothing done.
- Jeff Cash, President 1997, at the SFA retreat said to have a “gateway” conference to give common direction to lobbyist. Things have changed somewhat since then. Legislative Day is strong and recognized.
- We need to come together for what is best for all of us.
- Best example: Hometown Heroes
- Jeff was on a taskforce and told by legislators if we could “get our act together” we could accomplish a lot.
- Whole purpose was to put a positive spin on what we could agree on.
- In the beginning, if one organization voted no, then the coalition could not use the name to move the legislative agenda forward.
- It was not consensus, but awareness: issues were on the table.

- About the sixth (6th) year the scope was broadened. Things have changed. **What?** Fire service is looked at differently, we are not the fair-haired child, and we are part of public government.

***What were the circumstances surrounding why you wanted to pull together a leadership group?***

- Create one voice
- Identify common issues
- Build better relationships
- Build better communications
- Help develop better leaders/leadership
- Stop "compartmentalizing" within the fire service; break down walls
- Share and embrace good ideas
- A vision and mission for emergency services
- All emergency services working toward same goal
- See progress
- Try to build a consensus
- Strength in numbers
- Common focus
- Common input
- Common voice

***Did this group sit down to determine what all stakeholders wanted?***

- No

***Is Gateway a "structured organization"?***

- No

***Is Gateway "chartered"?***

- No

***Was this a consensus decision?***

- No and Yes
- Yes, the State Fireman's Board decided to kick Gateway off

***How did you make decisions?***

- Dot voting on brainstormed list

***How successful was that?***

- When wording of bill came out, one person influenced the wording. Roadblock for certain sections of our membership. In twelve (12) years the statistics are roughly: fifteen (15) successful, thirty (30) not successful and five (5) busted.
- No by-laws.

***If you were writing by-laws, what would you say about consensus?***

- Gateway will not pursue any issue that each group cannot agree upon as a core value. "Gentleman's Agreement." Agree to disagree but...
  - Have a stake
  - Believe in it
  - We communicate

***Are you here because you feel this group can be successful?***

- Gateway has really brought us together and communications are better.

***Are there other circumstances where you have lobbied for something and the bill was different from what you wanted?***

- Mostly successful, however, there is always something in the bill that you would not like to see.
  - Assignments are not being done.
  - We did not take action on them.

***What were your goals in the beginning?***

- All be on the same page
- Wanted a measure of stakeholder success
- Direct the path of the state's fire service

***How successful were you? Why?***

- Safe cigarette
- Seat belt
- 50-60% successful
- Benchmarked Gateway in 2009 and over 50% successful

### ***Why were you successful?***

#### Safe Cigarette

- Had facts, good data, and consensus
- Before Gateway we had bought into it
- Shared commitment

#### Seat Belts

- Lead US in pledges
- Could get excited/involved/have a party
- Achievable (beginning to end)
- Every issue has to be doable

#### Heart Attacks

- Did not make it through the first time
- Concentrated effort
- Common goal

### ***What does success mean?***

Success = commitment

or

Success = follow-through, monitoring

### **Summary:**

- Need for cooperation and path to move forward for twenty-six (26) agencies.
- Once we get back to day-to-day responsibilities we lose focus/commitment.
- Gateway is intended that we are on the same page.
- Do not do a good job of projecting a unified front. How do you sell it?
- Need incremental politics: small steps towards a goal.
- Building relationships: may take two years but seeds get planted.
- Journey is the learning.
- Focus on the "customer" not so much on ourselves.

## **The Early Years...**

### ***What tasks and accomplishments are you most proud of? Why?***

- Safe Cigarette
- Seat belts
- Heart attack
- Chief 101
- Legislative Day

- NFIRS
- Junior Firefighter Program
- All were #1 when undertaken

***Why were you successful?***

- Benefits ALL: top to bottom!

***Did you make changes to the structure of the organization? If so, what and why, and how did you accomplish the goals?***

- Brought in more members
- Needed to bring in more stakeholders

***Is Gateway a:***

- Meeting?
- Group?
- Team?
- Board?
- Committee?

***What is the structure?***

- Come together – work together
- NCSFA picks up the bill
- Some committees
- Gateway is a function of NCSFA
- Agree there are some “shadows” around roles

***Mission Statement as articulated in the 2000 Gateway Report:***

- Established to foster a consensus on key issues facing the fire service in NC and develop solutions to those issues and present an opportunity for the leadership of NC fire/rescue organizations and agencies to address issues facing the fire service and work together on resolutions.

***What would you do differently if you could get a “do over”? Why?***

- Identify the stakeholders
- Develop Charter/Rules of Order
- Each group pay a dues each year
- Go back to the original list sent by SFA
- Determine whether it is vote vs. consensus
- Define labor vs. management vs. firefighters vs. volunteers

That concluded Day One. We opened the next day asking for:

## A-Ha Moments...

- Change of attitude in the past twelve (12) years: unity to bring the organizations together at the same table.
- Chief 101 has a great impact.
- Structure never agreed upon. Used to be one vote per organization. How you define success defines the structure. Want to move forward from here.
- Completed staff work: those that were successful use completed staff work; those not using completed staff work were not as successful.
- Rules of engagement – definition of consensus.
- Contrast between those who understand the purpose of Gateway and those who do not. Consensus = simple majority not all.
- Is this an independent group and would we get together without NCSFA? No! Maybe Gateway is moving to something more independent.
- Table arrangement (for small group discussions) vs. U-shape to make choices. The original intent was to get the heads together (at the U-shape) to make decisions.

## What is our slogan?

- Gateway to the Future (9)
- Preparing for the Future (0)
- Progress through Unity (1)
- Consensus for Commitment (8)
- Together/United we Stand (1)
- Making a Difference through Diversity (1)
- Building Consensus for NCSFA (6)
- Progress through Vision (6)
- Unified Front (0)
- **Guiding Activities That Encourage WAY** (14)
- Completing the Vision (1)
- Committed to Excellence (2)
- Opening the Ideas of Emergency Service (1)
- Moving Forward Together (19)
- Portals of Progress (1)
- Common Focus, Common Input, Common Voice (11)
- Rising Above the Common (0)

No decision was made but a future decision might be to decide upon a slogan for branding Gateway.

## What are our Values?

We had a discussion about values and how we probably all share the same values; however, it is the weight we each put on our values and how values are internalized. A quick poll revealed the following values:

Honesty  
Integrity  
True to Self  
Respect  
Fairness  
Inclusiveness  
Ethics  
Outcomes  
Benefits Others  
Compassion  
Necessary

A future exercise would be to determine the key decision-making values of Gateway and weight and define each to ensure consistency in decision-making.

## Current Reality...

***What are your greatest strengths as an organization? Why?***

Commitment	Unity
Numbers	50,000 strong
Diversity in the organizations represented	Various disciplines
People	Different viewpoints, common cause, Diverse
Desire of people	Members represent multiple organizations

**A-has and root issues that need to be addressed:**

- We have opportunity to improve as a group
- We go home and drop the ball; we need personal commitment
- Address networking
- Address commitment
- Address communication: packaging/branding and dissemination
- Address the organization's structure

***Where do you experience the most difficulty in accomplishing the goals of the organization? Why?***

- People: diverse, work
- Economy
- Follow through
- Commitment
- Individual goals trump organizational (Gateway) goals
- Hard-headed, stubborn
- Transferring passion to troops
- Personnel to drive initiatives

***Where have you been personally frustrated concerning the organization? Why?***

- The discontent among some: do not understand why discontent
- Do not accomplish what we set out to accomplish. Feel bad, feel frustrated, span of control
- Do not give clear direction of who is responsible
- Not setting up clear lines of communication
- Perception about what is said, how we hear it
- Divisiveness: cannot get over the issues and work on what needs to be done.

***How do you resolve those issues within your organization?***

- Basically have the same goals, but it is how you choose to get there.
- Freedom of speech, ability to state an opinion without others forming assumptions or accepting different opinions.
- Listen to hear what the other person is saying.
- Work through "perceptions" vs. reality.
- Conflict is sometimes disrespectful.
- Assumptions people make about the other person's intent: are they achievable? If we say no, then they perceive we do not like their suggestion.
- Assumption about "who" makes the suggestion. If the same person says something that a person we do not accept says, then we do not accept it.
- Just say what the issue is – do not beat around!
- If the assumption is that there is a hierarchical plan, then the "wrong" person is not in the chain of command. The time it takes to make or act on a decision is assumed to reflect our commitment and/or motivation.
- Instant gratification: great at doing more with less but changing a culture takes time.
- Gateway does not have a consistent message, mission, goals, etc.

***What are your assumptions about your work here on the Gateway group? What do you do? Why?***

- Bring your organization's views forward
- Take decisions back: communication
- Ownership: each organization commits to working on what is decided to work on
- Health and wellness: created two committees
- Communicate with one voice
- Made a choice to communicate

***What impact do you think the work of this group has on the member organizations you represent? How do you know?***

- Impact is good – not always recognized
- Impact on legislation affecting the fire service
- Incrementally
- Chief 101 – 2,800 trained
- Walk-A-Mile – people are tracking
- Positive impact: feedback and observation
- If this group disbanded, would someone pick it up because the work is so valuable?

***How do you know when the message is being taken back?***

- Impact = ripple effect (impact that 50,000 can leverage)
- Is it a goal that all 50,000 know about Gateway?
- Commitment to communication process
- Focus on Gateway awareness: marketing! branding!
- Market what comes out of Gateway.

***Do you think the member organizations are aware of your work? Why?***

- SFC – getting reports on the site (if you put information out, would they still know it six months later?)
- How come they do not know? Assume they do!
- Engagement = personal decision
- Is it better to focus on one or two items/issue or share all?
- Marketing: can you convince people with showing one time?
- Something really important sometimes gets buried within longer missives.
- If it is really important, provide an executive summary: the first ten (10) seconds...

***Do you develop success indicator/measures?***

- Sometimes

***Are they measurable? How important are they? How successful are you in your own organization without them?***

- Some think it (Gateway) is a “think tank” not a formal organization
- Who does the work?
- Effective at some things and not others
- Disconnect between voting/consensus, formal vs. informal
- A-ha: put into the process what was a success and what was not and why!

***How have your feelings about formal organizations like this changed over the years? Why?***

- Gateway is NOT a formal organization.
- We are not an organization, we are a meeting.

***What does a successful formal organization look like?***

- Not like this
- Must be held to a high standard
- Share core values and are consistent and hold themselves to the high standards
- Structure
- It may be a Gateway initiative but must be adopted by the local organizations
- Market the initiatives
- We gave “it” a name (Gateway) = confusion
- Another confusion: not to be a leading organization
- Think tank: was connected to a formal organization that does the work
- Group of organizations for Fire/EMS to find common goals
- The more formal the organization the more rules and procedures. Level of bureaucracy.

***Who implements?***

- Take ideas back to get to legislators
- I400 – MAT Group (multi-agency team) = informational system
- Coordinating group that comes together

***What gives you the energy and commitment to keep volunteering your time to the organization? Why?***

- Obligation to commitment to my organization that I represent
- Expectation to lead
- Make a positive change in the organization
- See injuries everyday – get everybody to think/see: compassion
- Culture of the organization that it will never happen to me
- Goes back to citizens: give the very best
- Opportunity to have a say/be a force
- Create friendships

***What is the greatest hurdle facing the organization? Why?***

<b>Greatest hurdle?</b>	<b>Why?</b>
Understanding the purpose of this meeting	We want to fix stuff; assign tasks, etc.
Determine structure	Guides future
Working together	Turf
Sustainment between meetings	Communication
Legislative climate	Lost contacts who helped in the past
Identity	People confuse Gateway as an organization rather than a meeting
Egos	Different groups want to drive the meeting
Time commitment for issues	Individual priorities away from Gateway
Awareness of the group and its purpose	Non-communications
Stay in touch – leadership moot – more than once a year	Stay on target
Structure	Turf
Meeting after the meeting	Undermines the process
Follow through	Needed to get things done
Cooperation	Different views
Attitudes	Negative projections
Me B 4 WE	Stops progress
Attitudes/agenda	Good question
Direction	Best use of time

***What is the number one thing you would change right now for this group? Why?***

<b>Would Change?</b>	<b>Why?</b>
Ask NCSFA to send out ground rules with invitation	To avoid confusion
Change name from Gateway	To focus expectations and intent
Conference to Gateway Forum or Roundtable or Plain Gateway	Consistency
Keep as is	Works fine
Limit to statewide organizations	
Back to emphasis on accountability/ follow through	To maintain focus
Re-focus on initial players and rules for the whole FS/ES	Maintain control and intent of the Gateway concept
Branding	Focus on Gateway being an event or meeting rather than a quasi-organization
Being open minded	Need to respect interest of others
How do we monitor achievement	To show success/failures to our members
Establish structure	To communicate to participants and fire services what Gateway is
Structure	Get more done
Assign tasks	Measure/complete goals
Establish rules	To avoid confusion
Nothing	Ideas from the group
From self-serving to public-serving	Focus on customer
Follow-up	Track progress

***What themes are coming forward from the number one thing you would change?***

- Structure
- Accountability
- Defining the participants
- Set ground rules
- Focus
- Branding
- Clarity
- Rules of engagement
- Stability
- Sustainability

***What do you think it would take to accomplish this? Why?***

- Develop a Charter

## **The Future...**

***What new roles do you think might be required in the future to accomplish the goals of the Gateway group?***

- Leadership/chair to lead: set the focus
- Directions for the meeting with invitation
- Bring more information: subject matter experts
- Need legislative committee and/or communication hub
- Task group leader for each issue
- FA take reigns for scheduling, set guidelines
- Evaluate process put in force: measures
- Have President of FA set agenda, invites, rules of engagement
- Take more of leadership role
- Establish entity to establish Gateway structure
- Take a leadership role to more formalize structure
- Market and communicate goals
- Make Gateway more visible to the organizations
- Assignments to ensure accountability
- Open up pathways to make connections to the issues
- Set-up desired expectations ahead of time
- Better communicate back to our individual organizations
- FA create committee/council to guide this process
- Define the participation level and define and market to organizations
- Limit number of key organizations, prepare for meeting, follow-up with different organizations
- Someone, scribe, historian: keep records
- Goal monitoring
- Communicate and leadership

***What opportunities do you see on the horizon for the Gateway group?***

- Work in a coordinated group
- Solve issues that in past would set limitations: seek win/win
- When issues come up – channel through Gateway
- Opportunity to establish the purpose of Gateway
- Become significant portal to NCFS
- Workers compensation issues

- Use media and technology to reach all/more
- Focus opportunities in a limited opportunity world
- Participation of multi-agencies; greater possibility of achieving the goals/measuring
- Unity
- Become more effective to make positive changes for FS
- See and achieve the big picture – bigger audience
- Give everybody ownership in our destiny
- More measured but aggressive in our approach
- Be more active
- Acting as a cohesive force as budget strengths and demands continue
- Provide better education/marketing in Gateway initiatives
- Work with upcoming leaders for positive change: growing leaders
- Impact FS and direction
- Better our relationship with General Assembly
- Have communication with EVERY FF in NC
- Engage the youth of FS to be more involved, strong political force
- Each group have part of ownership of 50,000 and use them to get things done
- Many opportunities out there; but define direction
- Become diverse
- Communicate with every FF
- Representation of EMS
- Identify stakeholder groups

***What goals do you want to accomplish in 2012? Why?***

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Why?</b>
Establish rules	Cut out 3.5 days of conversation of what they are
Continue health & wellness	Reduce FF death and injury
Create direction	In order to advance
Address the safety culture in FS	Reduce injuries
Develop/create legislative agenda	Don't lose anymore ground
Redesign Gateway	To meet the needs of members
Reorganize Gateway	To meet the needs of members
Pursue residential sprinkler	Reduce property loss, safety to public
Commission study on vehicle crashes	Reduce injury/death
Establish better relationship with General Assembly	Reduce cuts in funding
Implement unity of Gateway organization	Strengthen our roles in General Assembly
Improve roster process	Eliminate confusion

Identify process for submitting an idea	Prevents dumping "who's got the monkey"?
Make more aware of the standards of FS	Reduce liability
Continue Health & Wellness	Reduce FF death/injury
Greater legislative impact	Prevent loss and move ideas forward
Increase spear of influence: public, vendors, industry, legislation, membership get more involved	Safer community, safer place for FF to work
Re-address seat belt issue	Some are not using
Update/establish more comprehensive guideline for Gateway	Clarity and direction
More frequent communication regarding Gateway	Improve awareness
Develop stress management	Reduce PPST/cut suicides in FS by 50%
Defend workers compensation in NC	Protect what we have
Revisit seat belt	Reduce injury
Revisit seat belt	Reduce injury
Defend workers comp	Protect what we have
Utilize quicker forms of communication	Provide quicker information to current information
Reassess Gateway structure	Make robust to effect things but not so large get bogged down
Understand and articulate the role of the community college system training network in issues of importance to the ES workforce and to work collaboratively to accomplish specific goals, where it is identified as appropriate	So training network provides relevant, rigorous and quality training, even within a context of instant logistic changes and challenges.

These goals need to be studied and grouped, then defined and ultimately run through your decision-making criteria.

***How will you know when you are successful at accomplishing these goals?***

- Once the goals are selected, it is important to develop indicators of success and measurement tools.

***What specific tasks will it take to reach these goals?***

- (Be specific for each task).

## Facilitator Discoveries...

### ***What do politicians want from you?***

- Organization has clarity of mission and purpose
- Commitment of stakeholders to consistent message
- Long term vision is articulated clearly
- Limited and precise objectives
- Incremental approach to long term success
- Need to be seen on more than one occasion
- Take what political landscape will give in the current environment

### ***What are successful organizations doing?***

- Commitment to effort is directly proportional to successful outcomes
- Establish a clear vision
- Maintain a competitive advantage
- Evaluate core competencies and concentrate on them
- Strengthen organizational capabilities with talented staff
- Have written plans and put plans into action
- Tolerate and capitalize on changes in the environment
- Stay up on technology
- Do not just set goals, achieve them
- Institute essential change and manage that change
- Create annual reviews and surveys to measure effectiveness
- Do not be afraid to be wrong, just do not stay wrong
- Internal and external communications must be consistent
- Alignment with all of the stakeholders including employees, customers, shareholders, community

## Next Steps...

- Develop outcome/goal statements
- Develop measure of success
- Identify specific tasks that need to be accomplished
- Assign task(s)
- Communicate, communicate, communicate
- Step back, take a deep breath, put structure to the process, provide forum, continue the process to move forward, engage
- Get assistance from other organizations
- Rethink and retool
- Talk to member to align with what we decide to do here

***If Gateway achieved its highest potential what would it be?***

- Communication.
- Find best way to utilize Gateway.
- Create synergy to help us communicate to elected officials.
- Consensus among all organizations.
- Cohesive and working together.
- Establish initiatives we all agree to move forward.
- Agreement between Fire/EMS on a few goals.
- Gateway would be a proactive, solution-driven work group focused on identifying a common priority because a strong, vibrant, and professional fire and emergency services community is important to families, local communities, and the state.
- Forum for discussion.
- Get the topics out in the open.
- No surprises down the road.
- For Gateway to be known as THE collaborative planning gathering in NC. Emphasize teamwork among the various fire service organizations and make NC Fire/Rescue services better in NC.
- When line FF talk openly about Gateway.
- Everybody being treated equally and working together for all.
- A tool for all agencies involved in Fire/Rescue service in NC to work toward a common goal of bettering the service.
- Learn how to better serve the firefighters of NC, with the help of sister agencies.
- Make a template from which all agencies may work.
- Sustainment between meetings as well as spreading the news about Gateway through our organizations.
- Determine the most effective way of bolstering the Gateway conference and the major issues/solutions affecting emergency services.
- Creating a team concept for the state: eliminating walls between organizations, all on the same page, working together, and gaining knowledge of all areas of emergency services.
- Bring problems to forum to work out solutions for legislative issue.
- No fire or rescue organization going in separate direction.
- Obtaining positive information of issues with the fire service and agreeing on how to resolve those issues.
- Consensus: all groups truly meeting the needs of its membership.
- The fire service will begin to prosper, advance issues, and understand each other.
- Identify what topics, actions, items can truly be achieved and see them through.
- True, 100% commitment from all involved.
- Make leadership in NC stronger.

- Elected officials will have FDs included in decisions.
- Coordinated planning effort.
- All groups focused on utilizing resources to accomplish top common priorities.
- Understand all groups' priorities.
- Method to create synergy among all fire and emergency services groups to promote the needs within the services and to elected officials and the local, state, and federal levels.
- To remove the disjointed agendas that are prevalent among the fire and emergency services.

Finally, those in attendance were asked to identify their three professional strengths when working in groups. It is good to review this list when making assignments. The following were identified.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Three Strengths</b>
Tracy McPherson	Connecting Dots, Empathy Use bureaucrat
Tim Bradley	Organizational, Very perceptive See the big picture
William Hunt	Vision, Organization, Collaborator
Richard O'Brien	Attention to detail, Seniority, Knowledge
Ronnie Hayes	Good listener, Self Starter, Leadership
Glenn Clapp	Attention to Detail, Organization Consensus Building
Brian Cox	Relationships (Creating), Outgoing Organizer
Dave Anders	Research, Organizing, Solving problems
Winfield Abee	Visionary, Creative, Practical Application
John Grimes	Talking, Building Consensus, Leading
Len Needham	Communications, Caring, Involvement
Larry Hughes	Soldier, Caring, Following directions
Scott Burnette	Empathetic, Data Driven, Results Oriented
Derrick Clouston	Building Consensus, Strategic Thinker Develop Initiatives
John White	Affirmation, Organizational, Opportunist

## Conclusion...

In conclusion, and considering whether the Gateway conference met its goal as outlined in the desired outcome statement: **“Identify potential process design changes that will ensure the (Gateway) model remains viable, contemporary and fits the needs of the state’s fire and emergency services”**, the following is offered by the facilitators:

- **Yes**, the discussion lead to recommending multiple design changes to the Gateway model, and
- **Yes**, if these changes are adopted, they will most certainly lead to a viable and contemporary model that not only will meet the needs of the state’s fire and emergency services, but will make NC a leader at the national level to demonstrate how forward thinking administrators come together to lead an organization of nearly 50,000 to ensure the highest level of customer safety and satisfaction.

### **Specific Design Changes would include:**

- Bring together one representative from each of the twenty-six (26) different professional Fire and EMS related entities (specifically the President or Chair and, if not available, their designee who can speak for and represent their organization).
- Develop a CHARTER to include:
  - Mission/Purpose
  - Team Composition
  - Interrelationships & Roles
  - Performance Challenge
  - Guidelines and Boundaries
  - Processes
  - Resources & Support
  - Accountability
- Identify decision-making weighted criteria based upon values.
- Develop communication tools and strategies.
- Develop an annual strategic plan with clearly articulated goals, roles and success indicators/measures.
- Develop a brand/slogan and the marketing strategy to go with it.
- Once the strategy is set with the identified goals, conduct a “call for assistance”, advertise the clearly articulated goals, and ask for those who have interest and/or expertise to volunteer their time and commitment to advancing the strategy. Tap those whom you know will remain enthusiastic, have a willingness to work with others, and possess the technical, research, and/or writing skills necessary to do completed staff work.

- Champion the Completed Staff Work model as a Gateway goal (similar to Chief 101) and develop the Train-the-Trainer program.

## Facilitator Contact Information...

We thank you for the opportunity to assist you; the members of Gateway in ensuring the Gateway Model will lead you for this year and many years to come.

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