

The Gateway Report



Issues Critical to North Carolina's Fire Service Leadership

Photo by William Holmes (December 2001)

The St. Louis Gateway Arch – A symbol of courage and leadership, while exploring uncharted territory...

**“A report presenting the conclusions and
recommendations from the participants of...”**

The Gateway Conference

**Raleigh, North Carolina
November 3 – 5, 2010**

Report facilitated and prepared by: Wesley D. Hutchins

INTRODUCTION

At the invitation of the North Carolina State Firemen's Association President Scott Alderman, thirty-one leaders representing sixteen organizations were in attendance. The conference was held in Raleigh, North Carolina at the Quorum Center. The title, "*The Gateway Conference*", recognizes that these industry leaders stand in the "Gateway" to the fire and rescue services future. This group of emergency services leaders has the opportunity to lead our industry through a portal, or gateway, of positive change.

This leadership opportunity gives us a chance to reflect upon lessons learned from past experience, and plan for our future direction. The following report documents the discussions, conclusions, and recommendations of the participants of the conference. It is the intention of the Gateway Conference participants that the emergency services in North Carolina will benefit from the experiences of the leadership in attendance at the conference, and act upon the issues and recommendations in this report.

Action is needed at both the association and individual level. Above all, it is hoped that the contents of this report will stimulate additional, continued thought and discussion of these and other issues relevant to the North Carolina fire and emergency services. The discussions will create a passion to seek out improvement in all aspects of service to the communities protected, and to those dependent upon us for leadership.

CONFERENCE AGENDA

Wednesday, November 3, 2010

- Participant introductions and Gateway process.
- Brief overview of strategies.

Thursday, November 4, 2010

- Gateway precursor and overview.
- Development of goal and strategies.
- Prioritize list of issues.

Friday, November 5, 2010

- Create goal statements for each of the priority issues.
- Develop action plans for each priority issue.
- Develop recommendations needed to support action plans.
- Next steps/follow up.

The conference was convened on Wednesday evening by NCSFA President Scott Alderman who welcomed the participants, and asked Ken Mullen, of the NC Association of Fire Chiefs, to offer the invocation. Introductions by attendees followed (*see preceding list of the Gateway Conference attendees*).

PARTICIPANTS in ATTENDANCE

<u>North Carolina State Firemen's Association</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Scott Alderman ♦ Paul Miller ♦ Kevin Gordon 	<u>North Carolina Association of Fire Chief's</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Randy Godwin ♦ Ken Mullen
<u>North Carolina Association of Rescue and EMS</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Gordon Joyner ♦ Joel Faircloth 	<u>North Carolina Society of Fire Rescue Instructors</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ John White ♦ Jim Hanline ♦ Jimmy Barrow
<u>North Carolina Association of Haz-Mat Responders</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Glenn Clapp 	<u>North Carolina Fire Marshals Association</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Bobby Hedrick
<u>Western North Carolina Association of Fire Fighters</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Tommy Blanton ♦ Scott Burnette ♦ Ryan Cole ♦ David Bullins 	<u>Eastern North Carolina Firemen's Association</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Tracy Mosley ♦ David English
<u>Piedmont North Carolina Firefighter's Association</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Len Needham 	<u>North Carolina Fallen Firefighter's Foundation</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Mike Brown ♦ Joey Webb
<u>North Carolina Professional Fire Fighters and Paramedics</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Dave Anders ♦ Richard O'Brien 	<u>North Carolina Division of Forestry Resources</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Gary Wood
<u>Southeastern Association of Fire Chief's (NC - IAFC)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Ron Fowler 	<u>National Volunteer Fire Council – NC Representative</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Jeff Cash
<u>North Carolina Federal and Military Firefighter's</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Mark Melvin 	<u>North Carolina Office of the State Fire Marshal</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Derrick Clouston
<u>North Carolina Community College System</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Phil Batts ♦ G. Winfield Abee ♦ Chris Raynor 	
<u>Facilitator</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Wesley D. Hutchins 	

REVIEW OF GATEWAY 2009

Participants reviewed the purpose, goals, vision, issues and strategies of the 2009 Gateway Conference report. The purpose of the review, made by Derrick Clauston, was to validate the purpose, goals, and vision of the Gateway Conference, and to identify the status/progress of the 2009 conference initiatives. Tracking of progress, benchmarking, and overall Gateway progression for this report will be the responsibility of Derrick Clauston, statistician for the North Carolina State Firemen's Association.

PURPOSE

To facilitate a meeting among the leaders of North Carolina's Fire Service to foster consensus on key major issues facing our industry and develop a vision for working towards those issues in a consolidated manner.

**The group reviewed the purpose and reinstated the recommended that "Fire Service" be changed to "Emergency Services", to more accurately represent the make-up of the industry.*

GOALS

- 1. Provide an environment for leaders from different arenas to meet and network.*
- 2. Provide individual leadership development.*
- 3. Identify the means to success and the roadblocks that create failure.*
- 4. Identify 4-6 issues that all participants can agree upon as being "key" major issues to advancing our industry.*
- 5. Develop a strategic vision and plan for partnering solutions to the key issues.*

These five goals were established for the first Gateway Conference in 2000. The group agreed to adopt these same goals for 2010/2011.

VISION

"A fully inclusive NC fire service that fosters consensus on major issues facing our members and the citizens we serve, and that develops coalitions for working towards solutions."

The group reviewed the vision and recommended that "fire service" be changed to "Emergency Services", to more accurately represent the make-up of the industry.

GOAL 1

Make a consolidated effort for fire service representation on the North Carolina Building Code Council – push for an appointment from the Governor’s Office.

From the Gateway Conference, the overall goal is to build awareness and foster consensus from the partnering organizations on issues critical to the fire and emergency services organizations throughout North Carolina. *Identified during the conference was the need to have fair and equitable representation on the building code council board.*

Gateway will pursue the following objectives in support of Goal 1.

Goal 1, Objective 1: Lobby the governor’s office for a fire services advocate to serve as a board member (seek the appointment).

Goal 1, Objective 2: Explore the possibility of having a knowledgeable fire services representative fill a vacant position on the board (direct or indirect relationship to the fire services).

Strategy 1: Identify what seats on the building code council are vacant or member terms due to expire.

Strategy 2: Be persistent and relentless with pressure on the governor's office for a board seat appointment.

Strategy 3: Identify advocates of the fire services as potential board members for the building code council.

Priority: Immediate need, high priority.

Person/Committee responsible: Bobby Hendrick, NC Fire Marshal’s Association.

Discussion:

- What is the best avenue to fill the vacant Building Code Council seat with a fire services advocate?
- A more concerted effort needs to be made to address residential sprinkler systems and wild land-urban interface issues.
- Keep pressure on the governor’s office to fill vacant seats.
- Address ethical issues surrounding business and agendas of the current building code council.
- Continue to show support for fire service issues at building code council meetings and hearings.

Activities	Responsible Entity	Benchmarks	Progress Date
Initial progress report.	Bobby Hedrick – NCFMO Assn.	Letters of support.	01/01/2011
Completion	Bobby Hedrick	Appointment made.	05/01/2011

Goal 2

Form a plan of action to increase the awareness of the need to recruit, train, and retain members of the North Carolina fire and emergency services.

From the Gateway Conference, the overall goal is to build awareness and foster consensus from the partnering organizations on issues critical to the fire and emergency services organizations throughout North Carolina. *Identified in the Gateway Conference was the ever present need to actively recruit, train, and retain members of the North Carolina fire and emergency services organizations.*

Gateway will pursue the following objectives in support of Goal 2.

Goal 2, Objective 1: Address the training requirements for members of fire and emergency services organizations throughout North Carolina.

Goal 2, Objective 2: Develop a plan to meet the recruitment, training, and retention of fire and emergency services personnel throughout North Carolina, targeting the regional level.

Goal 2, Objective 3: Better utilize the “Fire-Line” program adopted by the NC State Firemen’s Association and establish links from NCSFA to national organizations.

Strategy 1: Continue to monitor the North Carolina Junior Member Standard program, taking a more active role at the high school level.

Strategy 2: Determine the feasibility of obtaining grant monies available from the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC), and The International Association of Fire Chief’s (IAFC) Volunteer Combination Officer’s Section (VCOS).

Strategy 3: Contact regional associations and develop a plan to offer at least three classes on recruitment and retention based on initiatives by the NVFC and IAFC/VCOS.

Priority: Immediate need; high priority.

Person/Committee responsible: Scott Alderman, North Carolina State Firemen’s Association.

Discussion:

- A solid plan of action is needed to help agencies throughout NC on issues addressed in this goal.
- Assess the need to recruit minorities to the ranks of the NC Fire and Emergency Services.
- A solid plan will strengthen this initiative, this issue is very important to the NC fire services in its entirety.

Activities	Responsible Entity	Benchmarks	Progress Date
Contact on regional level.	Scott Alderman - NCSFA.	East, Piedmont, & Western quarterly mtgs.	01/01/2011
Workshop on issues.	Scott Alderman – NCSFA.	Hold workshop accordingly.	Midwinter/annual conf.
Establish resource links.	Scott Alderman – NCSFA.	Link to various web-sites established.	08/01/2011

Goal 3

Address the sustainability and longevity of the North Carolina Workman’s Compensation Fund unique to the North Carolina fire and emergency services.

From the Gateway Conference, the overall goal is to build awareness and foster consensus from the partnering organizations on issues critical to the fire and emergency services organizations throughout North Carolina. *Identified in the Gateway Conference was the ever present need to provide money and medical benefits to an employee who has an injury as a result of an accident, injury, or occupational disease on-the-job.*

Gateway will pursue the following objectives in support of Goal 3.

Goal 3, Objective 1: Address the sustainability of the workman’s compensation fund for members of the fire and emergency services.

Goal 3, Objective 2: Develop a plan to repeal any attempts to reduce funding for this service.

Goal 3, Objective 3: Work to dispel any attempts by the North Carolina Chamber to reduce funding.

Strategy 1: Continue to monitor the North Carolina Chamber activities related to worker’s compensation.

Strategy 2: Work in conjunction with the North Carolina Volunteer Safety Workman’s Compensation board to monitor activity and funding concerns.

Priority: Immediate need; high priority.

Person/Committee responsible: Dave Anders, NC Professional Fire Fighters and Paramedics Association

Discussion:

- Close monitoring of this issue is needed to help agencies throughout NC on funding and possible reduction issues addressed in this goal.
- Assess the impact of fund reductions.
- Additional lobbying efforts may be needed to repel issues surrounding this goal.

Activities	Responsible Entity	Benchmarks	Progress Date
Monitor	Scott Alderman – NCSFA.	East, Piedmont, & Western quarterly mtgs.	01/01/2011
Workshop on issues.	Scott Alderman – NCSFA.	Hold workshop accordingly.	Midwinter/annual conf.
Establish resource links.	Scott Alderman – NCSFA.	Link to various web-sites established.	08/01/2011

Goal 4

Increase the awareness of health, wellness, and safety of the members of the North Carolina fire and emergency services.

From the Gateway Conference, the overall goal is to build awareness and foster consensus from the partnering organizations on issues critical to the fire and emergency services organizations throughout North Carolina. *Identified in the Gateway Conference was the need for addressing fitness and exercise diet; smoking cessation; and mental health that will have a positive impact on fire and emergency services community.*

Gateway will pursue the following objectives in support of Goal 4.

Goal 4, Objective 1: Develop a partnership effort between Gateway agencies that will involve researching and developing an effective example of health and wellness program(s) aimed at the needs of the fire and emergency services personnel across North Carolina.

Goal 4, Objective 2: Develop initiatives to mitigate the leading cause of line-of-duty deaths in the fire and emergency services; stress related Cardiac deaths, which historically have accounted majority of firefighter fatalities. Reduction of this type of death alone would provide a positive impact in Gateway successfully meeting its goal to reduce fatalities of fire and emergency services personnel.

Goal 4, Objective 3: Continue to build partnerships with regional associations on promoting health and wellness initiatives across the state.

Strategy 1: Conduct workshops on wellness-fitness related topics at statewide – level fire service conferences including the annual SAFE, NCAFC mid-winter conference, and the annual NCARSEMS conference.

Strategy 2: Determine who the best entity is to address these concerns with, to educate the fire service on the importance of wellness and fitness, primarily through outreach and educational sessions at statewide conferences.

Priority: Immediate need; long range goal.

Person/Committee responsible: Tracey Mosley, Scott Burnette, Tommy Cole, Glenn Clapp, and Joey Webb.

Discussion:

- Change the culture at the personal level.
- District challenges are positive initiatives and should be promoted statewide.
- A solid plan is needed, and this issue is very important to the NC fire services.

Activities	Responsible Entity	Benchmarks	Progress Date
Form plan to promote health and wellness.	Regional presidents.	Address the impact.	01/01/2011
Address mental wellness.	Glenn Clapp – NCAHMR.	Plan for mental health identification and awareness.	02/04/2011
Bring all entities together to address all aspects of health, wellness, and safety.	Joey Webb - NCFE	Organized meeting.	Annual conference, August 2011.

Goal 5

Form a plan of action to address the possibility of the North Carolina Community College System Office disallowing the fee remission for public safety training, in particular fire/rescue training fee remission.

From the Gateway Conference, the overall goal is to build awareness and foster consensus from the partnering organizations on issues critical to the fire and emergency services organizations throughout North Carolina. *Currently, firefighters throughout North Carolina can attend training programs offered through the North Carolina Community Colleges System (NCCCS) fee exempt. Recent events have indicated that the longevity of this legislation may be threatened and fees may be imposed on fire/rescue training initiatives.*

Gateway will pursue the following objectives in support of Goal 5.

Goal 5, Objective 1: Develop a plan where NCSFA and NCAFC work together to preserve the current fee exemption status for firefighter’s attending North Carolina Community College sponsored classes.

Goal 5, Objective 2: Formulate a plan to meet training initiatives throughout the North Carolina Fire Services should the fee remission issues become a topic of debate.

Goal 5, Objective 3: Continue to build partnerships with local, regional, and state community college officials, stressing the continued need for solid partnerships.

Strategy 1: Closely monitor the budget hearings, administrative actions and meetings associated with the community college fee remission status for fire/rescue training.

Strategy 2: Determine who the best entity is to address these concerns with, and continue to lobby the NCCCS President’s Advisory council, the North Carolina Community College System board of trustees, and the President of the NCCCS.

Strategy 3: Develop an awareness of what value the community college fee remission plan adds to training throughout the state. Stress the importance of the partnership already in place with local college and fire service entities (apparatus and equipment).

Priority: Immediate need; high priority.

Person/Committee responsible: Paul Miller, Scott Alderman, North Carolina State Firemen’s Association, Ken Mullen, Randy Godwin, North Carolina Association of Fire Chief’s, and John White, North Carolina Society of Fire Rescue Instructors.

Discussion:

- A solid plan of action is needed to counter act the loss of the fee exemption status should it be brought to the table again.
- What is equipment and apparatus use worth to the local colleges?
- A solid plan is needed, and this issue is very important to the NC fire services.

Activities	Responsible Entity	Benchmarks	Progress Date
Address legislators.	Paul Miller, Ken Mullen, and John White. NCSFA/NCAFC/NCSFRI.	Address the impact.	01/01/2011
Address NCCCS president.	Paul Miller, Ken Mullen, and John White. NCSFA/NCAFC/NCSFRI.	Face-to-face meeting with Scott Ralls.	02/04/2011
Repeal any initiatives.	Paul Miller, Ken Mullen, and John White. NCSFA/NCAFC/NCSFRI.NCSFA and NCAFC.	Persistence.	Undetermined.

On-going Gateway Strategies.

To maintain consistently the Gateway leadership will consistently and comprehensively monitor the following on-going initiatives.

From the Gateway Conference, the overall goal is to build awareness and foster consensus from the partnering organizations on issues critical to the fire and emergency services organizations throughout North Carolina. *Monitoring initiatives, making adjustments to the goals and objectives, regular benchmarks, and follow through are important.*

The Gateway Conference attendees and organizations represented will work in unison in support of these on-going strategies.

- ♦ Promotion and follow through of the IMAS initiative.
- ♦ Communication and tracking of all Gateway initiatives and goals.
- ♦ Document and report priorities and progress of all Gateway initiatives and goals.
- ♦ Endorse and promote Fire and Life Safety initiatives.
- ♦ Expand and enhance the North Carolina Emergency Response Plan.
- ♦ Continue to promote the Gateway Conference as a platform designed to address key issues as one voice, seeking consensus on those issues.
- ♦ Build and enhance legislative day with the goal of an all inclusive North Carolina Fire and Emergency Services.

Priority: High priority.

Responsible entity: All member organizations and respective leadership.

Discussion:

- Membership needs to be well informed and reassured that Gateway is alive and well.

REPORT SUMMARY

Any strategic plan is organization and oversight driven at best. To make this final report of the Gateway Conference a comprehensive and dynamic document, consistent reviews, internal audits, and comprehensive completion of goals and objectives, and benchmarks are important. The Gateway Conference is a thought process as well as a plan. Part of developing sound strategies for Gateway and its coalition, is learning to think strategically, learning how to ask questions and to think broadly and creatively for the organizations represented within *Gateway*.

The attainment of the goals and initiatives in this report will make the Gateway Conference a more distinctive organization and enhance its competitive position when addressing issues of concern for the fire and emergency services throughout North Carolina. Over the period covered by this plan, the Gateway Conference will be increasingly acknowledged as one of the top comprehensive emergency services platforms for important issues to the fire and emergency services organizations in the state of North Carolina. With respect to common issues and single representation, the Gateway Conference and its representation will continue to promote and be advocates for issues critical to the fire and emergency services organizations in the state.

To make this document work for the Gateway Conference, the following strategies need to be incorporated in the planning and vision process.

- Create a contingency plan – applied strategic planning is based on events that are likely to happen in the future and that would greatly affect Gateway. Contingency plans will help Gateway develop a tracking system to provide early warning signs of changes, both inside and outside the agencies represented within the framework of the Gateway Conference that would seriously affect the operation of the fire and emergency services throughout North Carolina.
- Articulate a vision - Although Gateway planning usually focuses on a one or two - year time span, it is important to have a vision of what might be accomplished over a much longer time span. This vision might be focused 5 or more years in the future.
- Perform regular “SWOT” analysis – the Gateway organizations need to regularly look at the organization strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. This assessment will strengthen the purpose of Gateway and provide continuity for the members and organizations represented within the framework of Gateway.
- Implementation and follow through – the payoff for the Gateway Conference is in its application. The plan will accomplish little, if anything, if it lies unattended and the Gateway membership does not make an honest and thorough comprehensive review on regular intervals. Every board member of Gateway should feel involved, because the success of the reports and initiatives depends on the cooperation of the entire Gateway membership.

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Each agency agreed to the following strategic actions to support implementation of the six action plans:

- Each association and partnering organization will make representatives available to assist with follow-up and reporting as needed.
- Each association responsible for a report agrees to form and articulate their plans across the lines of communication within Gateway.
- Each association and partnering organization agreed that the NCSFA office in Raleigh will serve as the primary partner for future Gateway meetings and information clearing house.