

The Gateway Report

Issues Critical to North Carolina's Fire and Rescue Services Leadership

***A report presenting the conclusions and
recommendations from the participants of***

The Gateway VII Conference

***January 17-19, 2007
Mooreville, NC***

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Introduction

At the invitation of NC State Firemen's Association President Reginald Hassler, on January 17, 2007 twenty-five elected or appointed fire and rescue service leaders from fifteen state organizations or agencies met in Mooresville, NC for the seventh annual Gateway Conference. The following is a report documenting the discussions, conclusions, and recommendations of the participants of the conference. The hope is that the fire and rescue service in North Carolina will benefit from the experiences of our leadership in attending the conference, and act upon the issues and recommendations in this report. Action should come at the association level, and at the individual leadership level. Above all, it is hoped that the contents of this report will stimulate additional, continued thought and discussion on these and other issues relevant to our fire service. May these discussions create a passion to seek out improvement in all aspects of our service to the community we protect, and to those dependent upon us for leadership.

Purpose

The purpose of "The Gateway VII Conference" was to facilitate a meeting among the leaders of North Carolina's fire and rescue service to foster consensus on key major issues facing our industry and develop a vision for working towards those issues in a consolidated manner.

Goals

Five goals were established for the conference.

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 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.

Participants

The participants of The Gateway Conference represent many professional fire and rescue service associations in North Carolina, along with representatives of state and regional organizations.

Principals

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Paul Brooks, Treasurer of the North Carolina State Firemen's Association and Chairman of the Commission on Fire Accreditation International, served as the Gateway Conference Facilitator.

Vision

The members of Gateway VII discussed and reaffirmed the original vision for Gateway conferences. It is the desire of the members that the participating agencies adopt the same vision for North Carolina's fire and rescue services.

Gateway Vision

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

Executive Summary

The members shared opportunities to interact in both work sessions and socially, allowing them to review progress on previous Gateway issues, identify current issues of significance to North Carolina's fire and rescue service industry, selected the single most important topic for Gateway VII efforts, and identified the on-going tasks for existing Gateway committee or task forces. The three strategic teams met and worked on action plans as reported in this document and appointed Scott Alderman as Chairperson, and Pete Haithcock as Vice-Chairperson.

After considerable debate, the conference agreed to reaffirm a single issue and focus new efforts of Gateway and its participant agencies to make a significant change on that one issue to improve the safety and survival of our industry members and to provide a better and safer service to our citizens. The following position paper and call for action was adopted and released by Gateway VII participants.

Position Statement

GATEWAY POSITION STATEMENT AND CALL FOR ACTION

DATE: January 19, 2007

LOCATION: Mooresville, NC

SUBJECT: Emergency Worker Safety and Survival

The primary issue selected for Gateway VI, and reaffirmed by Gateway VII, is fire and rescue responder safety & survival with a focus on emergency vehicle operation (EVO) and prevention of injuries due to lifting. The goal by which to measure success is a twenty-five percent reduction in emergency responder deaths and injuries in five years. **25 in 5!**

The critical elements of EVO are 1) mandatory use of seat belts, 2) operating emergency vehicles at a responsible speed, 3) institutionalizing requirements for emergency vehicle operator competencies, and, 4) addressing safer operations of Privately Owned Vehicles (POV.)

Gateway action plans involve three strategies:

Awareness Heighten awareness and gain commitment at Chief Officer level.

Training Identify and define scope of problem, issue position statements and promote training and certification.

Regulation Seek elimination of exemptions and explore statutory or procedural options like licensing.

Second only to our commitment to the citizens we serve, the safety and survival of our own responders must be our primary concern. Therefore, Gateway VII calls for all fire and rescue leaders to immediately adopt and enforce a policy of mandatory seatbelt use, as required by law and best industry practices, by all personnel in every position on or in an emergency vehicle, and in every situation, emergency or non-emergency. All leaders of fire and rescue agencies should immediately review and update, or implement, operating procedures and guidelines that ensure every emergency vehicle operator is trained and operates emergency vehicles in emergency and non-emergency situations in accordance with General Statutes, Office of State Fire Marshal EVO certification and best practices industry training.

Commitment Statements

To further promote the **25 in 5!** initiatives, Gateway VII developed two commitment statements. One is for use by an individual fire or rescue service leader or member, while the other is for adoption by an organization as affirmed by its executive officer. Many members present at Gateway VII signed one or both commitment statements before leaving the conference.

**Declaration of Commitment
Fire and Rescue Responder
Safety and Survival**

25 In 5!

I recognize that the safety and survival, health and wellness of our emergency responders are critical to achieving our mission and are my greatest responsibilities.

One of the greatest risks to emergency responders is the operation of and riding in or on emergency vehicles in emergency and non-emergency situations.

The most immediate and successful means of preventing harm to emergency responders is to become accountable for ensuring compliance with law and industry best practices in the operation of emergency vehicles.

Therefore, I join other fire and rescue service leaders in pledging that:

1. I will encourage and support my organization to immediately adopt and/or implement a policy of mandatory seatbelt use.
2. I will encourage and support my organization to immediately conduct or direct a review, update, and implementation of operating procedures and guidelines that will ensure safe emergency vehicle operation.
3. I will encourage and support my organization to exercise the leadership and influence necessary to create and foster a culture that embraces safety and survival, fitness and wellness of all members.
4. I will embrace and promote the Gateway Conference theme of **25% Reduction In Emergency Responder Injuries and Deaths in 5 Years.**

Signature of President or Chairman

Date

Print name

Organization

**Declaration of Commitment
Fire and Rescue Responder
Safety and Survival**

25 In 5!

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One of the greatest risks to emergency responders is the operation of and riding in or on emergency vehicles in emergency and non-emergency situations.

The most immediate and successful means of preventing harm to emergency responders is to become accountable for ensuring compliance with law and industry best practices in the operation of emergency vehicles.

Therefore, I join other emergency service leaders in pledging that:

5. I will immediately adopt and/or implement a policy of mandatory seatbelt use.
6. I will immediately conduct or direct a review, update, and implementation of operating procedures and guidelines that will ensure safe emergency vehicle operation.
7. I will exercise the leadership and influence necessary to create and foster a culture in my organization that embraces safety and survival, fitness and wellness of all members.
8. I will embrace and promote the Gateway Conference theme of **25% Reduction In Emergency Responder Injuries and Deaths in 5 Years.**

Signature of Fire Chief or Rescue Squad Leader

Date

Print name

Organization

Team Strategies and Leadership

Each agency agreed to the following strategic actions to address implement the Gateway Plan:

- Create talking points in a briefing paper for distribution;
- Each participating association include the Gateway Vision, Issues and Priorities presented in The Gateway Report to update their own strategic plan;
- Each association will disseminate a briefing paper or executive summary to association members to provide awareness of major issues and priorities;
- Give Gateway update reports at each association meeting; and,
- Participate in coalitions or partnerships for solutions.

The members agreed that an overall strategic effort must be made to market Gateway initiatives and create a demand among our state industry for Gateway leadership, direction, and information.

The three strategies for achieving the **25 in 5!** Goal, and for improving performance with the critical elements of emergency vehicle operations, were assigned to teams as follows:

Awareness

- NC Association of Fire Chiefs, Lead
- Professional Fire Fighters & Paramedics of NC
- North Carolina State Firemen's Association
- Volunteer Safety Workers Compensation Fund
- North Carolina Association of Rescue and EMS
 - Set a goal for measuring achievement, **25 in 5!**
 - Develop a campaign to change attitudes and enhance awareness of emergency vehicle operation safety at the chief officer level.
 - Analyze and define the scope of the problem to include geo-based data.
 - Display activity geographically and by county.
 - Issue a position statement with simple guidelines and seeking commitment statements from the fire service leadership.

Training

- Volunteer Safety Workers Compensation Fund, Lead
- NC Association of Fire Chiefs
- Office of State Fire Marshal
- NC Department of Community Colleges

- North Carolina Society of Fire-Rescue Instructors
 - Promote training on EVO at all levels
 - Advocate for certification of operators
 - Seek out training resources from all available partners
 - VFIS
 - PFFPNC
 - NVFC
 - Seek out and provide risk management training for fire service leadership
 - Take strong position on evaluating and training for privately owned vehicle operations related to emergency incident response.

Regulation

- NC State Firemen's Association, Lead
- NC Association of Fire Chiefs
- North Carolina Association of Rescue and EMS
- Professional Fire Fighters & Paramedics of NC
- NC Fire & Rescue Commission
 - Identify regulatory/statutory options
 - Could include EVO licensing options like CDL.
 - Seek the elimination of exemptions to safety requirements.

Remaining Priorities

The conference participants recognize that there are other important and ongoing issues considered secondary to **25 in 5!**, but worthy of action by affected agencies.

NIMS

\$1.0 MIL for local training
NIMS 300/400 due in 09/30/07
Documentation of qualifications to teach
Instruction
Class popularity
Standards/accepted classes

Fire Fighter and Rescue Worker Health and Wellness

Cost VS Liability
PSOB – Heart Attack Case Rulings

Workers Comp Issues

Instructor status and coverage
Compensation Calculations
Instructors
Part time activities
Presumptive Law

Fire & Life Safety Issues

Fire Safe Cigarette Initiative
Sprinkler Issue
Child Passenger Safety Seat – Losing \$1.0 Mil Funding

Funding for SAFER