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State Fire Marshal News

Ohio Department of Commerce • Division of State Fire Marshal

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Operation "Safe Stay" Gets Underway

by Tracie Boyd, Code Enforcement Bureau

The "Operation Safe Stay" program was created on June 16, 2014, when Ohio Governor John R. Kasich signed House Bill (HB) 486 into law. Among other things, HB 486 authorized the Ohio Department of Commerce, Division of State Fire Marshal (SFM) to develop the "Operation Safe Stay" program. This program allows SFM to publically designate as a "Safe Stay" hotel those hotels and extended stay facilities in Ohio that consistently meet the highest level of Ohio Fire Code (OFC)-based fire and life safety standards and Ohio Revised Code (ORC) based sanitary guidelines.

All hotels in the State of Ohio must be inspected by and receive a license to operate from the SFM and must annually renew that license. All hotel licenses expire on December 31 of each calendar year. Renewal applications are submitted to the SFM in the fall of each year and the SFM's Code Enforcement Bureau (CEB) conducts an annual inspection of each facility throughout the fall and early winter. CEB inspectors may also conduct inspections throughout the course of the year due to a complaint.

When conducting these inspections, CEB inspectors are looking to ensure that each facility is in compliance with both the sanitary standards that hotel facilities are required to follow pursuant to the Ohio Revised Code (ORC) and with all applicable safety provisions of the Ohio Fire Code (OFC).

Because many hotels in the state routinely comply with the ORC and OFC standards, the Ohio Business Compliance Incentive program was developed. The program is a transformative approach to regulations and encourages compliance with regulations while safeguarding Ohioans. The program was developed as a way to reward consistently compliant businesses and to incentivize those that may be close to full compliance.

Under the Safe Stay program, the SFM may designate a qualifying licensed hotel as a "Safe Stay Hotel" if it meets certain requirements. Essentially, a hotel may qualify for participation in the program and be designated as an Ohio Safe Stay hotel if they meet the following requirements:

1. For a period of 24 consecutive months, the hotel must maintain a valid license to operate, must timely submit its' renewal application (on or before October 1), and must have been in compliance with all applicable ORC and OFC requirements; and

2. For a period of 60 consecutive months, there must not have been a finding of nuisance against the facility or a conviction for lewdness, assignation, prostitution, or felony drug activity based on conduct that occurred at the hotel property (or in some cases against the facility operator).

If during the course of an inspection, CEB inspectors find violations of the applicable ORC or OFC rules and regulations, the facility will not qualify for Safe Stay status until they are violation free for 24 consecutive months and meet the other program requirements. There is one exception to this rule: "minor violations."

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A Message from State Fire Marshal Larry L. Flowers

As December rolls around each year, I take the opportunity to reflect on all of the things that have happened at the State Fire Marshal's office (SFM) during the year. And let me tell you – 2016 didn't disappoint! This year has been full of exciting new additions and changes, and I want to take a moment to share with you some of the great things the men and women of SFM have accomplished this year with the support of the Ohio Department of Commerce and Commerce Director Jacqueline T. Williams.

First and foremost, without a great team in place, accomplishing great things just isn't possible. This was a year of change throughout SFM, but I am eagerly looking forward to seeing what our new staff members can achieve. Our first big hire was that of Chief Deputy Jeff Hussey. From there, we added new chiefs in three of our bureaus: Chief Bill Spurgeon of the Code Enforcement Bureau and Chief Danitra Butler of the Testing & Registration Bureau joined us in October, and Chief Ken Klouda of the Fire Prevention Bureau stepped up to the leading role in the bureau in November. Finally, in December, we added Public Information Officer Kelly Stincer to the team. I am all about putting the right people in the right places, and I know these individuals have hit the ground running with our current staff to continue the great work of the office.

While we worked hard on filling key vacancies at SFM, staff members also worked hard to bring necessary upgrades to our campus in Reynoldsburg thanks to the Capital Improvement Budget. Currently, our cafeteria kitchen is undergoing much needed renovations, and the Forensic Lab will be upgraded in three phases. Some other construction will be happening in 2017, all with the goal of making our office as efficient as possible for our staff and customers.

Changes also came in the form of upgrades to the Ohio Fire Academy (OFA) in 2016. More and more firefighters are looking to become EMTs and paramedics, and the staff at the OFA looked into ways to meet that growing demand. We opened the Center for EMS in October, which will house all of our Emergency Medical Services (EMS) courses, allowing more room for hands-on training. And we will team up with our great educational partner, the Central Ohio Technical College (COTC), to offer our first-ever paramedic course next year.

The men and women in the OFA also worked hard to secure an Assistance to Firefighters Grant through the Department of Homeland Security to purchase a driving simulator for use beginning in the spring. And finally, the OFA launched a new online registration system and upgraded classrooms and courses to meet the technology demands of today's fire service.

Speaking of meeting the demands of the fire service, the Fire & Explosion Investigation Bureau (FEIB) added a new K9 unit to the team. Investigator Jeff Heft and K9 Dolan completed training in August and have been on the move ever since. Their location in the southern part of the state ensures we have a quick response to any fires in that area that require the help of a K9 unit. We hope to add another team to the mix in 2017.

Finally, we have continued our commitment to offer grants for training and equipment to better prepare Ohio's firefighters for whatever may come their way. We continue to offer the Equipment and Training Reimbursement Grants and Revolving Loan, as we have for years. The MARCS Grant remains a popular grant, and fire departments have until December 31st to apply for funding. Finally, we are still offering the Firefighter I Grant and the Bureau of Workers' Compensation's Volunteer Firefighter I Grant with the ongoing goal of training Ohio firefighters to a higher level. We are proud to say we have awarded $5.2 million in grants in 2016, and hope to continue that trend into the New Year.

All of these efforts point to one thing: being our best to give our customers the best. As you can see, we are already looking ahead to 2017, and we will continue to commit our time and resources to bettering Ohio's fire service, and strive to put our best foot forward for the fire service and all of Ohio.

TRAINING CORNER: Driving Simulator

by Superintendent Steve Goheen, Ohio Fire Academy

Research indicates that there is a significant need for "hands-on" driving training in the fire service. Many national reports show that fire department apparatus and POV accidents moved to the number one cause of fatalities in the fire service. Training is key in reducing the current trend.

To that end, the Ohio Fire Academy (OFA) applied for and was awarded an Assistance to Firefighters Grant through the Department of Homeland Security to purchase a Mobile Driving Simulation Lab. The goal of the grant is to protect the health and safety of the public and firefighting personnel against fire and fire-related hazards. The OFA Mobile Driving Simulator Committee worked diligently over several months to research the types of products available in the marketplace and made site visits to the annual Fire Department Instructors Conference in Indianapolis as well as companies located in Michigan and New York. After careful consideration, the committee recommended Doron Precision Systems, Inc. in Binghamton, NY as they were able to meet all of the specification requirements.

The purpose of this lab is to save first responder lives through lecture and hands-on practical training using the most current simulation technology. This will result in:

- Risk reduction of lost time injuries due to preventable accidents
- Reduction of agency spending on claims/repairs to apparatus
- Delivery of initial and refresher training to Ohio's new and veteran first responders
- Raising the bar for safety for all Ohio emergency vehicle operators

The order has been placed with the vendor and this state of the art lab is scheduled to be available to bring to your training site in the spring of 2017.

For additional information please contact Dan Swords, Fire Training Supervisor, at daniel.swords@com.state.oh.us or 614-752-7160.

"Safe Stay" continued...

If, during an inspection, the CEB inspector finds only "minor violations" at the facility, the facility may still qualify for Safe Stay designation. For the purpose of the program, a "minor violation" is defined as a violation that does not pose an immediate threat to life or property and that can be and is corrected during the course of the inspection (i.e., before the inspector leaves the premises).

A hotel that does not meet the above criteria will not be designated as a Safe Stay facility. All hotels that do receive the "Safe Stay" designation will be allowed to advertise their status as such – through print and/or social media. They will also receive a decal that can be displayed in their lobby window. The presence of the logo will signify to the public that the facility has been inspected and has consistently met the highest level of ORC and OFC-based fire, life safety, and sanitary standards. In addition, a list of hotel facilities that have been designated as Safe Stay facilities will be posted on the SFM's website which will be updated nightly.

During the month of January 2017, the SFM will be conducting several regional information sessions regarding the program for members of the hotel industry and other interested parties. For more information about the Operation Safe Stay program, or to find out more about the regional meetings, please contact the SFM's CEB at 614-728-5460 or toll-free at 1-888-276-0303.

Meet the New Chiefs!

The State Fire Marshal's office welcomed some new faces in 2016 to lead various bureaus of the office. Take a few moments to get to know these chiefs a little better!

Chief Deputy Jeff Hussey, Chief Deputy State Fire Marshal

Chief Deputy Jeff Hussey joined the State Fire Marshal's Office in August 2016 following his retirement as fire chief of Granville Township in Licking County, where he worked since 2006. Chief Deputy Hussey served as a firefighter/ paramedic at several Central Ohio departments over a 33-year career, including Mifflin Township and Westerville.

He is a graduate of Franklin University in Columbus and completed the Ohio Fire Executive program in 2009. Hussey is an accredited Ohio fire chief through the Ohio Fire Chiefs Association.

Chief Deputy Hussey's goal is to ensure that the DSFM is closely aligned with the needs of Ohio's businesses, residents and first responders. He embraces an open, approachable style and is working to build strong relationships with the fire service and industry partners across the state.

He and his wife, Patty, have four children and live in Granville.

Chief William (Bill) Spurgeon, Code Enforcement Bureau

Chief Bill Spurgeon joined the State Fire Marshal's office in October 2016. He brings more than thirty years of public service to the agency and most recently served as the Director of Public Safety in Newark, Ohio. Spurgeon was a Newark firefighter, serving in a variety of roles in his time with the department.

He graduated Cum Laude from Mount Vernon Nazarene University, Central Ohio Technical College (COTC) and has completed the Ohio Fire Executive Program. He is the chairperson for the COTC Fire Science Advisory Committee and Alumni Committee and has taught classes in the Fire Science Program at the college.

He employs a servant-based leadership model to lead his group of code compliance educators and their goal is to exceed customer expectations while eliminating the threat of fire. Bill's professional philosophy is simple "try to leave government a little better than you found it".

He and his wife, Susan, have two adult children and reside in Newark.

Meet the New Chiefs!...continued

Chief Danitra Butler, Testing & Registration Bureau

Chief Danitra Butler became the chief of the Testing & Registration Bureau in October 2016. She is a Department of Commerce veteran, having worked in both the Division of Liquor Control and the Division of Real Estate & Professional Licensing since December 2001. Prior to coming to Commerce, she worked at Chase Mortgage Corporation, Merck-Medco Rx and Alliance Data Systems.

She has a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Capital University and a Master of Arts in Practical Theology from Ashland University.

Butler has a strong background in the administration of licensure programs from her previous work as the Enforcement Chief in Real Estate & Professional Licensing, where her duties included overseeing the administration of the appraiser licensing and certification program.

In her new role, Butler's first priority is to modernize the testing process for licensees who are required to take and pass an exam as part of the licensing process. The new testing process will include improved testing opportunities and more convenient locations to better serve applicants.

She and her husband, Wil, live in Reynoldsburg with their two sons.

Chief Ken Klouda, Fire Prevention Bureau

Chief Ken Klouda became the head of the Fire Prevention Bureau in November 2016. Most recently, he served as Assistant Chief of the bureau, a role he assumed in November 2013. He joined the State Fire Marshal's office in December 2010 as a Fire Training Officer 2. Before coming to Columbus, Klouda began his career in the fire service in 2003 at the Mantua-Shalersville Fire Department in Mantua, Ohio as a firefighter/EMT-paramedic. Klouda also served that role at the Hiram Fire Department in Hiram, Ohio. While at Hiram Fire Department he facilitated fire inspections in the Village of Hiram and Hiram Township.

Klouda has extensive education and training, including an associate's degree in Fire Protection Technology and a bachelor of science degree in Emergency Management from the University of Akron.

Chief Klouda is looking forward to having the Fire Prevention Bureau be the forefront of Community Risk Reduction in the state of Ohio. He feels the bureau's role as leaders in the state is to help every community address their fire and life safety risks.

Ken and his wife, Shannon, live in Pataskala with their son.

Bureau Spotlight: The Ohio Fire Academy

Mission: "To be recognized as the premier provider in Ohio and a national leader in the development and delivery of fire, EMS and Emergency Responder education and training programs"

In 1967, the Ohio Fire Academy (OFA) was established to provide firefighter training for emergency response personnel statewide. The OFA began with a few props donated by the initial instructors or equipment borrowed from local fire departments. The burn building was initially a metal shipping container and served the Academy until a concrete building was constructed. Years later in 2002, the OFA dedicated the modern engineered high intensity building.

Currently, the Academy occupies approximately 65 acres of the Ohio Fire Marshal's complex. The fire ground consists of many training props such as a propane fueled car fire, rack storage, farm equipment and ground fires props. The extrication, trench rescue and confined space areas provide safe real-life training scenarios to test the newest firefighter to veterans in the fire service. The OFA annually updates and adds to the grounds to meet the ever changing needs of the fire service.

The "Close to Home" program was created to meet one of the biggest challenges today's fire service is facing. Fewer volunteers and more part-time firefighters paired with everyone's busy lives, creates an obstacle for training away from home. The "Close to Home" program brings training right to Ohio's fire service at little to no cost. The OFA currently has a fleet of mobile resources, including the Grain Bin Rescue, Fire Behavior Lab, Search & Rescue Trailer and Fire Blast Trailer. Coming in summer 2017, the Academy is adding the Mobile Driving Simulator where students will be able to train in handling operating emergency equipment and the unique situations that equipment can create.

The Academy strives to continuously evolve to meet the always changing training environment, each year touching the careers and lives of more than 15,000 firefighters. The new Center for EMS opened in October. It will house Emergency Medical Technician and Paramedic class in partnership with Central Ohio Technical College (COTC). This dedicated building will provide larger classroom spaces and a permanent lab facility for students.

A new online registration system offers a "one stop shop" for class registration, dorm reservations and related class materials to streamline the process for busy students. Also, learning today is different than twenty years ago – the Academy moved from textbooks to laptops. To meet the technology demands of today's fire service, classrooms have new modern equipment, and instructors are updating our courses to be compatible with all forms of learning.

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The Ohio Fire Academy...continued

New class offerings are always in the works at the OFA to continue training Ohio's firefighters to be the best they can be. Starting this winter, the Academy will have Fire Officer 3 and Fire Officer 4 courses. It's important to the OFA to continue developing those who are leading the fire service to ensure a bright future and strong infrastructure within fire departments for years to come in Ohio.

Looking ahead to 2017, the Academy wants to continue providing state of the art education to the rapidly changing needs of the modern fire service.

Code Corner: Did you know?

The Ohio Revised Code and Ohio Fire Code require K-12 schools with 20 or more pupils to instruct and train children by means of drills or rapid dismissals? Hand in hand with this is the requirement for schools to submit a copy of the fire drill records to the Division of State Fire Marshal twice a year. These records allow the State Fire Marshal and local fire departments to ensure that, in the event of an emergency, children have been trained to leave the building in the shortest possible time without confusion. The records shall be submitted half way through the school year and again at the end. The records can be submitted via snail mail (8895 E. Main Street, Reynoldsburg, Ohio 43068), fax (614-728-5168) or email.

Highlighting Ohio's Fire Service: Cedarville Township Fire Department

Chief: Interim Chief Kyle E. Miller

Membership makeup: One career fire chief, one administrative assistant position, 43 volunteer fire and EMS providers. Previous to Chief Baldwin's retirement in June, the fire chief and assistant fire chief were career positions. We have not filled the assistant chief position and the township trustees are currently evaluating how Cedarville Township can be best served by paid personnel in 2017 and beyond.

Number of stations: One centrally located station in the Village of Cedarville.

Apparatus types: 1999 Pierce Engine, 1985 Pierce 95' Platform, 2012 Rosenbauer 3000 gal. Tanker, 1994 Summit Rescue, 2004 Ford Brush Truck, 2008 Ford/Horton Type III ambulance, 1997 Ford/Horton type III ambulance, 2004 Ford Excursion Command Vehicle, 2008 Ford F150 Command Vehicle, 1999 Wells Cargo MCI trailer

Area covered: Our jurisdiction covers 55 square miles, a population of 5,875 (9,675 with seasonal increase) and consists of Cedarville Township, the Village of Cedarville, and the northern half of Ross Township by contract. Located in the village is Cedarville University, a private, nonprofit school which has around 3,700 students and 625 faculty and staff. Services offered: Fire, Rescue, ALS medical care

About our department: Our fire department was organized in 1851, and was known as the Neptune Fire Company. It was staffed with volunteers, just as we are today. We have always received great respect for the job we do. We are today, in part, for the foundation laid by those that came before us. We have always received great support from the community and we strive to provide the level of service they expect and deserve. We respond AMAR with our neighboring jurisdictions on a frequent basis. We have worked hard to obtain an ISO Class 4 rating which saves home and business owners on their insurance premiums. We are dispatched through a countywide CAD system that includes enhanced 911.

Our volunteers take pride in being the only true volunteers in Greene County. They do not receive compensation from the township for their time making calls, training, and performing public services like fire prevention in schools and churches. The members belong to the Cedarville Fireman's Association which sponsors fundraisers to help support the mission and needs of the fire department.

We continuously try to recruit year round residents to volunteer but have found greater success in recruiting Cedarville University students. Of our current roster, 37 members are students, graduates or faculty/staff members of the university. We pay for new members' training and generally only have their service for a few years. We are a transient department regularly turning over 1/3 of our membership yearly. We are blessed to have the availability, youth, enthusiasm and strong desire to serve the community that the students bring. The challenge we face is the experience level of our members and maintaining an adequate level of staffing when the university is not in session. We are very thankful for those that serve the community by volunteering with us.

State Fire Marshal's Office Getting a "Face Lift"

by Chad Wissinger & Jeff Baucher

With the support of Governor John R. Kasich, the Ohio Legislature and Commerce Director Jacqueline T. Williams, the Division of State Fire Marshal (SFM) has started a renovation project that will improve the environmental systems, security devices and complete needed upgrades to several parts of the buildings on SFM's campus. The Capital Improvements are based on the facility's needs, and to make the buildings more efficient and able to utilize growing technologies. The improvements made today will extend the life of the buildings and allow the SFM office to continue meeting its goals of education, safety, investigation, inspection and environmental regulations for years to come.

This project will be removing and replacing inefficient and mechanically/financially burdensome heating and ventilation systems; improving the security and safety of the staff and guests by integrating new technology; repairing and resurfacing acres of hard surface roadways and parking areas and

renovating a kitchen that serves guests, students and staff. This renovation project also includes major upgrades to the Forensic Lab work spaces. This includes tearing out the current hardware that was installed in the 1970's, creating new rooms for explosive analyses, fire debris extractions and latent print processing, and a new digital evidence lab. The renovation project for the lab will be conducted in three phases, ensuring the continuity of the Lab's operations. Please excuse the work during the December-July time period.

For visitors to the SFM office between now and the end of July 2017, please expect altered parking options, cordoned off areas and alternate egress patterns. We will post any changes before they occur. We thank you for your understanding and look forward to our newly renovated facilities.

Welcome to the team!

The Fire and Explosion Investigation Bureau (FEIB) is continuing to add to its K-9 team to help reach the goal of having four Accelerant Detection Canines. With the recent addition of Dolan and handler Jeff Heft to the team, FEIB is at three accelerant detection canines and one explosive detection canine, with another team to begin training during the spring of 2017. We will be detailing the unit in upcoming newsletters! Welcome, Dolan!

Arson Seminars: Informative & Invaluable

State Fire Marshal staff hosted their Arson Seminar for Ohio Judges and Prosecutors in Chillicothe on November 17th. This seminar provided training on arson and related topics such as exploding targets, fireworks IED's and canine resources. The learning opportunity is invaluable for our judicial community.

These seminars are required by the Ohio Supreme Court to ensure Ohio's justice system is well trained on these very "misunderstood" topics, such as arson. We anticipate hosting another seminar in the spring of 2017 on a yet to be determined date.

Help us out!

We want your department in our next fire department highlight! Email Public Information Officer Kelly Stincer for details at kelly.stincer@com.state.oh.us or give her a call at (614) 752-7179!

Spread the Word!

We want to reach all Ohioans with fire safety messages and important updates from our office! That's why we have created another version of our newsletter just for the general public! Use this link to spread the word in your communities!

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