Alabama Fire College and Personnel Standards Commission

Annual Report FY 2014
A message from Executive Director Allan Rice

Thank you for reviewing our FY14 annual report. The members of the Firefighters Personnel Standards and Education Commission and staff of the Alabama Fire College appreciate the support of our state’s fire service and all of our partners as we complete another record-setting year. The total number of students served continues to increase, and this year we were privileged to train 25,979 individuals from Alabama, across the United States, and in other nations. We have continued to refine our training goals for each Alabama county, thus meeting the specific needs in each area of our state.

Our Regional Training Centers have proven to be very successful and are helping extend advanced training classes to all corners of Alabama. We have also been able to expand our mobile training fleet with the addition of a third Mobile Fire Trainer and an Emergency Driver Simulator. Likewise, the Campus Improvement Program at our main campus in Tuscaloosa is progressing, with the auditorium already completed and the new building scheduled to be open by this summer. As this exciting growth and expansion continues, please let us know how we can serve you better.

About the Alabama Fire College

The Alabama Fire College and Personnel Standards Commission is an educational institution with a rich history. An organized program of instruction for firefighters has existed in Alabama since 1936. The first session of the Alabama Fire College was held that year, and for the following three years, as a component of the Alabama Firemen’s Association annual conference. In 1940, the Fire College program was moved to the University of Alabama campus under the auspices of the State Department of Education’s former Trade and Industrial Division, where it continued to operate for eighteen years.

In 1955, the Alabama Legislature enacted a law that established the Alabama State Fire College as a separate state agency operating under the direct supervision of the State Superintendent of Education. The Fire College continued to provide educational offerings both on-campus in Tuscaloosa and through statewide extension efforts for another twenty-five years under this arrangement. In 1980, the State Board of Education formally placed the Fire College under the administrative control of Shelton State Community College as part of its Technical Division. By directive of the State Board, Fire College employees were appointed to the staff of Shelton State and were given the same benefits as other Shelton State employees.

In 1975, the Alabama Firefighters Personnel Standards Commission (“the Commission”) was created by legislative act. The intended functions and duties of this agency are enumerated in §36-32-5 of the Code of Alabama. At the time of this legislation, there was no formal link between the Commission and the Fire College, or between the Commission and any educational institution, entity or system.

The Fire College began offering fire science courses for college credit on a statewide basis through the community college system in 1985. This marked a pivotal transition from strictly technical offerings to a more definitive academic orientation for the institution. Because these courses were now transcripted for college credit and thus subject to the standards and guidelines of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the Fire College more fully assumed the general nature and character of a postsecondary institution in terms of operations and structure.

In 1988, the Alabama Legislature formally merged the Commission and the Fire College, and then granted the organization full autonomy and independent status in 2012. Today the Fire College functions primarily as an educational institution with the Commission as its board of trustees. Once the Commission approves specific certification standards, Fire College staff implements the educational and training programs necessary to support the needs of the fire service. The Fire College currently employs forty-seven full time employees and an average of seventy-five adjunct instructors at any given time. In addition to the main campus in Tuscaloosa, the Fire College operates ten regional offices in the state and a network of 19 regional training and extension centers. In fiscal year 2014, the Fire College provided educational offerings and training experiences to 25,979 students in Alabama and several other states and foreign countries.
Alabama Firefighters Personnel Standards & Education Commission

The Alabama Firefighters Personnel Standards and Education Commission is established by Section 36-32-2 of the Code of Alabama 1975 and is made up of seven appointed members. As of April 17th, 2012, the Governor and Lieutenant Governor each appoint one member. The Alabama Firefighters Association, The Professional Fire Fighters of Alabama, Alabama Association of Fire Chiefs, and the Alabama Association of Volunteer Fire Departments each appoint one member. The State Fire Marshal serves as a member by virtue of his position. All appointees must receive confirmation from the Alabama Senate. Among other duties established by law, the Commission certifies individual firefighters meeting the minimum standards established, as well as training and education programs for the fire service in Alabama.

Chairman Alberto “Butch” Zaragoza was appointed to the Alabama Fire College and Personnel Standards Commission in 1999 by the Governor. He joined Vestavia Fire Department in 1969, and has risen through the ranks to the position of Fire Chief. He is currently the mayor of Vestavia Hills.

Vice Chairman Edward Paulk is currently serving on the Alabama Fire College and Personnel Standards Commission as the State Fire Marshal. Mr. Paulk has been in the Fire Marshal’s office since 1984 and was appointed in April 2006 to serve on the commission. The State Fire Marshal is appointed by State Legislation.

Commissioner Russell Ledbetter was appointed to Alabama Fire College and Personnel Standards Commission in 2014 and will represent the Alabama Association of Firefighters. He began his fire service career as a volunteer firefighter in 1979 at Palmerdale Fire District. He was certified in FF I/II and became a paramedic in 1986. He has also served at Cahaba Heights Fire District, Bessemer Fire Department, and Trussville Fire & Rescue. He holds an Associates in Applied Science from the Community College of the Air Force and a bachelors degree from Athens State in Public Safety Administration. He completed the Executive Fire Officer program at the National Fire Academy in 2003. He has been Fire Chief at Trussville Fire & Rescue since 1998.

Commissioner Roy Mott was appointed to the Alabama Fire College and Personnel Standards Commission in 2012 by the Governor. He joined Thomasville Fire Department in 1960, where he served as Fire Chief for 17 years. He retired from the Alabama Forestry Commission where he supervised the Rural Community Fire Protection Program and designed and supervised the statewide communication system for the Alabama Forestry Commission and volunteer fire departments.

Commissioner Roger Dale Wyatt, representative for the PFFA, began his tenure January 2007. Commissioner Wyatt has worked for the Birmingham Fire and Rescue Service since 1991 and is currently a Captain assigned to St. 32. Mr. Wyatt holds a B.S. in Public Safety Administration from Athens State, an AAS from Jefferson State and NREMT-Paramedic training from UAB.

Commissioner Joey Darby began his fire service career in 1992 as a member of the Walnut Hill Volunteer Fire Department in Walnut Hill, FL. He joined the Auburn Fire Division in 1994 and rose to the rank of Battalion Chief before leaving to assume his present duties as the Fire Chief of the City of Foley in January 2009. He also served as the Fire Chief of the Stillwaters Fire District from 2005 through 2008. He has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Agricultural Engineering from Auburn University and has completed numerous executive classes at the National Fire Academy. Chief Darby was elected in 2013 to represent the Alabama Association of Fire Chiefs as their first appointment on the Commission.

Commissioner Mike Green was appointed to the Alabama Fire College and Personal Standards Commission in 2014 by the Alabama Association of Volunteer Fire Departments, as their first appointment on the Commission. He has been in the fire service for over thirty years. Green has worked and/or volunteered in all aspects of EMS and the fire service including ambulance services and both paid and volunteer fire departments. He has completed a number of courses through the Alabama Fire College and the National Fire Academy. Green is a retired Assistant Chief with Montgomery Fire & Rescue and the former Fire Chief of the Pike Road Volunteer Fire Department. Green is currently the president of the Montgomery County Association of Volunteer Fire Departments and president of the Alabama Association of Volunteer Fire Departments. Green also serves on the Southeast Alabama EMS Council. He is also a member of the North Montgomery County Volunteer Fire Department and Waugh-Mount Meigs Volunteer Fire Department.
The Alabama Fire College strive to ensure that every firefighter and EMS provider in the state has access to high-quality training in their local communities.

In 2014:

- 23,646 students were trained off of the main campus
- Partnerships with local fire departments saved $2.1 million dollars to taxpayers
- County needs are assessed and goals are targeted to increase firefighter safety
The Alabama Fire College reaches students all over the nation and world. These students may come to Alabama or AFC instructors and staff may travel to their location to offer training. Many of the firefighters from out of state have been students in prior years and they continue to utilize AFC because they expect excellence. The nation's flags shown below indicate the foreign nationals that have been served by AFC in FY2014.

The Stats: A Five-Year Comparison

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<th></th>
<th>Total Students</th>
<th>Certified VFFs</th>
<th>State Funding</th>
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<td>2009</td>
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The Stats: A Five-Year Comparison
Workplace Safety Training

90 courses - 1,851 students - 20,706 hours

The Workplace Safety Training Program of AFC extended AFC’s impact throughout the United States by reaching Native American tribes in seven states from New York and Alabama to Oregon and California as well as public sector emergency responders in five southeastern states with free training.

WST also met its goal to increase its fee-supported training courses by 25% over the previous year’s number. Finally, they submitted an application to extend the NIEHS funding for another five years and expect to hear the results by May 2015.
Emergency Driver Simulation Program

72 classes - 1,125 students - 4,500 hours

In FY2014, we introduced a new facet of training technology to our students. By partnering with Fort Payne Fire Department to acquire an Emergency Vehicle Driver Simulation Trainer, we were able to teach a course that impacts firefighter safety while responding and operating apparatus.

- Realistic scenarios allow for mistakes and learning in a safe environment
- High-impact training directed at known response issues
- Mobile unit available in all parts of the state

Third Mobile Fire Trainer Unit is a Welcome Addition to Mobile Training Fleet

122 classes
2,847 students
16,646 hours

A third mobile fire unit was placed into service in FY2014 thanks to a partnership with Smith's Station Volunteer Fire Department. The third unit will allow AFC to meet the increased demand for live fire training in a safe and controlled environment.

- Safe alternative to using donated structures
- Provides firefighters with realistic hands-on scenarios
The Alabama Fire College is certain that 2015 will be an exciting year.

The new auditorium is complete and is serving the needs of the Alabama Fire Service. The auditorium was the site of several state and national events in the Fall of 2014.

In addition to the auditorium, the new apparatus bay and classroom building will provide much needed space and capabilities to the campus. The drill field facilities will also be undergoing a significant improvement with the construction of a cityscape-style prop for more realistic training opportunities.

In FY2015, the Alabama Fire College will:
Continue to expand participation in all student programs.
Expand the Distance Delivery offering of the Certified Volunteer Firefighter.
Fully launch the AFC Online program to support fire and EMS courses.
Increase access to EMS courses in all areas of Alabama.

The Alabama Fire College will continue to serve the firefighters of Alabama in 2015.