



February 1, 2020

The Honorable Kate Brown
Office of the Governor
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301-4047

Dear Governor Brown:

After reviewing the performance of State Fire Marshal, Chief Jim Walker, and his staff, the members of the Governor's Fire Service Policy Council continue to be well pleased with the great work done by Chief Walker and his team. Oregon is fortunate to have such a high-achieving team, with many states looking to us for best practices. With the rapid growth occurring in Oregon and ever-increasing demands being placed on the State Fire Marshal, we are concerned about their future capacity and will be monitoring this closely.

I would be remiss to not mention our sadness at the departure of Heidi Moawad from your office. She was a tremendous advocate for the fire service and will be missed. On the other hand, we have enjoyed getting to know and working with Constantin Severe. He has already proven that he also will be an outstanding advocate for the fire service, and we thank you for his appointment.

Respectfully,

Les Hallman
Chair, Governor's Fire Service Policy Council

CC: Superintendent Travis Hampton
Constantin Severe

Attachment

Governor's Fire Service Policy Council

Biennial Report

2018-2019

Over 2018 and 2019, the Governor's Fire Service Policy Council, under the leadership of Chair Les Hallman and Vice-Chair Mark Kruetzer, continued providing advice and guidance on issues of common interest, policies, and affairs that affect the fire protection and life safety of the residents of Oregon.

This biennium, the council welcomed new membership from Chris McLaren representing Casualty and Property Insurance, Chief John Clark representing the League of Oregon Cities, and Chief Jack Carriger representing the Oregon Volunteer Firefighters Association. We saw the departure of Steven Patterson representing Casualty and Property Insurance and our public at large member, John Dimick. We thank you for the reappointments of Chief Les Hallman with the Oregon Fire Chief Association and Mark Kruetzer with the Oregon Fire District Directors Association, who both will serve their second consecutive terms.

COUNCIL DISCUSSIONS IN 2018/2019

Aircraft Hangar Foam

In 2018, the Governor's Fire Service Policy Council discussed the usage of foam for fire protection in aircraft hangars. By their nature, aircraft hangars pose unique challenges for the fire protection of contents, structure, occupants, and firefighting operations. Protecting these assets requires addressing a hangar's unique challenges. Large quantities of liquid jet fuel are present and aircraft maintenance activities offer a variety of potential ignition sources. As many in the aviation industry are seeking greater allowances from installing foam fire suppression systems in aircraft hangars, the Office of State Fire Marshal worked in collaboration with the Building Codes Division to evaluate current codes to provide a reasonable degree of protection from fire for life and property in aircraft hangars, based on sound engineering principles, test data, and field experience.

Ag-Exempt Task Force

There is no current consensus on how best to approach new and existing agriculturally exempt buildings and onsite crop processing using hazardous/mechanical methods. Fire departments and code officials are handling new construction conditions and ongoing maintenance inspections differently across Oregon. This has posed challenges with access and water supply related to agricultural exempt structures. In 2019, the council formed a task force to identify and outline fire service and fire code related issues, identify and outline authorities having jurisdictional roles and authorities, and identify a direction and best practices for implementing a statewide solution. Task force work is ongoing and expected to sunset in 2020 following the delivery of a recommendation to the council.

High-Density Residential Housing Task Force

In July of 2019, the Governor's Fire Service Policy Council created the High-Density Residential Housing Task Force following the tragic Villebois Community fire that destroyed an unfinished apartment complex, approximately 16 homes, and several vehicles; making it the largest fire in Wilsonville history. The task force was charged with researching issues surrounding these types

of incidents and developing recommendations to the council to mitigate and/or reduce risks and prevent similar catastrophic events. The task force is expected to submit its findings and recommendations to the council early 2020.

Behavioral Health in the Fire Service

The GFSPC closely followed SB 507 and its subsequent passage and signature by you into law. We are pleased that this important topic was discussed by the Legislature and protections for our firefighters put into place under the new law. We will continue to advocate for open discussions with the Oregon Fire Service on firefighter behavioral health along with best practices on prevention and treatment.

INFORMATIONAL REPORTS:

Council on Wildfire Response

It was a privilege to be appointed to the Council on Wildfire Response to represent Oregon's Fire Chiefs and local/structural fire departments. State Fire Marshal Jim Walker served as an ex-officio member of the 40-member council, along with state lawmakers, industry, state agency, business, community, NGO, tribal, and other stakeholders. Chief Deputy Mariana Ruiz-Temple and OSFM staff served on the Suppression Committee to evaluate Oregon's coordinated fire suppression response structure. All participating staff had the opportunity to expand their knowledge base and build relationships with non-traditional partners. Chief Walker and staff appreciate your unwavering commitment to the safety and security of Oregonians.

2019 Oregon Fire Code

In October 2019, the Office of State Fire Marshal adopted one of the most important tools used by the fire service to promote fire and life safety for all Oregonians. After 36 months of work with more than 150 members of the Oregon Fire Code Committee, the OSFM approved the 2019 Oregon Fire Code. The Oregon update to the 2018 International Fire Code (IFC) serves as the manual to protect the public from the hazards of fire, explosions, or dangerous conditions in buildings and other facilities. For more than two years, the fire code committee met each month and reviewed the 2018 IFC in great detail. Members came from the fire service, business and industry, partner agencies, and other interested parties. Each generously volunteered their time and expertise to provide input into the fire code that helps set the framework for a safer Oregon.

Listening and Understanding Tours

Over the past several years, structural fire jurisdictions throughout Oregon have responded to thousands of fires in the wildland urban interface (WUI), and residents are increasingly facing greater risk of large-scale fires. Wildfires in the WUI have caused the most deadly fires and billions in damages. The largest-loss fires nationally in 2018, the last year for which data is available, all occurred in the WUI. At the same time, more residents are moving to Oregon and into its wildland interface statewide. With the changing environment and the growing expectations, the OSFM organized a "Listening and Understanding" tour. OSFM staff met with members of the fire service as well as tribal and local planners to learn about their prevention needs to help shape a path forward.

Because of these statewide conversations, they identified three major themes: need for fire prevention resources, personnel, and codes/standards to help local jurisdictions address these

growing challenges. The OSFM is proposing to address WUI prevention and mitigation needs through staffing dedicated to community risk reduction. The OSFM also is proposing another Salem based position to support policy efforts to establish baseline level of fire protection through legislative and code changes.

Bigfoot

In June 2019, the OSFM proudly announced that a Pacific Northwest legend would join fire prevention activities statewide, particularly in the wildland urban interface and communities at greatest risk of wildfires and property loss. The Bigfoot campaign was largely successful in drawing attention and creating a bigger 'footprint' of wildfire prevention efforts around the state. Because Chief Walker and OSFM staff wanted people to believe in fire safety, whether camping, visiting Oregon, or recreating, staff created images and education materials showing Bigfoot outdoors, protecting his wilderness 'home.' Information was delivered through social media, online, and delivered to the Oregon fire service for distribution and education in their communities.

Hazardous Substance Online Reporting

In 2018, the OSFM's Community Right to Know Program transitioned from a paper process to an online reporting process. The transition followed nearly four years of work with partners and stakeholders, including reporting facilities, state agencies, emergency planners, and emergency responders. The result was a paperless solution to meet Oregon's specific reporting needs and the purpose of the Community Right to Know and Protection Act.

Beginning Jan. 1, 2018, facilities were able to access the online reporting portal called Community Right to Know Hazardous Substance Manager (CHS Manager) to submit their hazardous substance information. Over the course of the year, more than 12,000 facilities submitted their report online. CHS Manager also streamlined many internal processes to allow for increased fieldwork by compliance specialists. The focus of this fieldwork was to collaborate with the regulated industry to achieve compliance with reporting requirements.

2018 & 2019 Conflagration Report

The first day of summer brought the first conflagration of 2018 to Oregon, when OSFM's Green Team and five structural task forces responded to the Graham Fire near Lake Billy Chinook. The next conflagration, declared July 17, for the Substation Fire burning near Moro, Oregon. Just days later, another conflagration was declared for the Garner Complex in southwestern Oregon. In rapid succession, OSFM mobilized resources to California to aid in response to the Mendocino Complex; back to the gorge for the South Valley Fire; north from Garner and Taylor to the Sugarpine and Miles Fires; to the Memaloose 2 Fire in Mosier.

There was no respite until the evening of August 12, when OSFM's Agency Operations Center tracked the last resource safely home. Then on August 17, a conflagration was declared for the Stubblefield Fire near Condon, and on August 22, resources returned to Jackson County to assist in managing the Ramsey Canyon Fire. All resources were home for nearly a week before the Hugo Fire threatened homes in Josephine County, and the Red Team and four task forces mobilized to assist over Labor Day.

On October 8, OEM approached the OSFM with an Emergency Management Assistance Compact request for a Type III All-Hazards Incident Management Team of eight positions for a 14-day deployment to Florida in anticipation of Hurricane Michael's landfall. One of OSFM's Type II Incident Management Teams was mobilized, led by Chief Hallman, and departed Portland for Jacksonville, Florida. The team coordinated the re-establishment of infrastructures such as power, water, and transportation.

On October 13, Incident Commander Chief Kunze, along with combined OSFM and Oregon Department of Forestry's IMT, reported to Bay County in the Florida Panhandle. The unified IMT provided leadership to the county for emergency management response by deploying resources for search and rescue. The team then shifted into recover mode, helping residents obtain transitional housing and getting kids back into schools.

On October 14, the Klondike West Fire was declared a conflagration — the only October conflagration in history. OSFM's Red Team responded to the fire, which had been being managed by interagency teams for several months, along with five structural task forces. All structural resources were released on October 22, and it seemed that the 2018 fire season was over.

In the late evening of November 8, OSFM received word of an impending EMAC request for the Camp Fire in California. The following day, the AOC immediately began mobilizing 15 strike teams of engines. Ultimately, Oregon provided 287 personnel from 78 agencies. The majority of the resources worked six 24-hour shifts, and all Oregon resources were back in-station by November 21.

In April 2019, a combination of heavy precipitation and snowmelts led to flood-level conditions on the Pendleton Reservoir. As a result, the Bureau of Reclamation was forced to discharge excess flows into McKay Creek, which caused flooding of residences and roadways and damaging to public infrastructure in Pendleton and Umatilla County in April. You declared a disaster on April 15, and the OSFM mobilized Incident Management Teams members to support the joint response. The team, consisting of six members, provided support to address sewer back up and health concerns, public safety, and evacuations issues, in conjunction with local partners and the Type 3 team mobilized by Umatilla County.

By the morning of Oct. 26, 2019, the Kincade Fire in Sonoma County, California had consumed more than 30 square miles and destroyed an estimated 77 structures in just over 48 hours. The next day, 264 members from 68 Oregon fire agencies mobilized in 92 apparatus on their way to the incident. These resources made up 15 strike teams of engines, along with two Agency Representatives, Chief Mariana Ruiz-Temple and Chief Les Hallman from Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue. Not long after mobilizing, Chief Ruiz-Temple and six strike teams were diverted to an emerging fire (the Burris Fire) in Mendocino County. By Oct. 30, the Burris Fire was controlled to the point where all Oregon resources continued their original mission to the Kincade Fire. Demobilization and return to the state began on Nov. 2, with all resources either on their way home or moved to a third fire — the Ranch Fire in Tehama County — by Nov. 4. Seven Oregon strike teams and Chief Ruiz-Temple responded to the Ranch Fire. On the evening of Nov. 9, a

full 14 days after the initial notification from California, all Oregon resources were back in service at their home agencies.

Compared to 2018, this past summer was a welcomed relief. In 2019, there was not a single fire in the state that had threatened a community to the point that the local fire authority asked to invoke the Conflagration Act to utilize the statewide mutual aid system. This past summer also demonstrated the importance of a healthy mutual aid system. The system relies on strong partnerships and mutual aid at all levels; from the initial agency having jurisdiction, to their local mutual aid neighbors, to expanded mutual aid partners, to state and federal agencies, and ultimately to tapping into the statewide network through conflagration, to requesting intrastate mutual aid through EMAC. Strong working relationships and pre-planning for response remain the foundation of fire suppression in Oregon.