

DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES AND CODES

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS/INITIATIVES FOR 2010

The year 2010 has been extremely challenging for fire departments in New York State. Resources and funding were at a premium, and unfunded mandates made it difficult to provide adequate fire protection for the citizens of Albany. All of the Department's five major initiatives for 2010 related to challenges concerning funding for these mandates whether they were related to safety, manpower, or diversification.

1. Bulk Purchasing

In an effort to negotiate the lowest price possible for our equipment purchases, the Department has reached out to surrounding area fire departments to join us on a bulk purchasing initiative. At the present time, we have 13 departments involved in our consortium. We anticipate this number will nearly double in 2011. The recent purchase of mandated escape harnesses saved the City of Albany nearly \$70,000 using the bulk purchasing system.

2. Fire Act Grant

In 2009, New York State mandated that all firefighters be equipped with a "personal escape harness." In 2010, the Department applied for and was awarded a Fire Act grant in the amount of \$213,241 for the purpose of purchasing a harness, safety rope, and bail-out system for every member. The grant award also provided funds for a dozen members to participate in a train-the-trainer program.

Through this effort, the Department is instructing every member in the use of the rope and safety harness. The training requires each firefighter to use the harness system to safely bail out of a two-story window. A mock-up of a two story building front was built using funds under the grant. This "Bailout Training Simulator" will enable the Department to continue training as long as it is necessary.

3. Explorer Post #343

In our continuing efforts to increase the diversity of the Fire Department, we have worked extensively on minority recruitment strategies over the past several years. To acquaint young adults in the City of Albany with our services, the Department launched its new Explorer Post #343. This group consists of 12 young men and women who meet with Department members twice a month and focus on community service and receive an introduction to the Fire Department. The Explorer Post is a long-term strategy that we believe will further our relationships with the community and will develop a pipeline of minority youth interested in a career in the Albany Fire Department.

A new firefighter exam is scheduled for March 5, 2011. Packets of information have been assembled and are being distributed all across the City, including local schools,

churches, Ward Leaders, Hannaford Markets, Stewarts Shops, Albany Housing Authority, and at the Martin Luther King Career Day at the Empire State Plaza. It is hoped that the resulting eligibility list will provide a broad diversity of qualified candidates.

4. Adult EMT Class

Another component of the Department's recruitment efforts is the establishment of an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) evening class at Fire Department Headquarters. One of the eligibility requirements to become an Albany Firefighter is that each candidate must hold a current New York State EMT card. This requirement can sometimes be difficult for inner city young men and women. The evening class gives City residents preference to participate in the course.

5. Department Audit

In the City's efforts to streamline Department operations, the Command Staff worked extensively with PMF and Citygate Associates to complete a thorough review of the entire Department. The review required compilation of an extensive amount of data on staffing, response statistics, training records, management practices, and day-to-day administration and operations.