



# Pro Board Progress

National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications

February, 2007

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By all accounts, this year's Pro Board Advisory Committee Meeting and Conference on February 3rd in Orlando was a grand success. With over 65 attendees, 39 of our 44 Accredited Agencies were represented. This Newsletter features this meeting and the COA meeting held on February 2nd.

We received great feedback on the Conference, including this from David Jolly of the Virginia Department of Fire Programs. He writes: *"I would like to commend Amy, Fred, Dave and the Pro-Board staff for an excellent conference. It's not often that I can remember, attending such a worthwhile event. From the meeting on Friday throughout the program on Saturday I was impressed with the approach and commitment by everyone to make the Pro-Board continually better as an organization. Again, job well done."*

We conclude with a special tribute to Ken Elmore, retired Chair of the COA and Pro Board Accreditation Manager. Ken passed away in January.

Remember, we welcome your input to "Pro Board Progress". Please submit feedback as well as content for future issues to [editor@theproboard.org](mailto:editor@theproboard.org)

*Special thanks to George Luther who recorded our Orlando meeting on film.*



Chairman Jim Estepp opened this year's Advisory Committee meeting by welcoming the attendees. With nearly 90% of Accredited Agencies present, this year's Conference represents record attendance. Estepp gave special recognition to Fred Piechota, newly appointed Accreditation Manager and Chair of the Committee on Accreditation (COA), Dave Trebisacci, Program Manager and Amy Sturtevant, Certification Coordinator for their "behind the scenes" support of the Pro Board. Estepp also paid tribute to Ken Elmore, who recently passed away after a long battle with cancer. Ken was the Pro Board's first Accreditation Manager and served in that role for 5 1/2 years before retiring last summer. What a great job he did for the organization!

Estepp thanked George Luther for serving as Acting COA Chair during Ken's illness and congratulated Fred Piechota on becoming Accreditation Manager and COA Chair on a permanent basis. He also thanked George Luther, Kevin O'Connell, and Dave Trebisacci for coming together as a team to assure continuity of operations during Ken's absence.

Chairman Estepp noted some important points of activity the Board has accomplished over the past year including the launching of a new two part DVD program to help Accredited Agencies make their constituencies more aware of the benefits of Accreditation and Certification. Just last month, the Board met with the North American Fire Training Directors to discuss areas of mutual interest and pledged to continue this dialogue at future meetings. Finally, the Board of Directors this past September began a Long Range Strategic Planning Process, and after several one day planning retreats completed a Plan that will guide the Pro Board through the next decade and a half to the year 2020. Chairman Estepp noted that it is a bold plan with ambitious but, the Board believes, achievable goals. Estepp shared these goals with the group of attendees. If you would like a copy of the Vision and Goals Statement, please email [editor@theproboard.org](mailto:editor@theproboard.org).

In discussing other recent Board initiatives, Estepp reported that the COA has increased from 12 to 16 members and that three of these will be elected by the Advisory Committee in addition to the four that the Accredited Agencies are already appointing. One additional COA member will be appointed by the Board of Directors. He also announced that this appointment will be from Canada. In addition, the Advisory Committee Chairman will become a voting member of the Board of Directors from now on.

In closing, Chairman Estepp noted that the year 2007 represents the 25th Anniversary of the Pro Board because it was 25 years ago, in 1982, that the Pro Board as we know it today began Accrediting States and issuing Pro Board Certificates.





COA Chairman Fred Piechota reports the following from the February 2nd COA meeting in Orlando: Initial Accreditation was awarded to Colorado Division of Fire Safety, the 44th Pro Board Accredited Agency; Re-accreditation was awarded to the Colorado Metropolitan Certification Board (CMCB), Bucks County (Pennsylvania) Public Safety Training Center, and the Commonwealth Ports Authority (Saipan). The COA reviewed the proposed changes to NFPA Standards for Firefighter and Responders to Hazardous Materials Incidents and their Potential impact on certification testing. The Committee also conducted a comprehensive review of the "Project" methodology of evaluation.



Theresa Staples accepts Accreditation Certificate on behalf of Colorado.

*Pictured left to right: Fred Piechota, COA Chair, Theresa Staples, Jim Estepp, Chairman, Liz Summers, COA Member*



Peter Rines accepts Accreditation Certificate on behalf of State of Maine.

*Pictured left to right: Steve Austin, Vice Chair of Board, Peter Rines, Fred Piechota, COA Chair*



Danielle Stebner, Robert Grunmeier, and Rob Freese accept Re-Accreditation Certificate on behalf of Bucks County, Pennsylvania.

*Pictured left to right: Fred Piechota, COA Chair, Danielle Stebner, Robert Grunmeier, Jim Estep, Board Chair, Rob Freese, and Steve Austin, Board Vice-Chair*



Tony Wilkins accepts Re-Accreditation Certificate on behalf of Colorado Metro Certification Board.

*Pictured left to right: Fred Piechota, COA Chair, Tony Wilkins, Butch Weedon, Board of Directors, and Jim Estep, Board Chair*



Tom Sturtevant and Brandi Plunkett accept Re-Accreditation Certificate on behalf of Texas.

*Pictured left to right: Fred Piechota, COA Chair, Tom Sturtevant, Brandi Plunkett, and Jim Estep, Board Chair*



Joy Ann Guerrero and Stanley Torres accept Re-Accreditation Certificates on behalf of Hawaii and Saipan.

*Pictured left to right: Fred Piechota, COA Chair, Jim Burns, Board of Directors, Joy Ann Guerrero, Stanley Torres, and Jim Estepp, Board Chair*



Amy Sturtevant, Certification Coordinator (left), and Dave Trebisacci, Program Manager (right).



Dave Trebisacci, Program Manager, presented a Program update on the Pro Board activities to the attendees at the annual Conference and Meeting earlier this month. Trebisacci reported that, as of January 31st, there were 280,432 records in the National Registry Database. To date, for Fiscal Year 2007, the breakdown of certifications falls as follows: 30% Firefighter, 25% Hazmat, 10% Instructor, 6% Officer, and 29% all other subjects/levels. Of the 44 accredited agencies, 23 submitted their applications electronically, only 6 submitted bulk applications for printing, 15 distribute applications to candidates to be completed individually and roughly 10% of all applicants pay by credit card. Trebisacci also noted that the COA-2 Annual Reaccreditation Authorization Form is being updated to include validation of signatures for security purposes.

A final point that Trebisacci reported was in regards to the National Registry online at [www.theproboard.org](http://www.theproboard.org). By clicking on "Certification Search" and entering the last name and the last 4 digits of social security number, social insurance number, or employee number, the system will display the name, certification level, date certified, agency, and NFPA standard edition date. This is a terrific tool that is updated daily.

Any questions should be directed to either Amy Sturtevant, Certification Coordinator, at 617-984-7474 or [asturtevant@nfpa.org](mailto:asturtevant@nfpa.org) or Dave Trebisacci, Program Manager, at 617-984-7420 or [dtrebisacci@nfpa.org](mailto:dtrebisacci@nfpa.org).



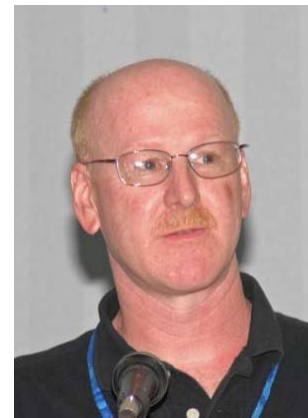
Fred Piechota moderated the Conference Educational Sessions generating much discussion and input from attendees.

See photographs below to get a sense of the excellent educational opportunities offered through these tutorial sessions.



### **Project Portfolio Methodology**

Larry Preston (l) and Tom Sturtevant (r) describe "Project Portfolios" and when they are used, including acceptable methodologies.

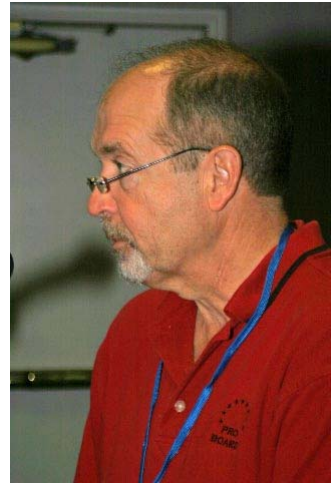


### **Site Visit Process Review**

Kevin O'Connell (pictured left) and George Luther (not shown) walked the attendees through the entire Accreditation/Re-Accreditation process answering several questions from the audience.



**Completing "Test to Standard" Matrices and "Local Validation" Open Forum**



Fred Piechota moderated an open forum discussion with a great deal of input from the audience.

**Practical Skills Evaluator Training Programs**

Bob Grunmeier described how they do it in Bucks County.



**Exemplary Program Presentation**

Mike Finney, Great Oaks Institute of Technology and Career Development, Cincinnati, Ohio shares one of their exemplary program ideas.



The Pro Board DVD produced last Fall is now available for inclusion in Power Point presentations and for the websites of Accredited Agencies. Several agencies asked for these enhancements so the video could be built into Power Point presentations widely used for fire service training. Also, several agencies want to make the videos available on their websites for the general public. If interested, contact Dave Trebisacci, Program Manager, at [dtrebisacci@nfpa.org](mailto:dtrebisacci@nfpa.org).

At this year's Advisory Committee meeting, the Johnny Wilson Award was awarded posthumously to Chief Ken Elmore, who served as Pro Board Accreditation Manager for five and a half years before retiring last summer. Prior to becoming manager, Elmore had served as Chair of the Pro Board's Committee on Accreditation since the mid-1990s.



Receiving the Award on behalf of the family were Shirley Elmore, Ken's widow, along with other members of the family including Ken & Shirley's grown son & daughter, K.C. Elmore & Kathy Woltz, and their grandson, Tony Woltz.



*Pictured l-r: Steve Austin, Chair of the Award Committee, Kathy Woltz, Tony Woltz, K.C. Elmore, Shirley Elmore, Fred Piechota, Kevin O'Connell, and Larry Preston who nominated Chief Elmore for the award.*

Below, in its entirety, is Larry Preston's nomination of Chief Elmore for this prestigious award:

*July 26, 2006*

*Johnny Wilson Memorial Award Selection Committee*

*PO Box 690632*

*Quincy, MA 02269*

*Dear Selection Committee,*

*It is with great pleasure that I submit the name of V. Kenneth Elmore for consideration for the Johnny G. Wilson Memorial Award. I met Ken when he first joined the Pro Board's Committee on Accreditation in the early 1990's. Ironically, I was assigned to go on a site visit with Ken to Johnny's beloved Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Counsel. I was immediately impressed with Ken's calm and professional demeanor.*

*Ken proved to be a quick study and was appointed by the Board of Directors to be the Chair of the Committee on Accreditation in the fall of 1995. It was in this position that Ken excelled. Ken seemed to effortlessly balance the concerns of committee members as well as ensure compliance with accreditation policies and procedures. In fact, Ken was the consummate arbiter. Repeatedly Ken was the cooler head that would prevail in times of stress.*

*It was in his role as Chair that I think Ken had the greatest influence on local, state, and national certification systems. He was a perfect representative of the Pro Board and his personality came shining through. It is in this area that Ken most reminds me of the late Johnny Wilson. Ken, as Johnny was, is a gentleman through and through. His demonstrations of respect for others and courteousness are an example to us all. Ken has done a great job of promoting the Pro Board and is probably responsible for more entities joining over the past 10 years than any other individual. No concern or question is too small for Ken to give his undivided attention. He has the unique ability to make anyone he deals with feel special. Ken does not utter a solitary negative word about those with whom he is in competition, and has always set a tremendous example for committee members.*

*I consider myself lucky to have known the late Johnny Wilson and to know and work with Ken Elmore. Rarely does one have the opportunity to meet one person of such high caliber yet I have met two. I have been enriched by working with these two gentlemen and I can think of no other person who will ever be as qualified as Ken Elmore to receive this award. Thank you for your consideration of my submission and please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.*

*Sincerely,*

*Lawrence Preston*

*Maryland Fire and Rescue Institute*

In tribute to the late Chief Ken Elmore, two good friends of Ken's who are also members of the Pro Board paid eulogy to his life, leadership, and legacy at his Memorial Service in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida on January 20, 2007. Below are excerpts from these tributes by Chief Herman Brice, Palm Beach County Fire Rescue Department, and George Luther, longstanding member of the Pro Board's Committee on Accreditation.

Chief Herman Brice, Palm Beach County Fire Department, paid tribute to Ken Elmore's "49 years of serving his community and his country", specifically his 23 years in the Washington, DC Fire Department, retiring as Battalion Chief - Training followed by his 20 years as Chief of the Town of Palm Beach Fire Department, during which he brought together the Fire Department and EMS, instituted Advanced Life Support Engineering, and Started the Fire Prevention Bureau. Chief Brice also spoke on a more personal note of Chief Ken Elmore's effective leadership because of his integrity, dedication, knowledge, and professional level of service. As Chief Brice put it, "Ken was kind, compassionate, calm, patient, honorable, and gentle but strong and respected for who he was.... Ken listened to others. He listened to discussions and debate and after hearing everyone's view he offered thoughtful comments to the discussion and people agreed with him."

***A Tribute to Ken Elmore by George Luther:***

*For the last 30 years, I have had the pleasure of traveling with Kenny throughout North America.*

*Shirley has asked that I address the impact that Ken has had on the national fire service.*

*Ken broke into the national fire service arena by helping to develop an apprenticeship program for firefighters. This program was designed to enhance the professionalism of the individual firefighter through better training. Every career firefighter is indebted to Kenny.*

*Next, he became involved in bringing women into the fire service. His diplomacy and sense of fair play aided in the production of a document that served for many years as the definitive authority on successfully integrating women into the firehouses of America. Women firefighters across the country owe Ken Elmore a big "thank you".*

*His next national interest involved the National Fire Protection Association's Technical Committee on Fire Service Training. This committee developed and maintained about a dozen standards and guides that defined how to properly train firefighters. Eventually, he became the Chairman of the Committee. Many years later, these documents are still used and civilian and firefighters' lives have been saved.*

*And last but not least, about 15 years ago, I recruited Ken to be part of another national committee - the Pro Board. He was a perfect fit. The Pro Board operates an international certification program for the fire service. Some 85 levels of certification are offered. Certification involves measuring or testing the competency levels of fire service personnel against minimum standards. The certification exams are administered through about 50 accredited agencies that must under go a rigorous review and audit by the Pro Board. Thousands of fire fighters are certified and nationally registered each year. Ken was responsible for coordinating all of these activities. He quickly rose to become the chairman for the Committee on Accreditation and then the first Accreditation Manager for the Board of Directors. Under his guidance, the Pro Board grew to be the leader in fire service certification throughout North America and in a few cases, abroad.*

*Ken was an excellent manager and a good will ambassador for the program. He instilled trust and respect in the system. A couple of days before Ken passed away; we received the following email. The writer was considering submitting an application for Pro Board accreditation for her state fire academy. The writer did not know that Ken had passed away when she wrote, and I quote: "I was curious to see what the (Pro Board) was all about, but what really sealed the decision was Mr. Elmore. I reflected on how calming and kind he was during our conversation. His professionalism is what we all should strive to achieve. His gentle nature beamed through the phone." That little email speaks volumes about Kenny.*

*Ken Elmore provided strength and integrity to all of his dealings in the fire service. Ken was truly a leader on a global perspective - a role model of enormous proportions. A giant when it came to saving lives, firefighter safety, professionalism and fairness. And, let's not forget the wisdom and counsel that he has provided to many of us. Many lives have been profoundly changed by the man we know as Kenny Elmore.*

*God blessed us when He gave Ken Elmore to us. Shirley and her family blessed us when they shared Kenny with us. Ken Elmore made a difference in our world.*

## Tell us about your Agency Activities

Articles for the next Pro Board Progress are being planned now.

Contact the Pro Board newsletter at [editor@theproboard.org](mailto:editor@theproboard.org) with information about your agency activities that we can highlight in a future issue of the newsletter.

Send us your feedback on this e-newsletter format - we'd love to hear from you what you think of it. Email comments to [editor@theproboard.org](mailto:editor@theproboard.org).

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