



Pro Board Progress

National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications

July 2007

In This Issue

Send us your News

Message from Chairman Estep

Annual Board Meeting Highlights

Training Conference Dates Set

What happens when an Advisory Rep gets a new job?

Virginia takes advantage of "Credentialing"

Stanley Torres awarded FAA Award

American Board for Certification in Homeland Security

Where do Federal Fire Grant monies go?

ICChiefs has new Executive Director

Quick Links

Pro Board

Tell us about your Entity Activities

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

Contact the Pro Board newsletter at editor@theproboard.org with information about your entity activities that we can highlight in a future issue of the newsletter.

Send us your feedback on this e-newsletter format - we want to hear from you and what you think of our newsletter. Email comments to editor@theproboard.org.



As we start the Pro Board's next fiscal year on July 1st, let me take this opportunity to thank each and every one of our 44 Accredited Entities for their dedication and support. This past year has seen several new developments and innovations in the Pro Board system. We have expanded the Committee on Accreditation to better serve you, added a Canadian position on the COA to assure Canada's unique circumstances are well represented in the COA process.....and your Advisory Committee Chair now has voting status on the Board of Directors. Another milestone was a meeting last January hosted by the Pro Board with the Executive committee of the North America Fire Training Directors which we plan to continue on an annual basis.

The Pro Board continues to be in excellent financial condition with steady growth each year. The increasing number of accredited entities and number of Pro Board registered certificates drive this growth which in turn allows innovation and investment in our future. The biggest growth has been in the electronic registration plan now used by 27 entities representing over 60% of our volume. Of special significance, this plan assures all certified individuals will be Pro Board certified and immediately registered in our web based accessible Certification Registry. It is also the most cost effective plan. Recognizing this fact and the Pro Board's solid finances, the Board of Directors approved the second fee reduction for this plan in as many years.

Your Board deliberated over several months last Fall, meeting several times to develop a Long Range Strategic Plan. After examining key trends for fire protection over the coming decade, the Board concluded *"the challenges of today and tomorrow (homeland security, credentialing, hazardous materials etc.) will push career and volunteer fire protection specialists into an expanded level of responsibility"*. Indeed, this is the challenge of the Pro Board accreditation system, namely to anticipate and keep up with the professional qualifications challenges of the future. Your Board of Directors is committed to assisting the fire and emergency services in meeting these challenges through our accredited entities.

In conclusion, let me wish you a pleasant and safe summer vacation season.

Jim Estepp, Chairman, Board of Directors

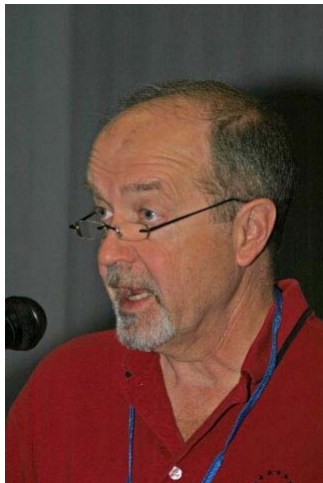
By Tony O'Neill

The Pro Board's Board of Directors held its Annual Business Meeting at BWI Airport in Baltimore May 22, 2007. Here are some of the highlights compiled by the Board Secretary, Tony O'Neill, for "Pro Board Progress".

- Approved a Resolution in recognition of Gary Togle's contribution to Fire Service Professional Qualifications and service to the Pro Board on the occasion of his retirement from NFPA
- At the request of NFPA, appointed Carl Peterson, Director of NFPA's Public Fire Protection Division to the Board of Directors to replace Gary Togle
- Heard reports from the Accreditation Manager (Fred Piechota), Program Manager (Dave Trebisacci), Advisory Committee Chair (Tom Sturtevant) and on the status of NFPA's Professional Qualifications activities and trends
- Considered a request from the Fire Commissioner of British Columbia to establish a Pro Board accreditation policy that recognizes the unique governance structure found in Canadian Provinces relating to the certification of emergency services personnel in Canada. The Board asked Fred Piechota, Accreditation Manager, to work with interested Canadians and come back to the Board with a proposal
- Heard a report on activities of the Committee on Accreditation (Fred Piechota) and reappointed six Board appointed COA members (Coffman, Brinkerhoff, Luther, Peal, O'Connell and Summers)
- Approved the Treasurer's report (Tony O'Neill) for the 10 months YTD of FY 07 ending April 30 indicating favorable trends for both income and expenses
- The Board approved a budget for FY 08 beginning July 1, 2007 which included a reduction of the \$6.50 plan fee to \$5.50 for the new fiscal year. The other fee plans remain the same.
- The Board considered a new Accreditation Policy for Intrastate Non Profit Organizations in States or Provinces that are unwilling or unable to provide testing and certification services for fire and emergency personnel. Agreeing that such a policy was warranted, the Board asked that a letter ballot be prepared spelling out the details of the proposed policy for Board consideration, which was subsequently approved effective June 12, 2007
- Mr. O'Neill, who had been serving as Interim Executive Secretary, was appointed Executive Secretary by the Board



Board of Directors (left to right) Fred Piechota, Butch Weedon, Tom Sturtevant, Jim Burns, Chair Jim Estep, Steve Austin, Carl Peterson, Dave Trebisacci, Tony O'Neill



By Fred Piechota

Planning is taking place to prepare for our bi-annual Training and Education Conference. The Conference Announcement will go out in August, but you should block the dates January 24-27, 2008 on your calendars for our Conference that will be held in Tampa, Florida. A small committee is working on the development of the training and education portion of the Conference and is seeking ideas for educational/informational topics that you would find important and useful. **If you have ideas**, please forward them to me at fred.piechota@theproboard.org and I will get them to the Committee.

We are in the process of updating our promotional brochure (that can be made available to any of you for your internal promotional activities) and we are seeking photos that typify certification related activities such as the conduct of examinations or evaluations. **If any of you have any digital photos** that depict such activities that we might consider for use on the brochure, please forward them to me at fred.piechota@theproboard.org.

We have completed a number of Accreditation and Reaccreditation visits so far this year and 10 more visits are scheduled to be completed during the remainder of the year, including new accreditation visits to Vancouver Island and North Carolina. My thanks to all of the staff who have worked diligently to prepare the application documents and special appreciation for the cooperation and hospitality that has been shown to each of our site teams for the visits that we have conducted so far. I'd like to also remind those who have upcoming visits to try to get your documents in as soon as possible so that the COA can begin their review.

We are working on a more efficient, electronic, means to review and return application document comments to each of you. I will keep you updated as that project progresses.

Submitted by Dr. Tom Sturtevant, TEXAS, Chairman of the Advisory Committee

The Pro Board Advisory Committee recently adopted the following policy.

This procedure will apply when any person elected by the Advisory Committee to any position loses the eligibility which allowed their initial election. It will be incumbent upon the individual to notify the Advisory Committee Chair upon any change in their eligibility status:

SUCCESSION CRITERIA

The individual shall be allowed to serve out the remainder of his/her term with appropriate documentation from both the new and past organization. Specifically, to be eligible to continue to serve in the elected position, the individual shall be required to produce, within 45 days of losing their eligibility, written documentation from their original organization that the organization is agreeable to the individual continuing to serve in the capacity and written documentation from their new organization (if applicable) that the individual will have full support to fulfill the duties and obligations of the elected position.

All those Advisory Committee Representatives whose eligibility has changed are required to meet this succession criterion.

Submitted by Billy Shelton, Director VDFP

Incident management in federally declared incidents, including terrorist attacks, major disasters and other emergency situations has become increasingly important in the wake of events such as September 11, 2001 and the Gulf Coast hurricanes of 2005. The complexity of these type incidents, coupled with the growing need of multi-agency and multi-functional involvement at the scene, has increased the need for a total systems approach for response. At the incident sites, the incident Commanders and their staff need to be able to identify the individuals responding and their qualifications. The mechanism that is being developed by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to respond to this critical need is the National Fire Service Responder Credentialing System (NFSRCS).

Of great importance to this national credentialing process is the interaction at the state level between the state entity that measures an individual's competence through a testing or evaluation process and issues credentials, and the third-party review/accreditation entity that validates the process. Both of these are essential components in ensuring that the individuals who respond to federal incidents are qualified. And this is where Virginia, as a result of the already well established relationship between the Virginia Department of Fire Programs (VDFP) and the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications (Pro Board), is ahead of the game in being prepared to move seamlessly into the arena of credentialing of its fire services first responders as part of the NFSRCS.

Virginia was proactive in identifying the benefits associated with nationally registering all Virginia certifications with the Pro Board and began a dialogue in 2004 to accomplish that task. Prior to that time, individuals had to nationally register each certificate with the Pro-Board. Virginia began a process of nationally registering all certifications from January 2003 through June 2005 retroactively. Since that time, Virginia has continued to automatically register all certifications issued by VDFP with the Pro Board on a quarterly basis. VDFP currently offers 22 certification courses accredited by the Pro Board and has nationally registered over 36,000 certifications to date.

The NFSRCS is a voluntary system. There is no mandate that any organization participate in this program. Local fire departments determine if and how many of its members will participate and

departments retain the right to not deploy any members if/when requested. A secondary benefit of VDFP's automatically registering certifications nationally is that they are becoming FIPS 201 compliant. FIPS 201 compliant is the standard that must be met for the credential to be issued.

Virginia's initiative as part of NFSRCS is already growing with fire services first responders in the National Capitol Region of Northern Virginia being issued FIPS 201 compliant First Responder Authentication Cards (FRAC). As we move forward in the next few years further into national credentialing, VDFP's foresight in automatically registering certifications nationally for its fire services first responders will continue to pay dividends.

The Honolulu Airports District Office recently nominated Mr. Stanley C. Torres, Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) Fire Chief, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), for the *Herman C. Bliss Airports Partnership Award*. Chief Torres was selected as the winner of this prestigious award by the Federal Aviation Administration and was presented with it at the Annual Airport Conference held in Los Angeles, California from May 22-25, 2007. We are proud of another Pro Board member and his Entity's accomplishment.

Chief Torres is being recognized for his leadership in the accomplishment of several outstanding partnership initiatives in support of FAA programs to enhance safety by improving airport infrastructure and emergency response capabilities throughout Micronesia.



Chief Stanley Torres, winner of 3rd Annual Federal Aviation Authority *Herman C. Bliss Airports Partnership Award*.

The American Board for Certification in Homeland Security was established by the American College of Forensic Examiners to provide certification, training and continuing education to professionals who have significant interest in homeland security. The Board advertises "Opportunities to become Certified in Homeland Security". You can find out more at www.chs.acfei.com or call 800-423 9737.

Now there is a web based database that describes the kind of grants and training programs that are being funded in your States. Launched on March 25th, this private sector sponsored database is designed to inform members of Congress and the public about the Fire Grant program and its benefit to local fire departments. You might want to check it out at www.firegrantdata.com. To keep this program going, the sponsors are looking for success stories, volunteer helpers and financial commitments to keep the web site updated, refreshed and enhanced on a regular basis as new DHS data is released. Your Pro Board contact for further information is Vice Chairman Steve Austin who helped launch this effort. He can be reached at (302) 995 0303 or steveaustin@earthlink.net.

Through Chairman Estep, who represents the IAFC on the Pro Board we have learned that Mark W. Light has been appointed IAFC Executive Director, upon the retirement of Gary Briese. Mr. Light had served as Deputy to Mr. Briese for the last 5 1/2 years and was chosen by the IAFC Board after a nationwide search. Mr. Light is a 30 year veteran of the fire service, having served through the ranks culminating his career as a Metro Chief.

He earned a Master of Public Administration from Virginia Tech and was named a Harvard University Fellow to the John F. Kennedy School of Government.

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