



Office of the Fire Marshal

Gwinnett County Department of Fire and Emergency Services

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Welcome Assistant Fire Marshal



Alan Blake, Asst. Fire Marshal

We are pleased to welcome Alan Blake as the new Assistant Fire Marshal. Alan began his work in the Office of the Fire Marshal on April 21, 2007. In his new role, Alan will be responsible for field activities including new construction and existing building inspections and code enforcement.

Through previous experience as a fire protection engineer in the insurance industry, Alan brings with him an extensive background in fire science. In addition, Alan served as a peace officer with the DeKalb County Police Department and most recently worked as a criminal investigator with the City of Lawrenceville Police Department.

Alan holds a Bachelors Degree in Engineering from Southern Polytechnic State University and a Masters Degree in Public Administration from Valdosta State University. He is married with three children and currently resides in Lawrenceville. ♦

“Our mission is to protect and preserve life and property through the thoughtful management of risks to life, environment, quality of life, and property”. Chief Knopick

New Fire Inspectors

Fire Inspectors Matt Phillips, Aaron Blackwell, and Jeremy Webb (pictured left to right) are recent additions to the Office of the Fire Marshal team.

The group is currently assigned to the Professional Development and Education Section, where they are engaged in lecture, group projects, and interactive computer simulations in fire protection, life safety, building systems, and accessibility for the physically disabled.



Captain Yoder reports they are doing very well and will be well prepared to test for their State Fire Inspector Certification later this month. ♦



From the Fire Marshal

Deputy Fire Chief, Ed Knopick

You are now holding the inaugural edition of the Office of the Fire Marshal Newsletter and should consider putting away a copy, as it may become very valuable in the future. As you can tell, I am very excited about our first issue and consider it a significant benchmark in the growth of the Office of the Fire Marshal. One year has lapsed (yeah... where did the time go?) since being appointed Fire Marshal and a great deal of effort has been made in examining and improving the delivery of Fire Prevention and Life Safety services in Gwinnett County. I think you will find this newsletter an extension of our overall improvement effort, providing insight into the issues of the built environment that Gwinnett County Department of Fire and

Emergency Services must prepare, respond, and operate. Our mission is to protect and preserve life and property through the thoughtful management of risks to life, environment, quality of life, and property.

The Office of the Fire Marshal is growing, adding to its numbers an Assistant Fire Marshal and three Fire Inspectors! We are pleased to have these individuals on board and look forward to their special talents and hard work in achieving the mission of protecting lives and property. Our growth is not exclusive to personnel but includes an expansion of services. There are many, however, the Community Risk Reduction Partnerships is a new concept in bringing code compliance to the business community in an environment of cooperation and mutual benefit through

its Compliance Assistance Program (CAP) and Self-Inspection Program (SIP). The CAP/SIP programs offer consultations and resource assistance in a way that supports institutionalizing fire and life safety practices in everyday business operations to achieve a safe workplace and business.

In closing, keep watching for future issues of the Office of the Fire Marshal Newsletter. Your suggestions and questions are welcome and are essential in bringing a publication of value to you. I am honored to be associated with the dedicated men and women of the Office of the Fire Marshal; it is through their labor of love that this newsletter is possible. ♦

Community Risk Reduction Partnerships

CRRP Manager, Karen Murray

Community Risk Reduction Partnerships (CRRP) is new to the Office of the Fire Marshal. The primary goal of this Section is to build partnerships within the business community and, through these partnerships, promote safety and self-inspection programs to ensure a practical awareness of the fire and life safety code requirements necessary to keep their businesses safe and therefore promote a fire safe community.

The Compliance Assistance Program (CAP) provides assistance to businesses in many ways. Fire and emergency preparedness information is provided to businesses, as CRRP staff assist the businesses with meeting their legal requirements. Business leaders and staff

are made aware of the operation and necessary maintenance needs of the fire and life safety systems required as a condition of the businesses certificate of occupancy.

The Self-Inspection Program (SIP) plays a key role in ensuring adequate fire and life safety in the business community and local schools. Working closely with the Educational Inspections Unit, CRRP staff meets with all elementary school management staff to provide an overview of specific fire and life safety code requirements prior to the actual school inspection.

In the 2006-2007 school year, this Section met with principals, assistant principals, and head custodial

staff at 56 public and private elementary schools and provided inspection follow-up meetings with the leadership staff of 46 public schools.

Prevention through Education

Moving forward, the Community Risk Reduction Partnerships will work to develop additional programs in the business community to promote improved system readiness, self-inspection certification, and certificates of fitness for fire and life safety competencies. ♦

For additional information, contact Karen Murray at 678-518-6112 or karen.murray@gwinnettcountry.com

Development and Construction

Deputy Fire Marshal, Captain Jim Egan

Inspections of new construction and remodel construction of existing buildings is conducted by the Office of the Fire Marshal in compliance with laws and regulations that require specific fire inspections at various stages of construction. These inspections will verify proper installation, operation, and acceptance of fire protection features, systems, and appliances within the building.

The Office of the Fire Marshal provides complete inspection of all new construction to ensure adherence to the scope of the project and to ensure all applicable provisions of the Life Safety Code and the Fire Code

are met and the building is safe and habitable.

If you have a new commercial project being built in your first due-in, give us a call. We can coordinate a walk through and include your station in various inspection stages.

On average, the Office of the Fire Marshal conducts over 700 new construction inspections each month throughout Gwinnett County. Don't hesitate to call if you want to be involved. ♦

*For additional information, contact
Capt. Egan at 678-518-6118 or
jim.egan@gwinnettcountry.com*



Firefighters should be familiar with lightweight materials and construction techniques they find during fires. Above is one of the latest lightweight techniques for roof trusses. A web based training program on the awareness of lightweight construction can be found at www.usfa.dhs.gov/fireservice/research/safety/construction.shtm.

Innovations and Maintenance

Deputy Fire Marshal, Captain Wayne Dixon

Since September 5, 2006, the Existing Building Inspection Section has inspected 107 Gwinnett County Public Schools, approximately 1,384 existing and newly installed classroom trailers, 33 private schools, and four City of Buford schools.

The first step in this process was to inform the administrators, principals, and teachers of what the inspectors would be looking for during the fire inspection. An informative document titled *Know Your No's* was distributed to the educators reminding them of the state fire and life safety code requirements in educational occupancies. This prompted the school staffs to be proactive in set

ting-up classrooms for the new school year.

In April 2007, the first round of school inspections was completed and the second round of private school inspections began. The second round of public school inspections is expected to begin in August 2007. During the first quarter of 2007, over 70 assembly occupancies were inspected through a program known as *Night on the Town*. This inspection program, conducted during nighttime business hours, focuses on identifying and eliminating overcrowding conditions and obstructed exits in restaurants, nightclubs,

movie theaters, pool halls, and other gathering places. During these inspections, several overcrowding conditions were identified and locked or blocked exits were discovered in over 36 percent of the occupancies. The *Night on the Town* program is proven to be a proactive means to ensure adequate emergency exits are available in the larger establishments throughout Gwinnett County.

Upcoming projects for the Existing Building Inspections Section include inspections of Gwinnett Place Mall, the Gwinnett Arena, and the 310+ child daycare centers within the county. ♦

*For additional information, contact
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We're on the Web!
www.gwinnettfiremarshal.com
www.gcfmo.com

The Office of the Fire Marshal is responsible for providing fire prevention services through planning, inspections and testing, enforcement, education, and community risk reduction strategies.

A highly dedicated, full time staff of twenty-eight join together to promote fire and life safety throughout Gwinnett County.

Fire and Life Safety Starts Here!

Engineering and Technology

Deputy Fire Marshal, Captain Steven Collins

The Fire Planning Section is responsible for reviewing construction documents, plans, and specifications for compliance with applicable codes and standards on fire and life safety, and accessibility for the physically disabled. On April 2, 2007 the Fire Planning Section went under the direction of the Gwinnett County Department of Planning and Development. This organizational realignment was a result of recommendations made by a study from the Matrix Company, an outside consultant hired by the County. The recommendations focused on meeting customer needs, maximizing the use of resources, and employing the latest in Information Technology.

Some new and exciting initiatives are being developed to enhance business functions in our office. The ACCELA wireless initiative has a project completion date of June 30, 2007. The Inspectors will have Toughbooks and wireless capabilities to conduct inspections and record inspection results in real time. The Land Records and Automated Inspection Systems Project is a county-wide initiative headed-up by our own David Dusik and it is currently in the bid proposal stage.

In February a new code adoption went into effect with the latest International Codes and NFPA Standards. During the month of March our office reviewed 942 submittals. The high rise plans have not hit our office yet but by all indications they will soon. This will be a challenge for us all as our skyline changes. ♦

For additional information, contact Capt. Collins at 678-518-6103 or steve.collins@gwinnettcounty.com

Professional Development and Education

Training Manager, Captain Jeff Yoder

The Office of the Fire Marshal, Liberty Fire Protection, Duke Realty, and LaCrosse Pump Company teamed up to provide a class on Stationary Fire Pumps for the Office of the Fire Marshal. The classes, which took place on Monday April 9 and Friday April 13, 2007, included a classroom introduction to stationary fire pumps followed by on-site demonstrations of both electric motor and diesel engine driven pumps at Duke properties. Stations 21-B and 24-B participated in portions of the training.

The class was well received and it was very beneficial to the partici-

pants. Stationary pumps are vital components of the fire protection systems in many of the buildings in our county, yet few personnel have an opportunity to learn first hand how the pumps operate or how they should be inspected.

Since January, the Office of the Fire Marshal

provided similar training on Fire Alarm and Detection Systems in coordination with Cana Communications and the Georgia Fire Inspectors Association, as well as training on Portable Fire Extinguishers and School Inspections. ♦



Wills LaCrosse Teaching Fire Pumps

For additional information, contact Capt. Yoder at 678-518-6106 or jeff.yoder@gwinnettcounty.com