Our First Newsletter!

The staff of Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council (GFSTC) is pleased to present our first newsletter for the fire service professionals of our great state. During this age of various communications mediums, we feel we can better serve you, our customer, by providing this periodical.

Our intent is to provide brief articles written and presented by our own staff and guest contributors covering points of interest and questions we regularly encounter. Due to our limited resources, we will be unable to print and mail future editions of this newsletter. The GFSTC Express will be made available through our website at www.gfstconline.org or by email distribution. Anyone desiring to be included on our electronic distribution list should simply email a request for the GFSTC Express to gfstc@gfstc.state.ga.us telling us your name, your organization, and the email you wish to use for receipt. Please include GFSTC Express in the subject line of your requesting email to insure prompt processing on our end.

It probably won’t take the reader long to realize this publication is designed, developed, written, and distributed using currently available software without the luxury of professional writers. With that stated, allow us to apologize now if our sentence structure and spelling is less than perfect at times. We assure you, our intent is honorable.

So, sit back and enjoy Volume 1, Issue 1 of the GFSTC Express.

A Fond Farewell To Lynn Kelley!

We would like to take this opportunity to give a warm goodbye to one of our fellow employees. Lynn Kelley (a.k.a. Bernie) is leaving us after 5 years of service at our agency. She started part-time with us in 2004 and moved to full-time in 2005, and has been our Administrative Assistant in charge of State Certifications for the past couple of years. She has been a Blessing to each and every one of us in the office and we all wish her a great and bountiful life to come!

(Please note that Jan Mathis will be assuming these responsibilities.)
Weight of Law... Lyn Pardue - Executive Director

Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council carries out our mission with state funding while following guidelines set forth by Georgia Law, Administrative Rules, Policy, and Procedure. Through the years, the laws affecting our fire service have been amended to reflect the desires of our fire service professionals. GFSTC Administrative Rules are also in need of revision.

Council member Alan Shuman, who also serves as our State Fire Marshal, made a presentation during the March meeting of the Council to begin the process of updating our Administrative Rules. Chief Shuman chairs the Rules Committee, which also includes Council members Ken Steele and Byron Lombard. Chief Shuman’s recommendations to the Council were to form 2 committees to review and update the Council’s Administrative Rules while ensuring the Rules mesh and comply with Georgia Law. Following a discussion by members, the Council voted to accept the recommendations.

Council Chair Frank Edwards recently extended invitations to a state-wide selection of Fire Chiefs, Training Officers, association representatives, and other officials to serve on our Rules Committee.

As the process of updating our Rules progresses, we will report developments and recommended changes through our website at www.gfstconline.org.


It’s another great day here at the Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council (GFSTC) and I’m thankful to have the opportunity to tell all of you how very proud I am to work for you and the fire service. You are my heroes. The very ones I depend on each day to protect my property and life. The very ones that I feel are often unrecognized for their dedication and desire to serve our great State. I am so very dependent on you and admire you tremendously.

We here at GFSTC realize that you have chosen this path due to your concern for others. We realize that you are underpaid (if paid at all) which emphasizes that you aren’t in this for the money and that you knew this when you started.

This brings our dedication to you.

This being our Agency’s first newsletter, it is indeed a new challenge for us and one we hope will be a useful tool for you. Please let us know your feelings, both good and bad, as we are here to help and serve you.

In order to better serve you we ask that you observe the following office procedures:

1) As much as possible, before each department member calls our office concerning an issue, it is recommended that you go through your Training Officer or Chief. This certainly helps clear up the phone lines, allowing our office staff to serve you better.

2) Observe allotted testing hours when taking a test in our office. This allows test takers to enjoy a quiet, conducive environment, as we currently have only six testing stations.

PLEASE NOTE:

Office TESTING Hours: 9 am – 2 pm Tuesday through Thursday By Appointment

Office Operating Hours: 8 am – 5 pm Monday through Friday

No test scores are given out over the phone.

Our office is closed during State Holidays.
How Can I Get My Test Score?

The first time you log-in you will need your GFSTC ID number and the last four digits of your social security number, which might bring up a good question, “What is my GFSTC ID number and how can I get it?” Everyone gets assigned a GFSTC ID number when they are downloaded into our system, either by a Change of Status form (handled by the department) or by filling out a registration form (commonly known as a green sheet). However, you will not be notified of the number once it is assigned to you; only your department will be able to access your GFSTC ID by going to our website and using their department log-in information. So if you do not know your GFSTC ID number, please get with your training officer to help you find out your ID. After you login the first time, you will be required to change your password.

Note: It is advisable once you log-in and change your password, that you click on the View/Update Your Information link and provide us with an email address. That way if you lose or forget your account information, you can click the Forgot Your Password link on the login page and have your information emailed to you automatically.

Now you are all set. You can view your certification(s) that you hold with our agency and when you test with us you can find out your test score by visiting our website. However, if you are trying to find out a score on a test you recently took, it will not be on the website until the test scores have been downloaded into our system. You will need to ask the test monitor when the test scores will be downloaded into our system, so you will know when you can view your test score. If you have any questions, please contact Chad Cobb or David Cummings at 478-993-4521.

Hydrants to Hard Drives

GFSTC has recently unveiled the online Change of Status Form that is available for use by any department that has an online account with us. Obtaining an online account is as simple as going to our GFSTC Online website (http://www.gfstconline.org), clicking on the Forms link under Quick Links and then clicking the Fire Department Related Forms link and downloading the Website Registration form.

Fire departments with an online account now also have the ability to submit test event requests to us online. All you have to do is login with your department account information and click on the Online Test Request link on the main screen. Once you finish filling out your test request, click the Preview button and make sure that everything is filled out and is in order, then click Save Event. The request is automatically sent to us and an email confirming the request is generated and sent to the test event contact’s email address.

If anyone has any questions, comments, or suggestions about our website and/or computer/electronic related subjects, the easiest way to get in touch with me is to email me at: cgriffith@gfstc.state.ga.us or by phone at 478.993.4666.
Staff members of the Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council are tasked with ensuring fire departments and firefighters are in compliance with Georgia law. These tasks are achieved through site visits. Over the last few years, site visits seem to have taken a back seat to some of our other duties. In the spring of 2008, Executive Director Lyn Pardue recognized this and reconfigured the agency into three divisions: Administrative, Evaluation, and Compliance. It is the duty of the Compliance Division to conduct these site visits.

You may ask, what is a site visit and why are they coming to see me? Well, a site visit is where a GFSTC staff member stops by a fire department to make sure it meets the requirements of O.C.G.A., Title 25, Chapters 3 and Chapter 4. Site visits are, almost without exception, set up beforehand. The staffer calls the fire department for an appointment. During the visit, we may tour your fire station(s) to check for minimum equipment, staffing and insurance. We may review training records.

Over the years, some people have gotten the wrong impression that we are there to gig you for one thing or another. In reality, nothing could be further from the truth. We are there, simply, to make sure that your documentation is in order, just in case you run into a problem.

The Compliance Division has two members, Britt Brinson and Mike Hancock. If we can ever be of service to any of you, please don’t hesitate to call.

Why Are They Coming To See Me?!?  Britt Brinson—Compliance Div.

Compliance Division Staff: Britt Brinson and Mike Hancock