

Tom's Creek

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THE BATTLE FOR SURVIVAL BEGINS!

We Open Fire on January 21st!

The Game Plan

If you really care about your National Fire Academy, what it has done to improve life and fire protection for this nation, how it has positively affected your home department in knowledge, skills, and abilities, then YOU must take an active part in getting the Congress and President to restore the funding that the bureaucrats in the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) have taken away over the past three years.

All of you are critical players in the war to reverse the trend that has reduced the USFA budget by over 50% in the past 10 months. If this money were going back to the General Fund to reduce the debt, maybe, there would be less opposition from the fire service. But, it isn't going there, it is going to other non-fire programs in DHS.

They are picking our pockets to fund law enforcement programs, not much different than what FEMA did to us in the 1980s. We fought them then and won; we must do it all over again. The script is the same, only the players have changed. We are again fighting for the survival of the USFA and NFA. If we fail, we only have ourselves to blame.

The Budget Reduction Details and Talking Points

USFA Budget - Dollars in Millions (rounded)

ITEM	2002	2003	2004	2005 Projected*	Loss Since 2002
Salary & Expenses	17.2	19.3	16.9	17.1	.147
Programs	47.6	33.5	34.8	34.2	13.4
TOTALS	64.8	52.8	51.7	51.3	13.5

* 2005 is a projected number before the latest cuts.

As can readily be seen, the USFA budget has lost \$13.5 million since 2002.

Programs that USFA does for the National fire service has decreased by \$13.4 million. This is where the rubber meets the road. DHS has diverted this money to other programs in the DHS.

ITEM	2002	2003	2004	2005 Actual*	Loss Since 2002
NFA Funding	10.7	10.4	9.7	9.6	1.1
Nat'l Fire Programs	12.3	6.3	5.7	3.2	9.1
Fire Data Center	7.6	8.0	7.7	4.8	2.8
TOTALS	30.6	24.7	23.1	19.2	13.0

* 2005 is the actual monies allocated after the latest cuts.

NFA has lost \$1.1 million, mostly from the Simulation Lab (\$300,000) and some from printing (if you don't have new/revised courses, why do you have to print?) etc.

National Fire Programs has lost \$9.1 million, mostly in **course development, course revisions**, and outreach (prevention, partnering with other organizations, tech assistance, and major fire reports).

The Fire Data Center has been crippled.

More Talking Points

Again, these cuts in Fire Programs are extremely dangerous because they prevent our ability to grow and produce the types of courses that are so dearly needed by the American fire service. We could be on the verge of extinction (and I think that is what the police/terrorism oriented DHS leadership wants).

Funds for all programs which do not directly generate student numbers have been reduced, including course development, course revisions, and TRADE activities.

Funding for the National Fire Data Center has been severely reduced.

Funding for technology development initiative such as the simulation lab and distance education projects have been reduced.

The Executive Fire Officer budget has been reduced from \$233,000 to \$65,000.

The NFA has become bureaucratically buried within the massive Department of Homeland Security. The functions and responsibilities of FEMA, a former cabinet-level agency, have been spread across a wide variety of divisions, branches, and agencies within DHS.

While the need for the number and types of courses offered by the NFA continues to increase, the Federal resources required to meet these needs have been significantly reduced.

Precisely at the same time that the NIMS Integration Center (NIC) has emphasized training as a priority for DHS grants to the States, we have others in DHS cutting the USFA/NFA budget and moving that money to other parts of DHS for terrorism and other efforts.

The American fire, rescue, and EMS services need, more than ever, effective training to be prepared for terrorism events. Because of the budget cuts, contemporary course materials and new courses will not be available for this effort.

It is clear that DHS does not care about the fire service or any aspect of prevention or anything that furthers the cause of fire service preparedness.

What You Need To Do

Using the details and talking points, put together a letter that can be sent to your Congressperson and two

Senators. You **MUST** fax the letters. Snail mail will take a month to get to them thru the mail facility. You can find their fax numbers at www.aspb.org/publicaffairs/state_fax_nmbrs.cfm. Go there now and get them and write them down. The only fax number I can find for the White House is 1 202-456-2461.

The letters to the two Senators and Congressperson can be virtually the same letter. The one to the President should be somewhat more direct about what DHS is doing to the fire service.

Also, get others from your agencies and departments to write a letter. The more the better – especially, the chief of department. Use department or agency letterhead where possible.

EACH OF YOU IS CRITICAL IN THIS BATTLE. WITHOUT A MASSIVE INPUT OF MAIL TO POLITICIANS, WE WILL FAIL. PLEASE DO YOUR PART. WE ASK ONLY ABOUT A HALF HOUR OF YOUR TIME.

DHS reports to over 80 committees in Congress. Your Congressperson and Senators are probably on at least one of those committees. **WRITE THEM!!**

Do Not FAX the letters until **January 21, 2005**. We are working with a large segment of the fire service community and would like to have the largest impact that is possible.

Please be aware that e-mails are an ineffective way of getting change to happen in Congress.

Dues -- \$25.00 for the Year -- 2004

We are working for you and the Academy. Please help us to help you by paying your 2005 Dues. This organization is a leader in rectifying problems at the NFA. But, it is only with a few dollars and help from each of you that we can continue to be effective.

Dues are \$25.00 for the calendar year.

Our E-mail address is: icsnfa@comcast.net

SNFAI MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION - 2005

\$25.00

Name: _____

City: _____

State: _____

ZIP: _____

Phone #: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

(Print Clearly)