



# C-gram



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE BOSTON FIRE DEPARTMENT NUMBER 01-2007

## *From the Commissioner*

Roderick J. Fraser, Jr.

During my visits to the field, Chief of Department Kevin MacCurtain and I received questions about many of the projects we are working on at BFDHQ. We decided that a great way to get better information out to the field on some of these initiatives and squelch the “rumor mill” was to send out a periodic newsletter. This will be the first of these newsletters that I decided to call the “C-Gram”, short for Commissioner’s Telegram. I consider this C-Gram 01.

There are many challenges facing the BFD as we move forward and we will develop plans to tackle all of them successfully. If you have ideas for the improvement of the department, please forward them up your chain of command. I am very proud to lead such a great organization as the Boston Fire Department and look forward to working with you in the years to come.



[Note: I decided to use “C-Gram” as the title of this newsletter because of the effect of Admiral Zumwalt’s successful series of “Z-Grams” of the early 1970’s. Anyone interested in viewing the “Z-Grams” can go to <http://www.history.navy.mil/faqs/faq93-2.htm> on the web.]

## **FIRE ACADEMY IMPROVEMENTS**

*Funding approved for the new burn building!  
Construction is scheduled to start in April!*

This is great news and this facility is definitely needed. The new burn building is much improved over the last building and includes a mock elevator shaft and a tower for Pompier ladder and repelling training.

I consider improvements to the Fire Academy to be a top priority and I am working to line up funding for additional improvements.

## *From the Chief of Department*

Kevin P. MacCurtain

**T**raining and safety go hand and hand. Nothing is more important than the Safety of our Firefighters. As the Fire Commissioner has stated, training is a core function of this department. It is a top priority to provide you with the best training possible. Our fire academy delivers superb training under the leadership of Drillmaster Captain Ed Scigliano and Deputy Chief David Granara. Chief Granara has reinstated the maze training this year, which will be a requirement for all firefighters. Our current burn building is condemned. We have not been able to have Back to Basics training without a burn building. When the new burn building is completed later this year we will be ready to reinstitute Back to Basics training.

In April we will hire a new recruit class of Firefighters. We know we have one of the best recruit training program in the country, however it does not include some of the National Standards required to be certified as Firefighter 1 and 2. Chief Granara is addressing this problem and will add the necessary requirements. When this recruit class graduates, it is our intent to have them certified as firefighter 1 and 2.



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## RADIO COMMUNICATIONS

**Monopole:** The BFD radio system is expanding its portable radio coverage area with the development of a 140' tall monopole antenna tower at Engine 16's firehouse. This location will include 5 simulcast transmitters and receivers. We expect this location to be on the air by this summer.

**MBTA Radio System:** The MBTA has installed a new radio system for Boston Firefighters. This system will provide channels BFD 1 and BFD 4 in all subway stations and tunnels. System functionality testing will be conducted during March. Members will be advised when the system is fully operational.

**New Portable Radio Feature:** A "Channel Announcement" feature will be added to the portables assigned to fire companies. This feature provides a channel ID announcement whenever you change channels. A side button on the remote speaker microphone will repeat the announcement whenever needed.

**WWW.BFDRADIO.NET Web Site:** The BFD Communications Section has developed a web site to provide members easy access to training and reference materials covering all aspects of the communications system. An extensive knowledge base will provide timely answers to most radio questions. The "Member's Area" of the web site is only available to computers on the BFD network.

**New Receive Locations:** The BFD Radio System's network of receivers encompasses 28 locations throughout the city. Three new sites will come on-line during 2007. We will be adding receivers at Engine 9, Engine 17, and at 1 Western Ave. (Harvard University). Portable radio coverage will be improved with the addition of these locations.

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## TOWER LADDER 3

The cost to repair Tower Ladder 3 together with its age makes it impractical to consider repairing. After discussions with Chief's of Operations Paul Moore and Andy O'Halloran and the field Deputies, Chief MacCurtain and I feel that the best course of action is to eliminate one Tower Ladder. When the repairs to Engine 10's floor are complete we intend to move TL 17's piece to TL 3 and have TL 17 revert back to a ladder company. This move should take place shortly.



# HEADQUARTERS REORGANIZATION

The new HQ reorganization is out in orders. We took a long time deciding how best to organize HQ for success. It is important to have the right people in the right jobs and I believe we have that situation now.

**IT:** There will no longer be a Deputy Chief in charge of the Information Technology Division. Deputy Chief David Mager decided to go to the field when a position came open and I decided not to fill that position with another Deputy Chief. John Perry will take over at the head of that division. Chief Mager did an excellent job; however, I felt that with the limited number of Deputy Chiefs available, we would be better served by their leadership in other areas that are core missions of the department. The city has hired a new Chief Information Officer, Bill Oates and we are working with his Department to help us solve out IT challenges in the future.

**Training:** The Training Division encompassed both training and maintenance, two core mission areas and it did not make sense to me that they be combined. Splitting them into two separate divisions accomplished two things. First, it allows Deputy Chief Granara to focus on training and make more improvements to our training process and secondly, it brings a new focus on maintenance and improving the maintenance process by putting the strong leadership of Deputy Chief Peter Laizza in charge of that separate division.

**Maintenance:** I feel we can really improve the services provided by the Maintenance Division with Deputy Chief Laizza in charge of that division. Chief Laizza will be looking to make improvements in the efficiency of the division by using best modern business practices and instituting process improvement over time. Goals for that division are: (1) decreased out of service time for apparatus in need of maintenance and repair, (2) automated planned maintenance systems, (3) utilization of vehicle fleet management software programs and (4) inventory management.

**Emergency Medical Division:** This is a new division created from the former EMS liaison office. Approximately 40% of our runs are emergency medical runs and as first responders, we need to ensure we have the best training possible. Additionally, we need to work better and more closely with our brothers and sisters at BEMS and this division will enable us to do that. Deputy Chief Ron Keating is stepping in to stand up this division and get it off on the right track. He will work with the BEMS leadership to develop a better Standard Operating Procedure for mission situations where our services overlap. Additionally, Chief Keating will coordinate training between our two departments.

**Fire Prevention:** Deputy Chief Dick Mullen is the new Fire Marshal and I am extremely confident in his leadership abilities. Fire Prevention is a tough job and he is right guy to have as the Fire Marshal.

**Emergency Planning and Preparedness:** This was formerly "Strategic Planning" but that was a misnomer. The division is virtually unchanged and Deputy Chief Gerry Fontana will remain in charge of this division. The title best describes their function and Special Operations will remain in that division.

**Massport MOU:** On June 24, 2006 legislation was passed that created a separate Fire Department at Massport, MGL Ch. 122, Section 137. Prior to this legislation Massport was a crash rescue Department. The legislation is specific to the confines of the footprint of the airport. Since that time the Chief of Massport and I have been working on an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) which clarifies lines of authority and responsibility. We feel that we are close to an agreement and will continue to work closely with Massport.

**Information Technology Improvements:** The city is installing a fiber optic backbone throughout the city. We are working with the city MIS office to get all of our firehouses tied into this backbone as soon as possible so we can improve connectivity and provide better training products to the field. Additionally, we are purchasing fax machines for all firehouses and new computers to install as the fiber optic tie ins are made.

**Documentation of Sick Leave:** If you have documentation to support any of your sick leave tours, please submit it to the medical office. Our goal is to be well below the city average for the number of undocumented sick days taken. The city tracks undocumented sick leave by department and undocumented days are seen by the press and by some watchdog groups as not valid. In other words, if a sick tour is not documented, some people assume you were not really sick. If you have documentation for sick tours (official notes signed by a Doctor's office or Notes from school noting a child's absence due to illness or appointment bills), please submit this documentation to the medical office. Driving down the number of undocumented sick days helps me in the budgetary process and prevents us from being embarrassed as a department.

**Massachusetts Turnpike Authority MOU:** There are two agreements that are presently being signed between the BFD and the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority. The first one covers emergency response, foam fire engines, and communications and control systems and is a successor agreement to the one that the department originally had with the CA/T Project. The second agreement is about the construction of new tunnels, drills and inspections.

**Collection of Firehouse Journals:** A Special Order was directed by Chief of Department MacCurtain concerning company journals that stated:

*In order to preserve the history of the Boston Fire Department, Company Commanders shall catalog all company journals. There are company journals in basements and attics of various firehouses. Much of our history has been lost, some of it during renovations to firehouses. Each Company Commander shall submit a Form 5A listing the inventoried items and any other items they feel may be of interest by February 2, 2007. Company Commanders will be contacted to make arrangements to have these records removed to a secure location.*

Once all of the journals are inventoried, Scott Salman of the Public Information Office will arrange to pick up the journals and deliver them to city archives where they can be preserved for future generations of researchers to access. This project is very important to our history.

**Budget:** The FY08 operating budget request is due February 20, 2006. Each division has submitted a budget request. Additional follow-up will take place with each division as necessary. The initial direction on the budget is that the FY08 budget will be level-funded at the current \$153 million that has been appropriated in FY07.

**Capitol Budget:** The City's Capital Budget Office has notified us that work will be able to begin on three projects that were originally not scheduled to start until FY08. They are Engine 51 firehouse renovation, a Shoring and Sealant project that includes Engines 2, 5, 29 and 56 and sealant for Engine 20, and a masonry repair project at Engine 41.

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## PROMOTIONS

On December 20, 2006, Boston Fire Commissioner Roderick J. Fraser, Jr. administered the Oath of Office to six members promoted to the Chief and Officer ranks. Pictured here are Lieutenant Christopher Corwin from Ladder 1, Chief of Department Kevin P. MacCurtain, Lieutenant Mark Corwin from Engine 16, Captain Carlos Nieves from Engine 5, Commissioner Fraser, Captain Frank Walsh from Fire Prevention, District Fire Chief William Meyer of Ladder 29 and District Fire Chief Gregory Mackin from Engine 22.

