Minnesota’s On-Line Fire Incident Reporting System
Session Presenter

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Acronyms / Abbreviations

- FD – Fire Department.
- MFIRS – Minnesota Fire Incident Reporting System.
- NFIRS – National Fire Incident Reporting System.
- SFMD – State Fire Marshal Division.
- USFA – United States Fire Administration.
On 1/1/2009, the United States Fire Administration (USFA) discontinued the “old” NFIRS 4.1 system:
- Basically, the “paper” reporting system went away.
- After 1/1/2009 all fire reports were required to meet NFIRS 5.0 format and be submitted electronically.
Minnesota has enjoyed a well developed fire reporting system with very active participation by the state’s fire departments.

- In 2007, 746 of 789 FDs provided reports to the SFMD (95% reporting).
- In 2008, 741 of 789 FDs provided reports to the SFMD (94% reporting).
In 2007, 412 of Minnesota’s 789 FDs provided reports to SFMD electronically:
- 377 FDs still report via “paper” reports.
- That represents 48% of the state’s FDs.

The SFMD recognized a need to have a reporting system for these FDs.
- Tended to be smaller FDs (run volume).
- Most did not have $$ to purchase software.
Formative Evaluation

SFMD looked at options:

- Purchasing computers and software for all FDs that didn’t have electronic reporting.
- Mandating local FDs to purchase equipment.
- Hiring staff to input into NFIRS 4.1 and convert to NFIRS 5.0 format.
- Developing an on-line reporting system.
The State of Minnesota published a Request for Proposal (RFP) for an online fire reporting system in July, 2008.

Two (2) vendors submitted responses to the RFP.

The vendors provided demonstrations to a technical review panel (fire service personnel).
There were two parts of the RFP:

- Basic system (NFIRS and backbone to run the base system),
- Optional modules:
  - Pre-fire planning,
  - Inspections,
  - Investigations,
  - Personnel payroll, etc.
Formative Evaluation

• In September, 2008 a state contract was awarded to a vendor named ImageTrend.

• The SFMD was able to purchase the entire system (basic and all optional modules).

• Training of local FDs occurred in late-2008.
Program Description

• Features (modules) Included:
  – On-Line fire reporting system,
  – FD Personnel / Payroll module,
  – FD Equipment / Inventory module,
  – Pre-fire Planning module,
  – Inspection module,
  – Investigation module.
Program Description – Advantages

• No software to purchase or upgrade.
• Does not need a stand-alone or dedicated computer:
  – Can operate from any computer with an internet connection.
• “Real-time” data reporting.
• No special data transfer process to SFMD.
• Compatible with MNSTAR (EMS Reports).
Program Description – Improvements

- The State Fire Marshal Division has convened some technical advisory groups (i.e. “user-groups”) to provide suggestions for modifications to the system.
- The investigation module is under development.
- A mapping module is under development.
Program Impact

• In 2009, 526 of Minnesota’s 785 fire departments (67%) entered their fire incident reports into this on-line system:
  – This far exceeded the initial goal of developing a reporting system for 377 fire departments.

• Overall reporting for 2009 was also up:
  – 759 of the 785 FDs reported (97%).
Program Impact

• Saved local fire departments time and money:
  – About $30,000 in software costs the first year.
  – Less staff time to download and export reports to the SFMD.
  – No dedicated or stand-alone computers to run the system.
Program Impact

• Some FDs are tying this system in with their computer-aided dispatch (CAD) which populates much of the data.
• Pre-fire planning information is accessible while responding or while on scene (with air cards or mobile data terminals).
• Incident reports can be completed at the scene (less time).
Outcomes

• Near “real-time” reporting of fire incidents.

• Access to apparatus and equipment resources for fire department mutual aid needs on a local, regional, and statewide level.

• Ability to track fire incident trends on a more timely basis.
Outcomes

• High quality output reports (some “canned” reports and an ad-hoc report writer).
• Ability to access the system from remote locations.
• Ability to track sprinkler successes on a statewide basis.
• Saves fire department software costs.
Conclusions

• The on-line fire reporting system has been very successful.
• The number of FDs using the system exceeded expectations.
• The total number of FDs reporting went up in the first year of the on-line system.
• Future enhancements will make it even more attractive.
Questions