Model Performance in Fire Prevention

Howard Lagomarsino – Division Chief, Albemarle County Fire Rescue
Made Possible By a FEMA Fire Prevention and Safety Grant
## Albemarle County, Virginia

### Our Community:
- Bedroom Community
- 720 Square Miles
- 5% Urban/95% Rural
- 105,000 Population

### Demographics:
- Roughly 44,000 Households
- 30% population “at Risk”
- 10% below Poverty Line
Albemarle County Fire Rescue

- Combination System
- 102 Career
- 450 Volunteer
- 10 Fire Stations
  - 4 - Ambulances/Medics
- 4 Rescue Stations

Vision 20/20

MODEL PERFORMANCE IN FIRE PREVENTION
Fire Prevention Efforts

- Commercial Inspections
- Target Hazard Permit Program
- Plans Review Process
- Public Education
  - Events
  - Schools
  - Smoke Alarms
“The Moment of Truth"

Reported Structure Fire, Persons Trapped:
• Mother, two Children (2 & 8 yrs. old)
They Did it Right, Why didn’t They Survive?

- School Age Child Attended School Fire Safety Program
- Smoke Alarms Present and Working
- Escape Plan Included Two Ways Out
a Hard Look at Processes

Data is Key

FORMATIVE EVALUATION
Albemarle County Situation:

• Local Data (2014):
  » Over 12,000 responses
  » Over $3 Million in property loss
  » 5 Firefighter injuries
  » 1 Civilian Injury
  » 6 Civilian fire deaths

• 76% of Civilian Casualty/Loss = Poverty

• Odds of being a Civilian Fire Injury/Death
  » Overall Population: 1 in 62,000
  » Poverty Population: 1 in 2,000
But we are not done with this phase: Why is this so?

- Our data and research revealed:
  - Smoke Alarms worked in only 23 % of the civilian Injury/deaths
  - 69% of the time escape was an issue
    - Did not have a plan
    - Went back in for something
    - Tried to fight the fire
Goals & Objectives

• Target Residential Fires in Poverty Areas
• Seek to Reduce Civilian Fire Loss/Casualty by 25 %
• Install 2000 Smoke Alarms in target areas within 12 Months
• Reach 1000 Homes in the target areas within 12 months
The Target Numbers Not the Whole Story:

• Cultural Change within ACFR:
  » Not just Career, but system wide

• Community Risk Analysis and Risk reduction Initiatives at Station Level

• “Community Policing” Culture Development

• Station ownership in the Community
How Are We Going to Do This?

Is It Realistic?
### Key Lesson: No Need to Go It Alone:

- Fire Corps
- Red Cross
- United Way
- School Organizations
- Boy/Girl Scouts
- Fraternal Organizations
- “Critter” Clubs
- Citizen Volunteers
- Business Partnerships
- Local Philanthropists

### Government Partners:
- Police
- Social Services
- Schools
- Politicians
- Development/Planning
- County Exec Office
- City/Town Manager Office
Do not Forget Branding Your Message:

Be Creative: Competing For Their Interests

• Multi-media

• Partners
What We Got Done in 12 Months by The Numbers:

- 1634 Home Contacts
- Initial Data Obtained from Citizens on Risk reduction Knowledge/ Practices
- 2155 Smoke Alarms Installed
- Community Risk Reduction Training at Stations
- Still Evaluating Departmental Climate for CRR
Are We Having a Positive Influence?

IMPACT EVALUATION

Vision 20/20
MODEL PERFORMANCE IN
FIRE PREVENTION
SYMPOSIUM
Albemarle County Impact Evaluation:

• Pre-Survey

• Post Survey
  » Still Working through this process

• Increase in Station level Public Education and Community Outreach Activity
Does the Data Support the Desired Change?
Outcomes:

• Too Early to Say Definitively
  – Seeing change at Cultural/Station level
  – No residential Fire Deaths since implementation
  – Civilian Injuries Down Also
  – Property Loss ??????
RECOMMENDATIONS
Lessons Learned:

• Technology: Blessing & Curse
• Customer Time is a commodity
• Evaluation: Ensure staffing for Post-Survey
• Ensure CRR Teams reflect the Community
• Planning, Planning, Planning
Lessons Learned:

• Do Not Be Afraid to Evaluate and Change on the fly
• No Matter how Much you Plan, the Ground Game Will Change
• Adapt, Overcome and Improvise
• Do NOT BE Paralyzed by Analysis
RESOURCES
Questions?

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