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PERFORMANCE UPDATE

WEST VIRGINIA STATE FIRE COMMISSION

AUDIT OVERVIEW

The State Fire Commission Has Made Some Progress in Responding to Issues Raised in Performance Reviews of 2000 and 2004; However, Other Important Issues of These Reports Have not Been Adequately Addressed

The West Virginia State Fire Commission's Website Could Benefit from Additional Features



WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of the 2011 Agency Review of the Department of Military Affairs and Public Safety, pursuant to Chapter 4, Article 10, Section 8(b)(4) of the *West Virginia Code*, the Legislative Auditor conduct an update of the two previous performance reviews done in 2000 and 2004 of the State Fire Commission in order to determine the agency's response to the recommendations of these reports.

Report Highlights:

Issue 1: The State Fire Commission Has Made Some Progress in Responding to Issues Raised in Performance Reviews of 2000 and 2004; However, Other Important Issues of These Reports Have not Been Adequately Addressed.

- The State Fire Commission has responded to four of the eight recommendations, but due to a reduction in personnel the Commission is not able to devote more resources to public education.
- As recommended, the State Fire Commission is conducting a greater number of audits on fire departments, is utilizing statistical analysis as a tool to assist the Commission in addressing the state's high fire death rate; and has developed standards for local fire departments in regards to response times, communications and minimum levels of water flow.
- The State Fire Commission's website has elements of transparency and user friendliness but it needs more improvement in both areas.

ISSUE 1

The State Fire Commission Has Made Some Progress in Responding to Issues Raised in Performance Reviews of 2000 and 2004; However, Other Important Issues of These Reports Have not Been Adequately Addressed.

Background

This report evaluates the State Fire Commission's (Commission) response to recommendations made in performance reports issued in 2000 and in 2004. A total of eight recommendations from these reports are being updated, five of which were made in both reports because of a lack of response to them by the Commission from 2000 to 2004.

This report evaluates the State Fire Commission's (Commission) response to recommendations made in performance reports issued in 2000 and in 2004.

Update of 2000 and 2004 Recommendations

Recommendation 1 (Made in 2000 and in 2004)

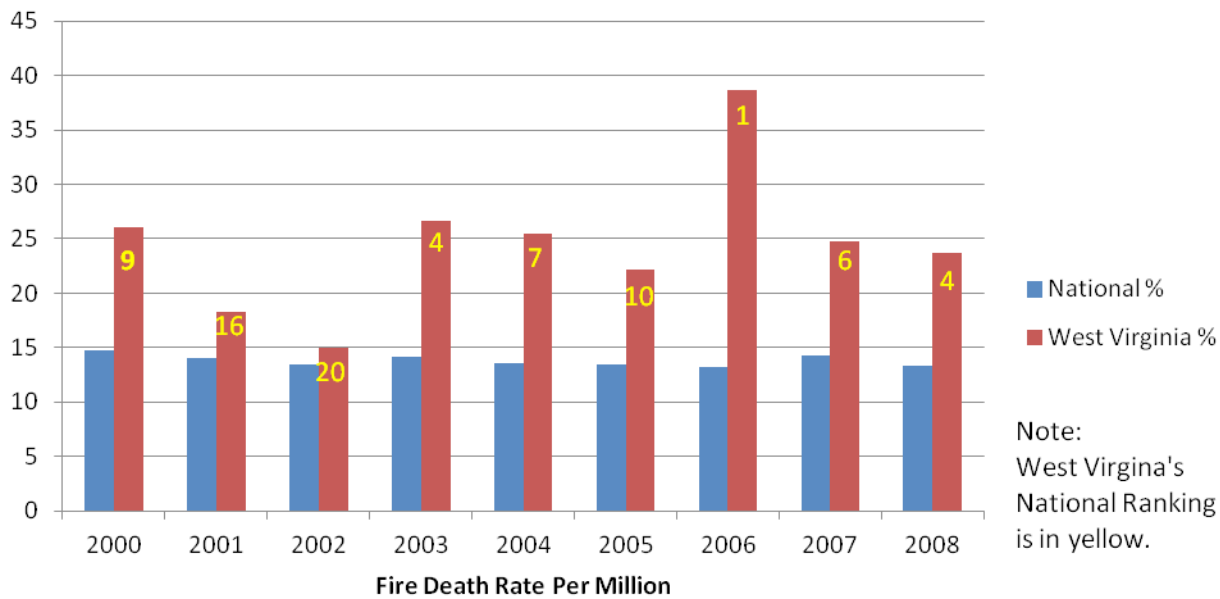
The Legislative Auditor recommends that the West Virginia State Fire Commission devote greater resources to public education.

Level of Compliance: Non-Compliance

The above recommendation was made in 2000 and in 2004. These reports acknowledged and agreed with the State Fire Commission's annual report statement that **"West Virginia continues to experience a grossly unacceptable fire death rate per capita."** However, the majority of all civilian fire-related deaths take place outside the jurisdiction of the Commission. Nevertheless, it is still the statutory responsibility of the Commission to reduce the high fire death rate in West Virginia. Table 1 below, demonstrates that in 2008 West Virginia had the fourth highest civilian fire-related death rate in the country, and West Virginia had the highest death rate in 2006. As a result, the Legislative Auditor concluded that with the civilian fire-related death rate being largely out of the Commission's jurisdiction, the primary way that it can reduce civilian fire-related deaths is to place greater emphasis on public education and awareness.

As a result, the Legislative Auditor concluded that with the civilian fire-related death rate being largely out of the Commission's jurisdiction, the primary way that it can reduce civilian fire-related deaths is to place greater emphasis on public education and awareness.

Table 1
West Virginia's Civilian Fire-Related Death Rate
2000-2008



The State Fire Commission has a Public Education Officer (PEO) whose reported duties in 2004 included the supervision of the Governor's Safer School Hotline, coordination of fire incident reporting, and other duties related to homeland security and flood assistance. At that time the Commission indicated that the Public Education Division was increased by four employees which allowed for more support for the PEO. Even with additional staff, it was reported that the PEO's number of responsibilities made it difficult to increase the awareness of fire safety. When asked on October 25, 2011 if the PEO position still existed, the Commission stated that the PEO position still exists but that "There is no support staff except for one (1) Office Assistant II and she is solely clerical support." The four previously employed staff no longer work for the agency. The positions, "...were reallocated by the Governor's Office to the Division of Homeland and Emergency Services."

When asked on October 25, 2011 if the PEO position still existed, the Commission stated that the PEO position still exists but that "There is no support staff except for one (1) Office Assistant II and she is solely clerical support."

During the 2004 report, the Commission indicated that due to other responsibilities, approximately 20 percent of the PEO's time was spent coordinating fire incident reports. The current PEO is no longer tasked

with coordinating fire incident reports but still has other responsibilities. According to the Commission:

...most of the PEO's activities focus on promotion of public fire education/awareness, whether through media outreach, training sessions, or collaboration with fire departments, State and civic groups. A very basic estimate of public education-related job time would be 92-93%.

The Commission has money set aside for public education. According to the Commission:

The State Fire Marshal's Office operates on a \$3.9 million special revenue budget. The Public Education Division receives \$81,156 per year (from general revenue). Additionally since establishment by the Legislature of the fire-safe cigarette certification program in 2009 (part of which is managed by the SFMO PEO), the SFMO and the State Tax Department split certification funding from tobacco manufacturers each year. The first year of the program, year before last, the Public Education Division received \$14,500 as the SFMO share; this past year, \$56,500 was received. These monies are by Code earmarked for fire prevention/safety programs. However, again, due to lack personnel, it continues to be difficult if not impossible to establish new programs or enhance existing programs, regardless of budget allotments.

It is the Legislative Auditor's opinion that the Commission has experienced a setback in regards to public education with the loss of four employees since 2004; however, the PEO may have more time currently devoted to public education than in 2000.

However, the reduction of personnel makes it difficult to enhance existing fire prevention/safety programs or establish new programs despite available funds for such programs. It is the Legislative Auditor's opinion that the Commission has experienced a setback in regards to public education with the loss of four employees since 2004; however, the PEO may have more time currently devoted to public education than in 2000. In the final analysis, the current level of Commission resources devoted to public education and awareness has suffered since 2004 and is not significantly more than in 2000. Although additional funds are available, they cannot be utilized. Therefore, the Legislative Auditor determines that the Commission is not in compliance of recommendation 1.

Recommendation 2 (Made in 2000 and 2004)

The Legislative Auditor recommends that the West Virginia Fire Commission should attempt to obtain private grants to assist in expanding its smoke detector giveaway programs and its public education in fire and burn prevention.

Level of Compliance: In Compliance

Since the 2004 report the Commission has been active in both obtaining private grants for fire prevention and expanding its smoke detector giveaway program. In 2006, the Commission obtained \$65,200 from FEMA's Assistance to Firefighters Grant for Fire Prevention. Also during 2006, the Commission partnered with the West Virginia Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity, Insurance Commission and West Virginia Community Action Partnership to distribute 5,500 smoke alarms along with fire prevention information. From 2007 to 2011 according to the Commission,

Since the 2004 report the Commission has been active in both obtaining private grants for fire prevention and expanding its smoke detector giveaway program.

"The PEO has partnered with other agencies that have obtained grants for smoke alarm distribution, and has assisted private and public entities (including fire departments) in submitting their own grant applications. Each year for the past several years the SFMO has provided 500 smoke alarms for the State Senior Conference at Cedar Lakes, along with fire prevention materials."

Table 2 demonstrates the number of smoke alarms distributed since FY 2007.

Table 2 Smoke Alarms Distributed FY 2007-2011	
Fiscal Year	Smoke Alarms Distributed
2007	814
2008	600
2009	600
2010	600
2011	506
Source: The West Virginia State Fire Commission	

Based on the reported information and the limited distribution of smoke alarms prior to 2007, it is the Legislative Auditor's opinion that the Commission is in compliance with Recommendation 2.

Recommendation 3 (Made in 2004)

The Legislative Auditor recommends that the Legislature should consider amending the Code to require smoke detectors in all new one and two family dwellings.

Level of Compliance: Established in Code

This recommendation had actually been in code since 1991; however, the Commission indicated that it has not had enforcement authority in this area.

Recommendation 4 (Made in 2004)

The Legislative Auditor recommends that the Public Education Officer coordinate educational activities with local fire departments.

Level of Compliance: Partial Compliance

According to *West Virginia Code §29-3-11(b)*:

*The state fire marshal, within policy established by the state fire commission, shall have all responsibility for the implementation of fire safety programs in this state designated to minimize fire hazards and disaster and loss of life and property from these causes. These responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the establishment and enforcement of fire safety practices throughout the state, preventive inspection and correction activities, **coordination of fire safety programs with volunteer and paid fire department** and critical analysis and evaluation of West Virginia's fire loss statistics for determination of problems and solutions. [Emphasis added]*

At the time of the January 2004 report, the PEO offered a public education class to fire departments four times in three years. On two occasions the class was cancelled due to insufficient enrollment. The fire classes were to allow the information gained to be provided to communities by the fire departments themselves. Delegation can be an effective way to educate the public; however, coordination requires knowledge of what is and is not being offered. However, for the 2004 report the Commission reported, “*We have no way of knowing the teaching activities of the fire departments.*”

In order to coordinate fire safety programs at fire departments at least three components are necessary: 1) knowledge of what is and is not being offered in fire safety education at fire departments, 2) knowledge of what locations of the state are and are not offering what is needed, and 3) efforts to strengthen those areas of the state that lack the needed fire safety programs. Currently the PEO attends and participates in local fire-department-sponsored and community-sponsored safety fairs when her schedule permits. Also, the Commission reported that in 2009 the PEO sent out a survey to all fire departments to determine what kind of public education resources they use “*. . . in their fire prevention programs in order to identify their most basic community fire prevention needs. Due to the lack of staff, however that information has not yet been compiled in a database to serve as a benchmark.*”

The Commission and the PEO are still delegating activities to the local fire departments but without the knowledge of what each community’s basic fire prevention needs are and if they are being met. The lack of staff is understandably a difficult issue. Although the Commission has made some attempts of coordinating fire safety programs with fire departments, it is clear that coordination has not been accomplished. Therefore, the Legislative Auditor determines that the Commission is in partial compliance with recommendation 4.

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The Commission and the PEO are still delegating activities to the local fire departments but without the knowledge of what each community’s basic fire prevention needs are and if they are being met.

Recommendation 5 (Made in 2000 and 2004)

The West Virginia State Fire Commission should develop a fire prevention and control plan as required by West Virginia Code §29-3-9(f). This plan should be comprehensive in indentifying the Commission’s strategy to reduce the state’s high fire death rate.

Level of Compliance: Non-Compliance

The Commission did not provide a response to this recommendation. Therefore, the Legislative Auditor assumes that the Commission has not complied with recommendation 5 and there is no available plan. It should be noted that the plan as required by Code would require identifying what areas of the state are in need of manpower, water sources, fire fighting facilities, vehicular needs, and public education and information, to name a few of the elements listed in statute. It is important to note that since the Commission has started a process of auditing fire departments once every five years (see Recommendation 6 of this report), it will be in a position to compile data from each fire department that can be used to identify the fire-fighting needs for the state. **Therefore, the Legislative Auditor recommends that the Commission consider collecting relevant information during its audit function in order to develop an understanding of the fire-fighting needs of the state.**

It is important to note that since the Commission has started a process of auditing fire departments once every five years (see Recommendation 6 of this report), it will be in a position to compile data from each fire department that can be used to identify the fire-fighting needs for the state.

Recommendation 6 (Made in 2000 and 2004)

The Legislative Auditor recommends that the West Virginia State Fire Commission should consider conducting a greater number of audits on fire departments.

Level of Compliance: Planned Compliance

The Commission provided PERD with the number of fire department audits from 2000 to 2010. Table 3 documents the number of audits with the accompanied percentage of fire departments audited. Since the 2004 report the number of audits performed has been sporadic. The Commission reported three years (2002, 2004 and 2008) with no audits performed.

Table 3
Number of Fire Department Audits
FY 2000-2010

Calendar Year	Number of Fire Departments Audited	Percentage of Fire Departments Audited
2000	71	16%
2001	23	5%
2002	0	0%
2003	17	4%
2004	0	0%
2005	4	1%
2006	12	3%
2007	25	6%
2008	0	0%
2009	1	.2%
2010	3	1%
2011	34	8%

Source: West Virginia State Fire Commission

From fiscal years 1993-1999 the number of audits per year averaged 42 but since that time the Commission has averaged 14 per year. According to the Commission, *“In August 2011 the Fire Department Services Division of the WV State Fire Marshal’s Office was created, with one of its assigned duties is to perform evaluations of all certified fire departments in West Virginia.”* The division has 4 inspectors that have been hired to conduct fire department evaluations throughout the state. According to legislative rule CSR §87-6-6.2, effective May 2008, a schedule of rotating audits is required in which 20 percent of fire departments would be evaluated each year, with the expected goal to audit each fire department every five years. Since the inception of the Fire Department Services Division, 34 fire department evaluations have been conducted. It must be noted that the rule to increase fire department audits was effective May 2008, but it has only been since the creation of the Fire Department Services Division in August 2011 that audits have increased.

According to the Commission, “In August 2011 the Fire Department Services Division of the WV State Fire Marshal’s Office was created, with one of its assigned duties is to perform evaluations of all certified fire departments in West Virginia.”

Since the inception of the Fire Department Services Division, 34 fire department evaluations have been conducted.

The Commission has made an effort to comply with the recommendation by creating the Fire Department Services Division. According to the Commission, *“The Fire Department Services Division was created to alleviate all of the tasks and responsibilities from the Regulatory Division associated with fire departments as mandated by the Fire Commission. A need was recognized that another full division was warranted in order to provide adequate service and oversight.”* **Due to the creation of the Division and the noted increase in audits completed since August 2011, it is the Legislative Auditor’s opinion that the Commission will be in compliance with recommendation 6 from the 2000 and 2004 report if the Commission continues its efforts in this area.**

According to the Commission, the State Fire Marshal’s Office/Public Education Division, “...has used National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) statistics for purposes of identifying public safety and fire department needs since 2001. . . .”

Recommendation 7 (Made in 2000 and 2004)

The West Virginia Fire Commission should devote greater attention to statistical analysis as a tool to reduce the state’s high fire death rate as required by West Virginia Code §29-3-11(b).

Level of Compliance: In Compliance

According to *West Virginia Code §29-3-11(b)*, the state fire marshal shall have all responsibility for the implementation of fire safety programs and develop a “...critical analysis and evaluation of West Virginia’s fire loss statistics for determination of problems and solutions.” According to the Commission, the State Fire Marshal’s Office/Public Education Division, *“...has used National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) statistics for purposes of identifying public safety and fire department needs since 2001. . . .”* This data has been used for press releases and fact sheets, newspapers, interviews, public safety announcements, and agency projects. From 2000 to 2008 West Virginia has ranked on average in the top 10 of civilian fire death rates per million residents. Therefore, as required per West Virginia Code, gathering and critically analyzing statistical information can assist the Commission in providing awareness and solutions that could be used to reduce the state’s high fire death rate.

The Commission’s current utilization of NFIRS and the state’s fire departments incident reporting enables the commission to access important statistics.

The Commission’s current utilization of NFIRS and the state’s fire departments incident reporting enables the commission to access important statistics. The Commission’s 2010 Annual Report indicated

that “the division actively supports and promotes the use of computer-based reporting in an NFIRS-compatible format by all fire departments in an effort to standardize and expedite incident reporting in West Virginia. This enables the Fire Marshal’s Office and the fire departments to access statistics that better reflect fire and life-safety trends and needs.” The 2010 Annual Report also identified several media campaigns that focused on the dangers of space heaters and their cause of recent fire deaths.

It is the Legislative Auditor’s opinion that the Commission has complied with recommendation 7.

Recommendation 8 (Made in 2000)

The West Virginia State Fire Commission should complete the requirement to establish the standards as required by WV Code §29-3-9(d). These standards should include minimum performance standards for response times, communications, minimum levels of water flow and pressure, and other performance standards necessary to accomplish improved fire protection and control.

Level of Compliance: In Compliance

In response to recommendation 8 from the September 2000 Performance Review, the Commission adopted an administrative policy effective May 1, 2007, titled “Requirements for Local Fire Departments.” The administrative policy addresses the concerns listed in statute such as establishing minimum standards for response time, training and equipment, water flow and pressure. In addition, the Commission can evaluate fire departments’ compliance with these minimum standards during audits of fire departments. The Commission has increased the number of annual fire department audits, beginning in August 2011, through the creation of the Fire Department Services Division (see Recommendation 6). The Commission has established a rotation in legislative rule (CSR §87-6-6) to conduct an audit on every fire department once every five years. Therefore, it is the Legislative Auditor’s opinion that the Commission has complied with recommendation 8 from the September 2000 Performance Review.

In response to recommendation 8 from the September 2000 Performance Review, the Commission adopted an administrative policy effective May 1, 2007, titled “Requirements for Local Fire Departments.”

The administrative policy addresses the concerns listed in statute such as establishing minimum standards for response time, training and equipment, water flow and pressure.

ISSUE 2

The West Virginia State Fire Commission’s Website Could Benefit from Additional Features.

Issue Summary

The Legislative Auditor conducted a literature review on assessments of government websites and developed an assessment tool to evaluate West Virginia’s state agency websites (see Appendix C). The tool lists a large number of website elements; however, some elements should be included in every state website, while other elements may not be necessary or practical for certain agencies. Table 4 indicates that the State Fire Commission integrates 50 percent of the checklist items in its website. This rating is at a level that shows the Commission has given consideration to both transparency and user friendliness in the use of technology. It is the Legislative Auditor’s opinion that while the Commission’s website has 50 percent of the checklist items, improvements can be made such as providing a section for open job postings, posting and publishing the most recent budget, and providing performance measures within the commission’s homepage.

It is the Legislative Auditor’s opinion that while the Commission’s website has 50 percent of the checklist items, improvements can be made such as providing a section for open job postings, posting and publishing the most recent budget, and providing performance measures within the commission’s homepage.

Table 4			
Fire Commission Website Evaluation Score			
Substantial Improvement Needed	More Improvement Needed	Modest Improvement Needed	Little or No Improvement Needed
0-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%
	50%		
Source: The Legislative Auditor’s review of the State Fire Commission’s website.			

The State Fire Commission’s Website Can Benefit From Additional Features

In order for a citizen to be able to engage in a governmental website they first should be able to manipulate the features and comprehend the information. Therefore, governmental websites should be user-friendly. A user-friendly website is understandable and easy to navigate from page

to page. Governmental websites should also provide transparency of an agency’s operation and promote public trust. A website that promotes transparency provides sufficient information on an agency’s budget, organization and performance.

The Legislative Auditor reviewed the Commission’s website for user-friendliness and transparency. Table 5 demonstrates that the Commission’s website needs additional features to enhance its user-friendliness and transparency. Some elements within the checklist may not be applicable to certain agencies but the checklist provides an overview of whether or not an agency is taking advantage of the interactive features of the internet and providing a website that is user-friendly and transparent.

The Legislative Auditor reviewed the Commission’s website for user-friendliness and transparency. Table 5 demonstrates that the Commission’s website needs additional features to enhance its user-friendliness and transparency.

Table 5 West Virginia Fire Commission Website Evaluation Score			
Category	Possible Points	Agency Points	Percentage
User-Friendly	18	10	55
Transparent	32	15	47
Total	50	25	50
Source: Legislative Auditor’s assessment of the State Fire Commission’s website.			

Modest Improvements in User-friendliness Should Be Considered

The Commission’s website is well designed. It is easy for the user to navigate from page to page. The site has important items such as a site map, search tool and a FAQ section which lists the Commission’s most frequently asked questions and responses. While the Commission’s website is fairly user-friendly, there are some features that should be considered.

The Commission’s website is well designed. It is easy for the user to navigate from page to page. The site has important items such as a site map, search tool and a FAQ section which lists the Commission’s most frequently asked questions and responses.

User-Friendly Considerations

The following are a few attributes that should be considered for a more user-friendly website:

- **Help Link-** A link which allows users to access assistance if needed.
- **Foreign language accessibility-** A link to translate all webpages into other languages other than English.
- **RSS Feeds-** Allows subscribers to receive regularly updated work in a standardized format.

A website that is transparent will have elements such as email contact information, the physical address of the agency, the phone number, as well as public records, the budget and performance measures.

The Commission's Website Needs More Transparency

A website that is transparent will have elements such as email contact information, the physical address of the agency, the phone number, as well as public records, the budget and performance measures. There should also be a way to contact the agency to voice a complaint, allowing for electronic interaction between the agency and citizens. The Commission's website has a number of elements within the checklist that informs the citizens about what the agency is doing. It encourages public participation by way of a general website email contact and the administrative official's contact information. However, there are a number of elements which could be incorporated to make the website more transparent.

Transparency Considerations

The following are a few attributes that would enhance the transparency of the Commission's website:

- **Location of Agency Headquarters-** The agency's contact page should include an embedded map that shows the agency's location.
- **Administrator's biography-** A biography explaining the administrator(s) professional qualifications and experience.
- **Complaint Form-** A specific page that contains a form to file a complaint.
- **Budget-** A link to the annual budget.

- **Performance measures/outcomes-** A page linked to the homepage explaining the agencies performance measures and outcomes.
- **Agency history-** A page explaining how the agency was created, what it has done, and if applicable, how its mission has changed over time.
- **Website updates-** A website update status, ideally, for every page.
- **FOIA information-** Information on how to submit a FOIA request, ideally with an online submission form.
- **Job Postings/links to Personnel Division-** List of available jobs within the commission and a link to the Personnel Division website.

The Commission's website has many good qualities of both user-friendliness and transparency but could benefit from additional features.

Conclusion

The use of technology has become a common way for state government to communicate with the public. To take advantage of this, state agencies are utilizing websites that engages citizens as active participants in the governmental process. Websites are also being constructed as a means to gain the trust of the public by documenting what the agency is doing. The Commission's website has many good qualities of both user-friendliness and transparency but could benefit from additional features.

Appendix A: Transmittal Letter

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John Sylvia
Director

December 20, 2011

Mr. Sterling Lewis, Jr., State Fire Marshall
West Virginia State Fire Commission
1027 Quarrier Street, 2nd Floor
Charleston, WV 25301

Dear Mr. Lewis:

This is to transmit a draft copy of the Agency Preview of the State Fire Commission. This report is scheduled to be presented during the January 8-10, 2012 interim meeting of the Joint Committee on Government Operations and the Joint Committee on Government Organizations. We will inform you of the exact time and location once the information becomes available. It is expected that a representative from your agency be present at the meeting to orally respond to the report and answer any questions the committees may have.

We need to schedule an exit conference to discuss any concerns you may have with the report. We would like to have the meeting on December 28, 2011, if possible. Please notify us to schedule an exact time. In addition, we need your written response by noon on December 30, 2011 in order for it to be included in the final report. If your agency intends to distribute additional material to committee members at the meeting, please contact the House Government Organization staff at 340-3192 by Thursday, January 5, 2012 to make arrangements.

We request that your personnel not disclose the report to anyone not affiliated with your agency. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Sylvia".

John Sylvia

c: Joseph C. Thornton, Cabinet Secretary
c: Christine F. Morris, Deputy Cabinet Secretary

Enclosure

Joint Committee on Government and Finance

Appendix B: Objective, Scope and Methodology

This Regulatory Board Review of the Board of Osteopathy is required and authorized by the West Virginia Performance Review Act, Chapter 4, Article 10, Section 8(b)(4) of the West Virginia Code.

Objective

The objective of this review is to determine the extent to which the State Fire Commission has responded to recommendations from the January 2004 performance review and the September 2000 performance review.

Scope

The scope of this review focuses strictly on the recommendations made in the 2000 and 2004 performance reviews, and to what extent the agency has responded to these recommendations.

Methodology

This report contains information provided to the Legislative Auditor from the State Fire Commission regarding its response to recommendations made in performance reports from 2000 and 2004. The Performance Evaluation and Research Division (PERD) staff then determined what level of compliance should be provided to the Commission on each recommendation. PERD conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Appendix C: Website Criteria Checklist and Points System

Website Criteria Checklist and Points System State Fire Commission			
User-Friendly	Description	Total Points Possible	Total Agency Points
Criteria	The ease of navigation from page to page along with the usefulness of the website.	18	10
		Individual Points Possible	Individual Agency Points
Search Tool	The website should contain a search box (1), preferably on every page (1).	2 points	2 points
Help Link	There should be a link that allows users to access a FAQ section (1) and agency contact information (1) on a single page. The link's text does not have to contain the word help, but it should contain language that clearly indicates that the user can find assistance by clicking the link (i.e. "How do I...", "Questions?" or "Need assistance?")	2 points	0 points
Foreign language accessibility	A link to translate all webpages into languages other than English.	1 point	0 points
Content Readability	The website should be written on a 6 th -7 th grade reading level. The Flesch-Kincaid Test is widely used by Federal and State agencies to measure readability.	No points, see narrative	
Site Functionality	The website should use sans serif fonts (1), the website should include buttons to adjust the font size (1), and resizing of text should not distort site graphics or text (1).	3 points	3 points
Site Map	A list of pages contained in a website that can be accessed by web crawlers and users. The Site Map acts as an index of the entire website and a link to the department's entire site should be located on the bottom of every page.	1 point	1 point
Mobile Functionality	The agency's website is available in a mobile version (1) and/or the agency has created mobile applications (apps) (1).	2 points	0 points
Navigation	Every page should be linked to the agency's homepage (1) and should have a navigation bar at the top of every page (1).	2 points	2 points

Website Criteria Checklist and Points System State Fire Commission			
FAQ Section	A page that lists the agency's most frequent asked questions and responses.	1 point	1 point
Feedback Options	A page where users can voluntarily submit feedback about the website or particular section of the website.	1 point	1 point
Online survey/poll	A short survey that pops up and requests users to evaluate the website.	1 point	0 points
Social Media Links	The website should contain buttons that allow users to post an agency's content to social media pages such as Facebook and Twitter.	1 point	0 points
RSS Feeds	RSS stands for "Really Simple Syndication" and allows subscribers to receive regularly updated work (i.e. blog posts, news stories, audio/video, etc.) in a standardized format. All agency websites should have a RSS link on their websites.	1 point	0 points
Transparency	Description	Total Points Possible	Total Agency Points
Criteria	A website which promotes accountability and provides information for citizens about what the agency is doing. It encourages public participation while also utilizing tools and methods to collaborate across all levels of government.	32	15
		Individual Points Possible	Individual Agency Points
Email	General website contact.	1 point	1 point
Physical Address	General address of stage agency.	1 point	1 point
Phone Number	Correct phone number of state agency.	1 point	1 point
Location of Agency Headquarters	The agency's contact page should include an embedded map that shows the agency's location.	1 point	0 points
Administrative officials	Names (1) and contact information (1) of administrative officials.	2 points	2 points

Website Criteria Checklist and Points System State Fire Commission			
Administrator(s) biography	A biography explaining the administrator(s) professional qualifications and experience.	1 point	0 points
Privacy policy	A clear explanation of the agency/state's online privacy policy.	1 point	1 point
Public Records	The website should contain all applicable public records relating to the agency's function. If the website contains more than one of the following criteria the agency will receive two points: • Statutes • Rules and/or regulations • Contracts • Permits/licensees • Audits • Violations/disciplinary actions • Meeting Minutes • Grants	2 points	2 points
Complaint form	A specific page that contains a form to file a complaint (1), preferably an online form (1).	2 points	0 points
Budget	Budget data is available (1) at the checkbook level (1), ideally in a searchable database (1).	3 points	0 points
Mission statement	The agency's mission statement should be located on the homepage.	1 point	1 point
Calendar of events	Information on events, meetings, etc. (1) ideally imbedded using a calendar program (1).	2 points	1 point
e-Publications	Agency publications should be online (1) and downloadable (1).	2 points	2 points
Agency Organizational Chart	A narrative describing the agency organization (1), preferably in a pictorial representation such as a hierarchy/organizational chart (1).	2 points	2 points
Graphic capabilities	Allows users to access relevant graphics such as maps, diagrams, etc.	1 point	0 points

Website Criteria Checklist and Points System State Fire Commission			
Audio/video features	Allows users to access and download relevant audio and video content.	1 point	1 point
FOIA information	Information on how to submit a FOIA request (1), ideally with an online submission form (1).	2 points	0 points
P e r f o r m a n c e measures/outcomes	A page linked to the homepage explaining the agencies performance measures and outcomes.	1 point	0 points
Agency history	The agency's website should include a page explaining how the agency was created, what it has done, and how, if applicable, has its mission changed over time.	1 point	0 points
Website updates	The website should have a website update status on screen (1) and ideally for every page (1).	2 points	0 points
Job Postings/links to Personnel Division website	The agency should have a section on homepage for open job postings (1) and a link to the application page Personnel Division (1).	2 points	0 points

Appendix D: Agency Response



**State of West Virginia
Department of Military Affairs and Public Safety**

Sterling Lewis, Jr.
State Fire Marshal

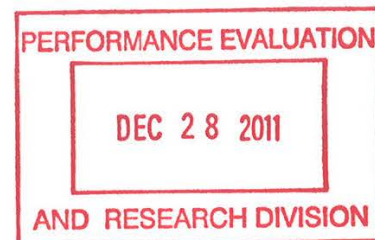
Earl Ray Tomblin, Governor

Phone: (304) 558-2191
Fax: (304) 558-2537

STATE FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE
1207 Quarrier St, 2nd Floor
Charleston, WV 25301

December 28, 2011

West Virginia Legislature
Performance Evaluation & Research Division
Building 1, Room W-314
State Capitol
Charleston, WV 25305



Dear Sir:

I have reviewed the draft copy of the Agency Preview of the State Fire Commission.

I found it to be very helpful in improving our ability in being able to go forward to serve the citizens of West Virginia.

I have no additional input to the findings.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sterling Lewis, Jr.".

Sterling Lewis, Jr.
West Virginia State Fire Marshal
Regional Response Team Director



WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION & RESEARCH DIVISION

Building 1, Room W-314, State Capitol Complex, Charleston, West Virginia 25305

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