

Tuesday, October 12, 2004

**Keynote address**

**Morrie Bradley and Linda Hansen, Emergency Management Australia  
The Future of the Australian Disaster Information Network (AusDIN) and the Role  
Played by Library Networks**

Morrie Bradley discussed the similarities of the problems throughout the membership of inFIRE, particularly in addressing the changing roles of libraries within organizations as centers of knowledge rather than centers of just data and information. Libraries have, in fact, become synonymous with networks as their role has changed to incorporate the stories and skills of individuals and other organizations to supplement their information collections. AusDIN is a tool that evolved over time to facilitate sharing knowledge across jurisdictional boundaries. Under the Australian Emergency Management Committee, AusDIN is seeking to facilitate the changes in libraries and their parent organizations by encouraging interagency relationships, networking of individuals, sharing of knowledge and effective use of technology.

Linda Hansen then proceeded to discuss the role of libraries in AusDIN. Librarians are the people in an organization who know or can find out about individuals and groups who working on the same types of projects and can then seek to bring those entities with their varied backgrounds, experiences and knowledge together for collaboration in a safe and benign environment where knowledge is openly shared. The Emergency Management Australia (EMA) Library is a national resource with both historical and contemporary materials and takes an all hazard, all agency approach to emergency management. The EMA Library further seeks to create connections between organizations and individuals through partnering with libraries both internationally and through ALIES (Australasian Libraries In Emergency Services). ALIES, with a history extending back to 1990, provides an example of the type of knowledge sharing proposed by AusDIN, and has recently developed a strategic plan and gained recognition by authorities through AusDIN. The main service principles of the EMA Library are to provide clients with just what they want, just when they need it, by being connected to what the organization and its people are actually doing, by cataloging the information that people in the organization will really need (even if it is simply a table or chart in a larger work), and by dispensing of clerical roles as much as possible.

**Marie Wilhelmsson, Swedish Rescue Services Agency  
Usage of an integrated decision support system in respect of a safe community and  
risk management**

The Swedish Rescue Services Agency (SRSA) strives for a safer society as the national authority with an advisory role over municipal fire and rescue services working to prevent accidents in homes and in society. Additionally, SRSA participates in international humanitarian relief efforts. SRSA's RIB program is their integrated decision support system which includes a library of over 3800 digital documents, 16000 records, all SRSA publications and over 500 symbols and clip art. RIB also incorporates

the “Safe Community” program, an injury prevention model for SRSA and the World Health Organization.

Sweden’s approach to risk management starts on the local level and the basic approach has been outlined in a recent law. Local agencies are responsible for accident prevention and emergency response, and the approach incorporates risk inventory and analysis. There are a variety of professionals involved in risk management. RIB’s tools for risk management include the RiskERA program, which is a GIS-based for locating risks, classifying them, and predicting the outcomes of events. The strategies for these activities have been modified since the 9/11 and Madrid incidents, and many documents have been translated into Swedish and resources have been examined for a similar response in Sweden.

RIB also provides local agencies with a hazardous materials database, chemical dispersion models, an experts and equipment database and accident statistics. Plans are to provide web access to the program later this year and to develop a mini-version of the program in English in 2005.

### **Bob Sutcliffe, Fire Protection Association Australia**

#### **A Message from our Sponsor**

FPA Australia is an organization that aims to ensure the highest possible level of protection to life and property from fire. The organization was formed as a non-profit in 1960 by a group of sprinkler designers and installers and its current membership consists of anyone interested in fire protection. They are Australia’s major technical and educating fire safety association. Some of their activities include:

- publishing *Fire Australia* with the Institute of Fire Engineers
- conducting conferences, seminars and workshops
- conducting community fire awareness campaigns
- producing fire safety publications
- maintaining National Technical Committees and special interest groups
- distributors of fire publications
- preparing submissions for government regulations
- contributing to the development of Australian standards

The organization has a two-tiered membership structure consisting of individual members who are governed by a code of ethics, corporate members governed by a code of practice and organizations who are users of services rather than providers. There are five technical committees focused on fire protection equipment and appliances and six special interest groups concerned with fire protection in various environments. For additional information, the website at <http://www.fpaa.com.au> is currently being revamped and should be fully functional in a month, providing access to the publications catalog and the library catalog (access for members only).

### **Katherine Kirk, Queensland Fire and Rescue Service**

#### **Planning Equitable Fire and Rescue Service Delivery Based on Informed Decision Making**

The state of Queensland has a population of 3.8 million and covers 1.7 million square kilometers. The current trend in the state is toward increasing populations in cities and decreasing population in rural areas. Currently, the Queensland Fire Rescue Service has 237 urban stations covering 87% of the population and 1565 rural brigades in 4

classes covering 83% of the area. Urban stations inspect buildings for fire safety, do community education programs and attend about 60000 incidents. All incidents attended by the urban stations are recorded in a database, and reporting conforms to Australian Incident Reporting System (AIRS). A project was undertaken to determine if there is equity of service throughout the Queensland population, if increasing population will increase incidents, and if and where new resources will be needed.

The analysis consisted of developing a model through use of locations of incidents, either as reported in first attending crew reports or from GIS data, use of GIS data to calculate areas of station responsibility, use of population data from census and by comparing collection districts to station areas to estimate populations. The model was then used to determine if the types of stations and brigades in areas match the workloads of those areas. The model predicted these matches fairly accurately and further indicated that the stations and brigades currently matched their workloads reasonably well. The data can then be used to correlate the number of incidents in a population and the number of incidents in an area of responsibility. This information, with state, local and national information on projected population changes, will be used to redefine boundaries for stations and brigades and to plan for future location of services.

### **Sheila Pantry OBE, Sheila Pantry Associates Ltd.**

#### **Fire risk assessment and management information provision**

There are five steps for risk assessment in the UK:

- 1) Examine a workplace and determine the locations of hazards.
- 2) Determine what could go wrong in each area and who could be affected.
- 3) Determine if the precautions in place adequately address the hazards.
- 4) Record the findings of the assessment.
- 5) Consider when the workplace will be reassessed, as proper risk management requires continual review.

The UK fire service has recently undergone profound changes. A recent independent review of the fire service, "The Future of the Fire Service: Reducing Risk, Saving Lives," recommends reworking the current fire service into a community fire safety service that addresses risk in incremental steps and requires that the authorities determine deployment and develop Integrated Risk Management Plans, or IRMPs.

These changes will change the future of information specialists who are working with the fire service; the focus on risk reduction and management, community education and fire safety, enforcement, emergency response and emergency preparedness will pose new challenges as our field strives to provide information services and training that are cost effective, up to date and provide the right information at the right time. Information services will need to support research that informs policy development, determines training needs, clarifies the understanding of risk and the development of strategies to deal with risk, encourages the identification and sharing of best practices and informs the development of new equipment and technologies.

A far reaching partnership of information providers, both across the UK and internationally has been created, with the Fire and Rescue Statistics User Group as a part of it. The goal of the Fire and Rescue Statistics User Group is to locate sources of statistics, promote the use of those statistics and provide a forum for users to communicate. There are concerns that the internet is having an unintended effect of

suppressing historical data, in that outdated information is often replaced with current data or sites are simply allowed to die, preventing an examination of historical trends.

Within organizations, an information audit can provide the framework for understanding the resources that they have at hand. An information audit requires determining what information exists within the organization, where the information is located, how many sections of the organization have their own information, what information is needed at what times, who uses the information, what gaps exist in the available resources, where are potential new customers, why do people choose this resource over that resource, why do some use the resources more than others, why do some never use the resources, how can the information be provided in the most useful format, and determining on what information each job in the organization depends. The challenges presented in the information audit can be used by information providers to improve services and build improvements into future plans.

Full presentation and paper available at <http://www.sheilapantry.com> .

### **Graham Metcalf, Queensland Fire and Rescue Service An informed media is an informed community**

The changing face of the media has had an impact on emergency services. With new technology, including mobile phones that can provide digital photographs and video, the media is able to obtain real time information from bystanders at incidents, sometimes before the fire service is even given the opportunity to respond. For example, in a fire at the Morrison Hotel bottle shop, bystanders were on the phone with radio broadcast implying a delay in the arrival of firefighters, when they were actually there within three minutes of being notified. Further problems arise when the media wants the facts of an incident before those facts are really known. They may then turn to speculative sources, possibly implicating innocent victims in the circumstances of a fire.

The key to interacting with the media as a fire service organization is to provide them with frequent updates and statements as soon as possible. The fire service needs to be prepared for an increasing demand for immediate information.

### **Sharon McKechnie, Fire & Emergency Services Authority of Western Australia Local government becoming AWARE**

AWARE is a program to facilitate emergency risk management as a community program. The goals of community emergency risk management were well understood, but there was an issue with funding programs. Initial funds were then provided by EMA to pursue the program, and after surveying local governments to determine their funding preferences, it was decided that the money would be used for scholarships, grants, and training.

AWARE's objectives are to develop local leaders in emergency risk management, enhance local skills and understanding of the program, identify opportunities to fund local emergency risk management programs, and integrate emergency risk management as part of the local safety programs. The scholarships through the AWARE program provide funding for individuals interested in coordinating projects, assisting in the development of emergency management arrangements, working to increase awareness of risk in communities, and encouraging locals to take an interest in risk management. In

the first year of the program, there were seven scholarships, four in the second year, and this year there are three.

AWARE grants provide salary subsidies so that members of the emergency services in areas can develop mitigation strategies and perform research studies to determine where the risks are in their communities. In the first year eleven grants were provided, seven in the second year and three this year. The final part of AWARE provides training to communities in the management of risk and recovery.

**Bob England, Oklahoma State University and Fire Protection Publications  
Susan Walker, Oklahoma State University and Fire Protection Publications  
International Fire Service Journal of Leadership and Management: Development of  
a new journal**

Oklahoma State University, the International Fire Service Training Association, and Fire Protection Publications are launching a new peer-reviewed journal focusing on fire service leadership and management. A recent research symposium was held to address the questions of what is already known about leadership and management in the fire service and what needs to be explored in greater detail. A summary of the topics, issues and themes that the symposium settled on as areas that need to be addressed in the new journal can be found under the “RS04” button at <http://www.ifsjlm.org> . The journal will strive to bridge gaps between academics and practicing fire and emergency management professionals. The first call for papers is expected to be issued through the website within the next few months.