



To: Maine Fire Community

From: James O. Ortiz, Ed.D. *JO*  
President

Sub.: MFTE Moving Forward

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Southern Maine Community College (SMCC) is setting the stage to strengthen the Maine Fire Training and Education (MFTE) program to enable it to better serve the fire community of Maine. This effort will take approximately nine to twelve months to accomplish; however, there are some immediate steps that will be put in place over the next few months. The goal of this effort is to integrate the program into the fire community with strong ties to the Fire Chiefs Association, Fire Commission, and related constituencies; to clarify, and if necessary reconstitute, the mission and goals of the organization; and to provide broader high quality training and educational opportunities to first responders within the fire community as well as, when appropriate, more advanced support to Maine fire departments. Taking this step has involved consultation with leaders in the fire community, and I expect these discussions will broaden as this effort accelerates. The following actions begin this effort:

- Appoint a Director for MFTE. The search committee has recommended four well qualified candidates for the position. The person we are looking for is one who can provide strong leadership to MFTE, be articulate in representing the organization, be collegial with the various constituencies within the fire and public safety community of Maine and at the national level, have exceptional management and finance expertise and experience; and be visionary.
- MFTE will be made an Institute within SMCC, a stand along entity separate from the academic departments that will collaborate with the public service departments and that will report directly to the President of the College through the Vice-President.
- The MFTE Institute offices will be moved to the Brunswick campus when the four buildings intended for SMCC are transferred to the College (July 1, 2010 is the projected date) along with all equipment now stationed in South Portland.
- MFTE will continue to have as a high priority expansion of quality training while at the same time strengthening or developing five regional fire training sites throughout the state of Maine. Standards will be established to ensure the

quality and currency of these facilities that will be locally managed in collaboration with MFTE.

- The existing MFTE Advisory Committee may be maintained but the composition will be modified to expand representation from the fire community.
- In late January or early February 2010 a strategic planning group will be assembled to review the last strategic plan and related documents and start to update the strategic plan.

This effort will be accomplished within the existing statutory structure, with the Maine Community College System Trustees ultimately responsible for MFTE. The Trustees have delegated to the President of SMCC the administration of the program (to become an Institute). MFTE will report directly to the President though the Vice-President, with a strong connection to the Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee advises and recommends to the President through the Director and VP. The Director is expected to work with the various fire constituencies.

It is my expectation that these changes and the collaborative manner in which they will be implemented will strengthen MFTE to the benefit of the fire community of Maine. MFTE will develop a quality model of training and education that fits the needs of Maine.