



FIREFIGHTER DIVERSITY

RECRUITMENT COUNCIL

NATIONAL RECRUIT DATABASE

2nd Annual Conference – March 2009 - Dolce Hayes Mansion - San Jose, CA

Attending were Fire and HR representatives from throughout the nation, numerous chiefs, upper level officers and, many returning Council members from the 2008 inaugural conference. Participants also included Gary Giacomo, the Director of Communications for the California State Firefighters Association, and Chief Ortega, representing the Department of Defense Fire Service in Fort Bliss, Texas.



In conjunction with the conference, Firefighter's ABC's conducted its 8 hour Entry Level Workshop for candidates the following Saturday.



The conference was very well received, with high marks given for speaker selection, content, the Dolce Hayes Mansion location and the excellent inclusive meals.



A “Why Diversity Matters” discussion highlighted the under representation of ethnic groups and women within the Fire Service and included a summary of challenges faced in recruiting qualified candidates.

Emphasized was the critical need for Fire Departments to perpetually fill their diversity recruitment pipeline through greater awareness of the Fire Service as a viable career option. Also noted was the need for community outreach programs that both motivate and prepare younger candidates for the application process.

- > *“Really enjoyed it. Chiefs Cloud and Jarvis were outstanding and inspirational.”*
- > *“Chief Gilbert was very good. Appreciated his honesty.”*
- > *“Great resources for outreach programs.”*
- > *“A lot of great information and opportunities to network.”*
- > *“I’ll be back next year.”*



Chief Cloud



Chief Gilbert

- > Keynote speaker Chief Rosemary Cloud, East Point, Georgia and the first Black Female Fire Chief in America, provided personal insights on her rise through the ranks and very candid examples of the extreme challenges she faced. While highlighting the need for enhanced diversity recruitment, she also emphasized the critical responsibility of upper management to create work environments that fully embrace diversity.
- > As an excellent companion presentation to that of Chief Cloud, Chief Debra Jarvis, (retired) provided an in-depth overview for “Assessing an Organization’s Capacity to Recruit and Retain Diversity”.
- > Chief Sheldon Gilbert, President of the California Fire Chiefs Association and Chief of the Alameda County Fire Department, discussed the importance of successful diversity recruitment and retention through the “Top Down” adoption by Chiefs. He personally committed to furthering diversity through his influence within the California Chiefs Association. Additionally, Chief Gilbert and his staff presented their department’s approach that integrates diversity within all their recruitment activities as opposed to treating it as a separate endeavor.



FIREFIGHTER DIVERSITY RECRUITMENT COUNCIL NATIONAL RECRUIT DATABASE

2nd Annual Conference Highlights *(continued)*



Dolce Hayes Mansion

- > Dan Biddle, of Biddle Associates, provided an insightful analysis of critical “Testing Issues Related to Diversity Recruitment” and how they must be considered to avoid an adverse impact among diverse candidate groups.
- > Chief Michael E. Smith, retired and former Board Member of Metro Chiefs, gave an inspiring presentation centered upon the courage required by chiefs to “Stimulate Diversity”.

Chiefs' Breakout Session

In addition to these and other highly informative presentations, a separate breakout session was held for Chiefs and high ranking officers. Among the many issues discussed, of key importance was group consensus to promote Council membership among their local, regional and national chiefs associations.



Council Member Online Chat Room/Forum: An in-depth tutorial was conducted for this collaborative online tool. For exclusive use by Members of the Firefighter Diversity Recruitment Council, they can freely post questions, comments, request input and share experiences on a wide-range of diversity recruitment topics.

Introduction of the National Recruit Database: This low cost subscription service is designed for aspiring firefighters to receive job, testing and other announcements that are posted, free of charge, by Council Member departments. Additionally, subscribing candidates have access to a wide range of resources to assist their preparation for the application process.

2010 Conference: Please mark your calendar for next year's conference that will be held March 18 & 19 at the Dolce Hayes Mansion in San Jose, California.

POST CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

> **The vast majority of attending organizations filled out conference evaluation forms that were rich in positive comments, suggestions for next year's event and ideas to enhance the online interaction among Members. A summary of evaluation forms is available for review in the Member's area of www.FirefightersABCs.com.**

> **Development for a number of suggestions in the online Council Member area are currently underway and will be available in early August '09. Included will be multiple usernames/passwords for use by each Council Member organization and the ability to view summary statistics for the National Recruit Database across a variety of attributes.**

> **The initial issue of the Firefighter Diversity Recruitment Council newsletter will be distributed to Members in July. Among a wide range of topics, included will be “How To” diversity recruitment planning templates, articles by guest editors and “Tips for Success” from fellow Council Members.**

