



Your Fire and Rescue Services working together

# FIRE AND RESCUE NEWS

Summer 2008



## Welcome

The East Midlands Regional Management Board is helping to strengthen joint working across all five fire and rescue services.

Examples in this issue show how we are equipping our region to respond to major emergencies, working together on fire safety, training and recruitment, and honing our skills to rescue people from crashed vehicles.

Plus, we highlight a variety of other initiatives from across the region which complete the picture of your modern fire and rescue service.

# Search dogs are new recruits

**A NEW ELITE CANINE SQUAD is joining fire and rescue services across the east midlands, specially trained to sniff out people trapped in collapsed buildings.**

Known as 'USAR dogs' – Urban Search and Rescue – they all receive up to two years of specialist training before they are ready to report for duty.

The two East Midlands dogs will be based in Leicestershire and

Lincolnshire, but they will all be available to be deployed anywhere across the region, or the UK, whenever they are needed. Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service has taken the lead role in co-ordinating training and establishing a national USAR dog duty rota.

Fire Minister Parmjit Dhanda met Gemma the Collie when he visited Leicester. Her handler Chris Pritchard encouraged her to show off her skills at sniffing out bodies in a mock rescue search. "These dogs are

real life savers," the Minister said. "Their skills are crucial to giving the fire service the best possible chance of finding people alive in collapsed buildings."

The recruitment of the USAR dogs supports the Government's commitment to make sure fire and rescue services have the equipment to deal with major incidents.

You can read about some of the other investment which has been made in the East Midlands on page 5.



Parmjit Dhanda (left) meets Chris Pritchard and Gemma the USAR dog

# Cutting it

**EIGHT TEAMS OF HIGHLY-SKILLED RESCUERS took part in a recent competition to find the top extrication team in the East Midlands.**

Two teams each were entered by Northamptonshire, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, whilst Lincolnshire and Leicestershire both put forward a team. At the end of a physically and mentally demanding day, the honours were awarded to the 'Service' team from Nottinghamshire.

Rescue from road traffic collisions is now one of the principal activities for fire and rescue services across the UK and this annual competition makes an important contribution to the development of techniques and equipment.

This year's Regional Extrication Challenge was hosted by Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service. It brought the teams together to exercise their extrication techniques and demonstrate their speed and efficiency in releasing people trapped in crashed vehicles.

Each team had 20 minutes to complete the challenge and judges rated their overall command and control of the incident, the physical rescue and the medical care given to the casualty.

The Nottinghamshire winners now go forward to the national championships in Scotland in August, joined by the highest-placed teams from the other four East Midlands' fire and rescue services.



The successful Nottinghamshire team in action

## Keeping staff safe

**HEALTH AND SAFETY STAFF IN LINCOLNSHIRE believe that a new scheme introduced in their fire and rescue service has helped to prevent colleagues being injured.**

Their statistics show that at least one major injury has been avoided in the last 12 months by acting on safety issues raised by employees through its Safe Card scheme. This reporting system encourages staff to highlight any health and safety concerns that they have, which allows them to be investigated and, if appropriate, action taken to prevent an accident happening.

The Safe Card system was introduced to encourage a culture of safety in Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service. Cards are available for use by both uniformed and support staff, and can be filled in anonymously if preferred.

Paul Barkway, Health and Safety Advisor, said: "Most organisations struggle to get half a dozen near-misses reported in a year – that's six opportunities to put things right before somebody gets hurt.

"But thanks to the Safe Card system, Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue staff came up with 296 suggestions last year. Statistics show that in taking action on these, we prevented at least one and, arguably two, major injuries in our workforce."



Paul Barkway

## Scheme to make safer homes

**A NEW SCHEME aimed at helping families to make their homes safer has been launched in Northampton, as part of a project to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.**

Almost 300 children in the UK are admitted to hospital every day because of accidents and, every week, nearly five children die. Many of these deaths and serious injuries could be prevented.

The new CASPAR (Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour Partnership) Home Safety Equipment Scheme is available to every parent or carer with a child under five living in the Thorplands area.

It is designed to help prevent avoidable injuries in the home by providing a pack of free home safety equipment to families, including a referral to Northamptonshire's Fire and Rescue Service to provide a free home fire safety check.

The scheme is funded through the CASPAR 5 Thorplands project, an estate-based crime reduction initiative which works in partnership with the Police, local authorities, the Fire and Rescue Service and the local community.

## Partnerships get results

**THE EAST MIDLANDS REGIONAL MANAGEMENT BOARD (RMB) is helping to make a positive difference to the way fire and rescue services across the region work together.**

Joint working on a variety of different initiatives is paying dividends, giving weight to the principle that more can be achieved if organisations share their ideas, their experiences and the abilities of the people who work within them.

The RMB was established in 2004, with the aim of making the five organisations more effective and efficient by working together on a number of specific projects. Each project is led by one of the fire and rescue services with a dedicated manager at its helm, but they all draw upon the experience and skills of staff from each of the partner organisations.

A recent report to the meeting of the East Midlands Regional Management

Board highlighted just some of the successes achieved through this partnership working over the last 12 months. These include:

- **Completion of the building of the new Fire and Rescue Services Regional Control Centre (RCC) at Castle Donington.**
- **Plans made to appoint the control room staff who will lead the way in working at the RCC.**
- **Continued progress with the New Dimensions programme, strengthening resilience within the region (see article on page 5).**
- **First regional recruitment campaign completed and training places offered to 85 potential firefighters, from an initial 2,500 applicants. Second campaign now in early planning stages.**
- **Development programme being developed for fire and rescue service staff at middle management level across the East Midlands.**
- **A joint Equalities and Diversity Strategy produced in conjunction with a three-year action plan for the region.**

- **Joint approach developed for procurement designed to save time and money and streamline procedures by reducing paperwork, buying in bulk and establishing common purchasing processes.**

Cllr Peter Roffey, Chair of the East Midlands RMB, said: The RMB aims to make the five fire and rescue services in the East Midlands more effective and efficient through working together towards common goals.



Peter Roffey

“We are making great progress towards this and the list of things we have achieved during the last 12 months, plus our plans for the year ahead, shows that we are making a positive difference and seeing great benefits from this regional approach.”

The RMB comprises two members of each fire and rescue service, supported by their respective chief fire officers.

## Water babies

**NEW PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICES (PFD) passed their health and safety tests swimmingly when put under the microscope by Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service.**

Tests carried out at a local swimming pool by team members Mick Harlow and Kevin Yip showed that the PFDs worked well when worn over full firefighting kit, and that they were suitable for people of different shapes and sizes.

Helen Crampton, of Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service, explained that they also conducted a test to see what happened when someone was in the water in full fire kit, but not wearing a PFD.

“We found that a quantity of air remained within the garments which can keep an individual afloat for a time, but that air dissipates with movement and, as the clothes and boots become waterlogged, the person starts to sink,” she said. “The PFD clearly provides valuable protection when required.”

Mick Harlow and Kevin Yip prepare to take the plunge



## Making progress together

**FIRE SAFETY EXPERTS FROM ACROSS THE EAST MIDLANDS are working together to share information, develop their skills and discuss issues relating to legislation and compliance.**

A quarterly meeting brings them together to learn from each other's experiences and strengthen the service delivered by the five fire and rescue organisations.

The first meeting was held in 2004, but the group re-focused its efforts two years ago in order to prepare for the introduction of the new Fire Safety Order legislation. This resulted in a number of initiatives, including all fire safety officers in the region receiving their training together in preparation for the complexity of the new legislation.

Now they are going from strength-to-strength and, as well as establishing a standardised induction programme, they have responded collectively to documents circulated for consultation and set up a group to look specifically at fire engineering issues relating to new buildings.

"There are a lot of developments taking place in fire safety and we all strongly believe that a regional approach to many of the issues is our best way forward" explained the group's Chair, Mark Huckerby.

"This will further ensure that each service is able to more professionally deal with the risks within their own areas, and we are seeing great benefits from this joint approach through more effective use of resources, sharing expertise, discussing key topics and training opportunities."

## Making First Contact

**A NEW PARTNERSHIP SERVICE helping people to live more independently in their own homes has been launched in Derbyshire.**

The First Contact Signposting Scheme pilot, based at Buxton Fire Station, gives vulnerable people a single point of contact where they can seek help and advice on a range of issues including home fire safety, crime reduction and home security, energy efficiency, grants and benefit claims.

Support will be offered by staff as part of their routine visits, which could mean that fire and rescue service staff carrying out home fire safety checks will be able to offer the householder another service in the scheme, if they think it would be of benefit.

If the resident gives their permission, then their details will be passed on and the relevant agency will make contact to discuss what may be available.



Supt Paul Rouse, Cathy Ayrton, Scheme Co-ordinator, and Chief Fire Officer Brian Tregunna

## Wading in to help

**CONSERVATION WORK CARRIED OUT BY NOTTINGHAMSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST has been made a little more comfortable for its staff and volunteers, thanks to a donation of waders and life vests by Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service.**

The equipment is no longer being used by the Service but it still has a useful life. It will be used for

conservation work, such as planting marginal vegetation and clearing rubbish at the charity's wetland sites, including Attenborough Nature Reserve and the Idle Valley.



Mick Pearson (right) from Notts FRS hands the waders over to John Black, Reserve Officer.

## Declaration for change

**NOTTINGHAMSHIRE has become the first fire and rescue service in the East Midlands to publicly commit to reducing global warming, signing a government-backed declaration to address the issues of climate change.**

Signatories of the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change, which include all of the county's local authorities, promise to work with local and central government to combat climate change, and commit to reducing greenhouse gasses through their own use of resources.

Nottinghamshire has already taken steps towards reducing carbon emissions and is currently carrying out an environmental audit of Service premises.

Organisation Development Manager, Jeremy Lodge, said: "We have seen the direct impact of climate change through the extremes in weather, leading to more emergency calls to rescue people and property.

"The Nottingham Declaration gives us the opportunity to openly add our support to climate change initiatives. It will also help us to address the issue of our own carbon footprint, and will act as a driver for further business improvement."

## Destination Bulgaria

**VOLUNTEERS FROM LEICESTERSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE will be driving 2,000 miles to Bulgaria this summer, delivering equipment to supplement the country's ageing fire resources.**

The group of 10 will travel to Haskovo – Leicester's twin town. This is their fourth journey in the last four years, having already delivered seven pumping appliances, one Foam Salvage Tender, two minibuses, one Land Rover and three Police civil disturbance vehicles.

None of them were suitable for use in the UK, but they have been valuable to the Bulgarians, replacing their 35-year-old front-line vehicles and providing additional equipment.

## Preparing for the worst

**THE EAST MIDLANDS IS WELL-PREPARED to deal with major emergencies following huge investment in specialist equipment, training and procedures that have been shared right across the region.**

Protective clothing, response vehicles, pumping equipment and staff training have all been enhanced through the Government's New Dimensions programme. This was prompted by the 2001 attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York, and was designed to strengthen the UK's response to major events such as terrorist attacks, industrial incidents, chemical spills and natural disasters.

The East Midlands equipment is based in different locations and crews have been specially-trained to operate it. Every item is designed to be shared and is on permanent standby, ready to respond to an emergency, wherever it may be – within the region, or anywhere in the country.

Last year, for example, our two High Volume Pumps (HVPs) – which are capable of pumping 8,000 litres of water every minute – were in particular demand during the flooding, and were used in Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, Humberside and Gloucestershire.



Unloading the Incident Response Unit



The High Volume Pump in action

Implementation of this programme in the East Midlands has been co-ordinated through the Regional Management Board, leading to a range of improvements for all five fire and rescue services. A further £300,000 investment in our programme has just been announced by the Government, to fund continued training and additional protective clothing. New equipment bought for the region through New Dimensions includes:

- **Incident Response Unit – for mass decontamination of casualties and rescuers following a chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear incident.**
- **High Volume Pump – for pumping large volumes of water away from, or to, the scene of an incident.**
- **Enhanced Command Support vehicle – providing command and control facilities at a major incident.**
- **Detection, Identification and Monitoring unit – for detecting, analysing and identifying chemicals at the scene of a chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear incident.**
- **Urban Search and Rescue Unit – with searching and listening devices, lighting, tools for cutting, lifting, propping and breaking and communication equipment.**

## A station for a new generation

**DERBY'S NEWEST FIRE STATION** boasts a whole host of renewable energy features designed to save 20 tonnes of carbon emissions every year and minimise its impact upon the environment.

The building, which stands on the site of the old station in Nottingham Road, includes a wind turbine, panels on the training tower to generate electricity, a solar hot water system, improved insulation and automatic sensor lighting.

It also has a meeting room for members of the community to use for various functions, and more than 20 local organisations have expressed their interest in using the facilities.



The new station is officially opened

## Steady improvements

**PUBLIC SATISFACTION WITH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES** across the East Midlands is high, and the Audit Commission has also given an independent 'thumbs-up' to the progress being made.

All five organisations covering Nottinghamshire, Northamptonshire, Lincolnshire, Leicestershire and Derbyshire were assessed by external auditors last year. Initial information was gathered by the auditors through documents submitted by each of the fire and rescue services. This was followed up with individual visits to interview various members of staff and to gather supporting information.

The organisations were all judged on the way they manage their resources, their business focus and the overall direction that they are travelling in. And the auditors highlighted areas where all the organisations were demonstrating clear improvements, and also aspects where they need more work, in order to strengthen their performance even further.

Information about the performance of each fire and rescue service can be found on its respective website. Addresses can be found at the bottom of this page.

## Royal recognition

**HRH THE PRINCE OF WALES** recently hosted a reception to say thank you to the fire and rescue services which support his charity, The Prince's Trust.

Representatives from Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, Leicestershire and Derbyshire were joined by men and women from the police and the armed forces to meet the Prince and the Duchess of Cornwall at St James' Palace.

The Prince's Trust helps 16-25-year-olds to develop self-confidence, leadership skills, responsibility and motivation to help them move on to

work, education or further training. Fire and rescue services across the country work in partnership with the Prince's Trust to deliver the programme.

The East Midlands contingent at the lunchtime reception included chief fire officers, managers of the Prince's Trust programme from the fire and rescue services, team leaders and two young people who have been helped by the programme, one of whom is hoping to go on and become a firefighter.

This reception follows an occasion in February when a group from



The Prince of Wales on a visit to Leicestershire

Leicestershire met the Prince of Wales on his visit to the city. Chief Fire Officer Dave Webb, Fire Authority Chair Cllr Peter Roffey were joined by four members of the Leicestershire team: Juliet Briggs, Tony Mangan, Steve Beeson and Jenni Stewart.

## Contact us

If you wish to contact us about any of the issues in this newsletter, please email [response@notts-fire.gov.uk](mailto:response@notts-fire.gov.uk) or write to: Fire and Rescue News, Corporate Communications, Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service, Headquarters, Bestwood Lodge, Arnold, Nottingham, NG5 8PD.

Keep up-to-date with the East Midlands Regional Management Board via our website - [www.emrmb-fire.gov.uk](http://www.emrmb-fire.gov.uk)

For information about all aspects of your fire and rescue service - from fire safety advice to career opportunities - visit your local fire and rescue service website at: [www.derbyshire-fire-service.co.uk](http://www.derbyshire-fire-service.co.uk) [www.leicestershire-fire.gov.uk](http://www.leicestershire-fire.gov.uk) [www.lincolnshirefire.org.uk](http://www.lincolnshirefire.org.uk) [www.northamptonshire.gov.uk](http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk) [www.notts-fire.gov.uk](http://www.notts-fire.gov.uk)