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# CORPORATE REPORT

NO: **R145** COUNCIL DATE: **July 25, 2011**

**REGULAR COUNCIL**

TO: **Mayor & Council** DATE: **July 25, 2011**

FROM: **Fire Chief** FILE: **1360-20**

SUBJECT: **National Fire Incident Database Research Project**

## RECOMMENDATION

The Fire Services Department recommends that Council receive this report as information.

## INTENT

The purpose of this report is to advise Council about the National Fire Incident Database (NFID) research project and the involvement of the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs and the Surrey Fire Chief in that project.

## BACKGROUND

The Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs (CAFC) has received a grant from Defence Research & Development Canada - Centre for Security Science / Canadian Police Research Centre to explore the development of a web-based database of fire statistics (National Fire Incident Database) that would be available for use by fire departments and other organizations across Canada. Data collected by means of the database could be used as the basis to recommend amendments to buildings codes and fire codes, to help fire departments to strategically deploy resources and to assist in targeting fire safety communications effectively, among many other actions.

As the CAFC representative, the Surrey Fire Chief will act as the lead on the project. The research team will be managed by Dr. Darryl Plecas, Director of the Centre for Criminal Justice Research for the University of the Fraser Valley's School of Criminology and Criminal Justice. Criminology researcher Paul Maxim, Associate Vice-President of Research at **Wilfrid** Laurier University, will conduct the research for the project.

This year-long project, which will commence this summer, will establish the scope for a national fire data system, including the types of data to be collected, the hardware and software requirements, the roles and contributions that may be available from partners, possible funding sources and the resources that will be required to set up and maintain the system.

The research will include consultation with fire service departments across the country, a review of international best practices and an investigation of existing Canadian data management systems, such as FDM (a Canadian local software vendor) and the Canadian Police Information Centre. A key focus of the research will be to ensure that the proposed database will meet the needs of Canadian fire service departments and communities.

**DISCUSSION**

Evidence-based decision-making is the foundation of the majority of Surrey Fire Service initiatives and practices including HomeSafe home safety visits that have significantly reduced fires in targeted neighbourhoods; the high-rise incident management system that improves response to high-rise fires; the award-winning attendance management program that has reduced staff absenteeism and costs; and an automated planning tool that allows for the effective dynamic deployment of apparatus and staff to match the expected demand for service within the community on a time-of-day basis.

The capacity to collect and analyze data varies widely from city to city across the country, and no comprehensive system exists to collect or distribute regional, provincial and national fire service-related data.

The proposed National Fire Incident Database would fill this gap, significantly enhancing the operational effectiveness of Canadian fire services. By collecting and analyzing fire data, the database will provide fire service departments the information they need to effectively target their resources, operate more efficiently and increase their fire prevention capacity.

**CONCLUSION**

The development of a reliable national source of fire data will help to improve the safety in communities across the country. The database would provide users with easy access to a wide range of data that would assist in ensuring that decisions regarding local fire services are efficient and effective. The involvement of a City of Surrey staff member in the development of the database will act to raise the profile of Surrey across Canada and beyond, as this project will likely garner interest outside of Canada.

Len Garis
Fire Chief