From: Albemarle County Fire Rescue
To: Jason Nauman;
Subject: National Fire Academy Announces Second Semester Course Vacancies
Date: Sunday, 06 April 2008 10:18:32

REMINDER: In an innovative effort to be good stewards of technology, the Albemarle County Department of Fire Rescue will begin phasing out mass e-mail correspondence in lieu of more advanced RSS feeds. By June 2008, system-wide *FYI* (information-only) e-mails, *such as this one*, will be discontinued except for important and/or urgent informational correspondence. In place of the mass e-mail distribution, information will be posted to RSS feeds. For individuals who may prefer to continue to receive notification of the information via e-mail, several free services are available to send RSS feeds to any valid e-mail address. For more information on RSS Feeds, Feed "Readers," and RSS-to-Email services, please visit the ACFR RSS/XML/Podcasting webpage.

Course Vacancies at the National Fire Academy

All vacancies are filled on a first come, first served basis and qualified by using the Student Selection Criteria listed on the NFA website.

Second Semester 2008

R101 Code Management: A Systems Approach
8/4/08-8/15/08 7 vacancies

R135 F. Protection for the Built Environment
6/22/08-6/27/08 3 vacancies

R203 Fire Dynamics-Fire Modeling
8/18/08-8/29/08 1 vacancy

R213 Analysis of Arson Management
7/27/08-8/1/08 14 vacancies

R491 NFIRS: Program Manager
7/20/08-7/25/08 14 vacancies

R492 NFIRS: Standards of Cover
6/1/08-6/6/08 21 vacancies
6/22/08-6/27/08 21 vacancies

R508 Partnering for Fire Defense and Emergency Services Planning

9/14/08-9/19/08 12 vacancies

R810 VIP: Leadership & Administration
9/14/08-919/08 8 vacancies

R811 VIP: Fire Cause Determination
7/20/08-7/25/08 5 vacancies
9/14/08-9/19/08 2 vacancies

R816 VIP: Community Education Leadership
9/14/08-919/08 20 vacancies

FAQ: NFA Vacancy Lists

Q. Why are there vacancies at the National Fire Academy? Are enrollments down?

A**.** Enrollments in the National Fire Academy (NFA) are actually up. Last year, in cooperation with our State training partners, our on-line training at NFAOnline, and in our resident and off-campus delivery program, the NFA reached 108,000 fire service professionals. In 1995 we trained just 15,000. Like every college, we plan our academic year based on last year's enrollments, the number of new courses on the schedule, waiting lists for current courses and the calendar and our best estimate of the demand for courses the following year. It's not an exact science.

Vacancies occur for any number of reasons – some classes have low demand because the number of fire department members doing that job is low (e.g. public educators, data analysts, training, plans review, budget), but these courses are in many ways critical to the success of fire and life safety and the administration of the fire department. Other times we may overestimate the demand. When that happens, we cancel a low-demand course, move the enrolled students into another delivery of that course and use the funds to run an additional high-demand course.

Q. It seems that I'm hearing more about vacancies than I ever have in the past. Why is that?

A. Well, you are. Before widespread communication using web sites and email, the NFA relied on last minute telephone calls to fill seats. We couldn't announce the vacancies in sufficient time to get the students here to campus. Now, with improved communications, the increased membership and support of the Alumni Association and the participation of many of the fire service organizations, we distribute vacancy announcements in a matter of minutes. It is working very well.

What you are seeing, though, is only the vacancies. We never send out the list of classes that are already filled and have a waiting list. The lists show only the few vacancies we have.

Q. I don't apply during the application period, I like to wait to see what classes have vacancies before I apply, is that a good idea?
A. NO! The first requirement for a student's eligibility to attend the NFA is their current job responsibility (Box #16). If you wait, it is likely that the courses you qualify for will be filled by others in the normal application process. When that happens, you lose the best chance you had to attend the NFA. Worse, if applications are low, the class you seek may be cancelled. The most useful and valuable course for you may never show up on a vacancy list. The better strategy is to apply during the normal application periods (May 1- June 30 and Nov 1 to Dec 30). Remember, if you qualify, you may apply for two different courses in the same semester (using a separate application for each); however, you will only receive a stipend for one trip per fiscal year (Oct 1 through Sept 30)

Q. Why are there waiting lists and vacancy lists at the same time?
A. Our courses are academically rigorous, and every class is considered mid- to upper-level college course work. It is important to ensure that each student is capable of success in the course before being admitted.

Students are accepted to the NFA based on the 'target audience' criteria listed in the catalog. We want to make sure that the course is a benefit to both the fire department and the students when they return; and is of sufficient complexity to advance the student's knowledge to improve local service delivery. Students who do not meet the 'target' criteria would slow the class down, and expose the student to possible failure.

It is more important to fill a seat with a qualified student than it is to simply fill a vacancy. This ensures success for the department, the student and the rest of the class.

Q. What is the most frequent cause of application rejection?
A. Used the wrong application. For resident courses, applicants should submit the long form (75-5) application which requires the chief's signature Didn't fill out the application completely Didn't sign the application, or have the Fire Chief sign the application Failure to describe your activities/responsibilities as they relate to the course for which you are applying and identify how you will use the information obtained from the course. (Box 16).

Q. Any suggestions to increase my chances of success?

A. On our website, there is a document that provides eight "tips" for completing a successful application. It only takes a minute – but will dramatically improve your chances for success:
http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/nfa/about/attend/apply.shtm

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