

International SprinklerScene

Vol. X No. 2

May-August 2001

IFSA Awards Grants for 2001-2002

Meeting in Anaheim, California, USA on May 15, 2001, the IFSA Board of Directors authorized funding to the following organizations for the coming year:

National Fire Sprinkler Network (UK) - US\$50,000
Residential Sprinkler Association (UK) - US\$125,000
Sprinklerframjandet (Sweden) - US\$40,000

This is the third consecutive year that the IFSA has funded the two programs in the United Kingdom. The National Fire Sprinkler Network, which achieved success in 2000 in its campaign to lower the threshold for sprinkler system requirements in single-story retail buildings in the UK, is now leading a campaign to provide sprinkler protection of schools. It has continued to expand membership, welcoming new support from the Royal Institute of Architects and the Building Research Establishment. The Residential Sprinkler Association has been extremely effective in raising the profile of residential sprinkler protection with burn demonstrations, training courses, and the development of British Standards for residential sprinklers and their installation. The RSA is currently spearheading a movement to provide sprinkler protection for Houses in Multiple Occupation.

The IFSA also initiated funding in support of several sprinkler promotional efforts of the Swedish sprinkler association Sprinklerfrämjandet. The projects include the feasibility of sprinklers on houseboats, sprinklers in multi-story wood frame housing, and exposure protection sprinklers for historic wooden streetfronts in the town of Eksjö. Earlier this year, a whole block of the wooden center of the Swedish city of Jönköping burned to the ground. In the Eksjö project, a row of open sprinklers will be installed along the top of each side of the streetfront, with two rows used where the building heights exceed 6 m (20 ft). The IFSA funding will permit better documentation of the projects as they move forward. A video clip describing the wooden streetfront project, translated to English, is available for viewing on the IFSA website at www.sprinklerworld.org

Published by the National Fire Sprinkler Association, Inc. for members of the International Fire Sprinkler Association.
P.O. Box 1000 • 40 Jon Barrett Road • Patterson, NY 12563 U.S.A. • (845) 878-4200 • FAX (845) 878-4215
Information contained in this newsletter is derived from sources believed to be reliable. NFSA cannot guarantee accuracy of all information. ©2001 NFSA, Inc. Cannot be reproduced without permission of the editor.



IFSA Exhibits at NFPA Americas' Fire Expo

The International Fire Sprinkler Association (IFSA) exhibited at the inaugural NFPA Americas' Fire Expo, held July 24 – 26, 2001 in conjunction with the Americas' Building & Home Automation and Americas' Security Expos at the Miami Beach Convention Center in Miami, Florida. The show, which was the first of its kind, targeted fire protection concerns throughout Latin America. In preparation for the event, IFSA had designed a new exhibit booth, which included translation of the organization's strategic objectives into Spanish. The Association's membership information was also translated and reprinted in Spanish for distribution at the show. Other handout information included an executive summary of current projects supported by funding from the IFSA and Resource Center Catalogs of the National Fire Sprinkler Association. Visual aids used to help draw floor traffic into the booth included a recorded interview with NFSA's Northeast Regional Manager, Richard Skinner, by a Spanish network television station in New York City. The interview was taped at the hardware store in New York City where a fire and explosion claimed the lives of three New York City firefighters on June 17, 2001.

IFSA Contracts for Media Response to Major Fires

The IFSA has hired the TV Access firm as part of a strategy to react to major fires worldwide with information on the effectiveness of fire sprinkler systems. Under the arrangement, TV Access will contact local television stations with news departments in the area of the fire by e-mail or fax within four working hours of notification by IFSA. Communications will be in English and will lay out the desirability of a story on fire sprinklers. TV Access will also maintain a relationship with CNN International and handle their requests with regard to sprinkler video footage. IFSA members with information on a major fire loss should immediately contact IFSA at +1-845-878-4200 and speak with Managing Director John Viniello (ext. 121) or Technical Director Russ Fleming (ext. 127) or send an e-mail to IFSA@sprinklerworld.org.

Sprinklers Featured in Historic Buildings at Vienna Conference

The NFPA Committee on Cultural Resources joined with the European Network for Fire Risk Assessment in Historic Buildings for a combined spring meeting and conference at the historic Schloss Schonbrunn in Vienna, Austria on June 13-16, 2001. Dr. Rudolf Wran of the Austrian Ministry of Education, Science and Culture was among those that welcomed the participants, and noted that the loss to fire of the famous Ring Theater in Vienna had changed some thinking in terms of fire protection, pointing out the need for preventing fire spread and destruction of property between the time of fire initiation and arrival of firefighters. Stewart Kidd of the UK, in his capacity as Heritage Loss Prevention Consultant, stressed the need to avoid complacency and to address the problem through technology, including sprinkler protection. Other speakers discussed specific cases involving automatic suppression systems.

Ironically, only a few weeks following the conference, a fire destroyed the Sofien Salon festival hall, the last of the famous Viennese ballrooms. Despite the efforts of 150 firefighters, the fire was so intense that it left only the outside walls standing. The building dated back to 1826 and was used as a bath house, public swimming pool, meeting hall and theater before Johann Strauss and others began using it as a concert venue. The hall was in the process of being renovated to include a hotel.

World Sprinkler News

Sprinklers in Background at International Fire Conference - Automatic sprinkler and water mist systems were noticeably out of the limelight at the International Conference on Engineered Fire Protection Design held in San Francisco June 11-15, 2001. Representatives from 12 countries heard only one presentation focusing on sprinkler protection among the forty technical papers given over the course of the five-day conference. The paper, entitled "The Significance of Sprinkler Effectiveness in Performance Based Design of Steel Buildings for Fire" described New Zealand research that evaluated the reliability of sprinkler protection so as to determine the probability of a fully developed fire. The study is based on the data compiled from 1886 to 1986 in Australia and New Zealand by Harry Marryatt. However, it is asserted that Marryatt's data showing that the fire was "controlled" by sprinklers in 99.76% of cases can only be stated as a conditional probability: "if fire occurs in a sprinklered building that is large enough to activate the sprinkler system then the probability that it will be controlled by the sprinkler system is 0.9967."

Ecstasy Report Endorses Sprinklers - The U.S. National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) has finally released the full Marine Accident Report (available at www.nts.gov/Publictn/2001/MAR0101.pdf) regarding the fire on board the Liberian passenger ship Ecstasy in Miami on July 20, 1998. The report states that the probable cause of the fire was unauthorized welding by crewmembers in the main laundry that ignited a large accumulation of lint in the ventilation system. The fire spread through the ventilation ducts to the unsprinklered mooring deck at the rear of the ship and ignited 11 polypropylene 900 lb. mooring lines, resulting in a fire that opened approximately 60 sprinklers in adjacent areas of the ship. Even though this was twice the design basis of the sprinkler system, the sprinklers are credited with working properly and preventing a significantly worse fire. As a result of the fire, the NTSB is recommending that all cruise ship operators install detection and suppression systems on similar mooring decks, and is pursuing a like change in the rules of the International Maritime Organization. IFSA Technical Director Russ Fleming assisted the NTSB in its fire investigation.

Central Sprinkler Announces Replacement Program - Central Sprinkler has announced a replacement program for GB and certain other models of sprinklers containing o-rings and manufactured since 1988. The replacement program is a voluntary program negotiated between the company and the US Consumer Products Safety Commission (CPSC). As announced, the program will include replacement sprinklers and the labor to perform the replacement. Due to the number of sprinklers that need to be replaced, CPSC and Central anticipate that this program will take place over a period of years. In general, sprinklers will be replaced with priority based on the age of the sprinklers, the occupancy, and whether the sprinklers show signs of corrosion or leaking. Full information is available at www.sprinklerreplacement.com.

Manila Fire Kills 73 - A pre-dawn hotel fire in a suburb of Manila in the Philippines killed 73 people and injured another 50 on August 18, 2001. The five-story Manor Hotel in Quezon City had no sprinklers or smoke detectors, its fire alarm system wasn't working, and emergency fire exits were found locked or obstructed. The fire was the worst in the Philippines since the March 1966 discotheque fire that killed 160 people, mostly teenagers. Two of the discotheque owners were sentenced to four years in jail earlier this year for violating safety codes, and a formal complaint has now been filed against the hotel owner for "reckless imprudence resulting in multiple homicide", likewise punishable by four year's imprisonment.

Australia Launches Quality Standards - Declaring that "construction is becoming an increasingly global business", Australian Member of Parliament Warren Entsch introduced new global construction guidelines aimed at meeting international quality standards. Based on the new edition of ISO 9001:2000, the HB 90.3 Guide was launched at an Institution of Engineers Australia conference in April 2001.

British Associations to Work Together - At a meeting on July 4, 2001, the Residential Sprinkler Association, the British Automatic Sprinkler Association, and the Association of Fire Protection

Engineers agreed to set up a Joint Sprinkler Industry Liaison Panel whose first priority will be the establishment of an effective certification scheme for the fire sprinkler industry in the UK. The associations also agreed to cooperate in the promotion of the fire sprinkler industry.

New Zealand Multi-Purpose Guide - The Building Research Association of New Zealand (BRANZ) has received funding from the New Zealand Fire Service, NZ Master Plumbers Federation, and Housing New Zealand in support of publication of a guide to installing multi-purpose domestic sprinkler systems. To be entitled the *Guide to Installing Fire Sprinklers in Houses*, the document will be based on the principles and findings of recent research work by BRANZ which showed that multi-purpose systems are both practical and cost effective. It is intended to be consistent with proposed revisions to NZS 4515 – *Fire Sprinkler Systems for Residential and Domestic Occupancies*, due to be released in late 2001.

NFPA to Conduct Seminars in Spanish - Protection Knowledge Concepts, a sister organization of fire protection engineering consulting firm Rolf Jensen & Associates, is teaming with the NFPA to conduct a series of Spanish-language NFPA code seminars in Latin America and Spain. The seminars will be based on the NFPA's *Fire Protection Handbook*, with additional seminars planned on NFPA petrochemical standards 30, 54 and 58.

Australia to Consolidate Maintenance Provisions - An effort to consolidate all Australian fire protection system maintenance provisions into a single document is currently underway by eleven subcommittees of FP-001 as they revise AS1851 – *Maintenance of Fire Protection Systems*. The new document, which will have eleven chapters addressing Sprinklers, Detection, Gaseous, Aqueous, Pumps, Hydrants, Hose reels, Extinguishers, Passive, Smoke and Evacuation, is expected to be available in the second half of 2002.

Upcoming Meetings, Seminars, and Exhibitions of Interest

September 17-19, 2001 – Interflam 2001, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK, Interscience Communications (Fax +44(0)20-8692-5155 or interflam@dial.pipex.com)

October 10-11, 2001 – Workshop on Water Mist Fire Suppression Technology, U.S. Dept. of Navy and International Water Mist Association, Golden, Colorado, USA (www.mines.edu/research/ccacs)

November 10-14, 2001 – NFPA Fall Education Conference, Dallas, Texas, USA, NFPA (www.nfpa.org)

December 3, 2001 – IFSA Board of Directors Meeting, Barcelona, Spain

April 25-27, 2002 – NFSA Annual Seminar, Las Vegas, Nevada, USA (Fax +1-845-878-4215 or www.nfsa.org)