



# INFO FIRE NEWSLETTER

STATE FIREMEN'S AND FIRE MARSHALS' ASSOCIATION OF TEXAS ★ 4450 FRONTIER TRL ★ AUSTIN, TX ★ (512) 454-3473

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### Copperas Cove Fire Chief participates in fire service needs assessment in Argentina

Fire Chief Dennis Haas from Copperas Cove just returned from assisting with a fire protection needs assessment in Garin, Argentina. Chief Haas participated at the request of Dr. Stephan Hittmann, President and CEO of the 911 Program Fund. The 911 Program Fund is a non-profit organization that was formed in the aftermath of September 11th and has provided donated equipment and training to the gulf coast region in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and many Central and South American countries over the past three years.

The trip to Argentina was at the request of Adrian Alberto Peralta, Jefe Cuerpo Activo (Fire Chief) of Garin, Argentina, a community of approximately 75,000 people located about fifty miles outside of Buenos Aires. The purpose of the trip was to assist Chief Peralta with identifying training and equipment needs, as well as to assist with the formulation of plans on how to develop partnerships between industry and the firefighters (bomberos) who protect it.



During the 6-day trip, Dr. Hittmann and Chief Haas had the opportunity to conduct an inventory of equipment and apparatus of five different fire departments in the region (federation) that work together and provide mutual aid to each other on a daily basis. They also had the opportunity to observe actual firefighting operations during a structure fire that occurred their second day in Garin.

Additionally, they met with Omar Leon, President of the Commission and other commission members that oversee the financial issues of the fire department and met with Luis Patti, who is a national legislator similar to our Congressman to discuss the burden of getting donated equipment through customs in Argentina. Mr. Patti reassured Dr. Hittmann and the firefighters of Garin that he is committed to helping streamline the customs process so that donated equipment will not be tied up for months in customs.

Other areas that were observed or studied were the receipt of alarms, response data, water supply, ambulance service and relationships with other municipal organizations such as the police. One afternoon was spent looking at the local hospital emergency room, which is staffed by three physicians who see an estimated 300 to 350 patients a day.



The trip culminated with an area conference in which Dr. Hittmann spoke to members about the 911 Program Fund as well as the responsibility that municipalities and industry have to provide local firefighters with the equipment necessary to adequately protect them. The conference was attended by representatives from nine different industries in the Garin area, by eight different fire departments as well as by representatives from the Office of the Federal Director of Firefighters, Office of Civil Defense, Autopista Del Sol (Highway Patrol) and Policia de Provincia de Buenos Aires.

Chief Haas has committed himself to assisting the 911 Program Fund with soliciting assistance from the Texas Fire Chief's Association and Texas Fireman's and Fire Marshal's Association for the donation of used equipment. As we all know, there is much equipment that fire departments across the state are discarding because it no longer meets NFPA standards or has reached its life term. This equipment can be donated to the 911 Program Fund who in turn, arranges for shipment to Central and South American countries in need.

Equipment that can be donated includes tools, fire apparatus, ambulances, fire hose, protective clothing, breathing apparatus, etc. For more information, contact Dr. Stephan Hittmann at 914-479-8800 or by email at [hittmann@911programfund.com](mailto:hittmann@911programfund.com) OR Chief Haas at 254-630-9700 or by email at [dhaas@ci.copperas-cove.tx.us](mailto:dhaas@ci.copperas-cove.tx.us).