Building Public/Private Partnerships to Support Regional Training Programs and Facilities

John C. Cermak

Alhambra Fire Department, Alhambra, California
Appendices Not Included. Please visit the Learning Resource Center on the Web at http://www.lrc.dhs.gov/ to learn how to obtain this report in its entirety through Interlibrary Loan.
Certification Statement

I hereby certify that this paper constitutes my own product, that where the language of others is set forth, quotation marks so indicate, and that the appropriate credit is given where I have used the language, ideas, expression, or writings of others.

Signed __________________________

John C. Cermak
Abstract

The Alhambra Fire Department is developing a Regional Training Center to be utilized by local Fire Departments. The purpose of this study is to identify the criteria for a cost recovery plan that will maintain the Training Center assets. A comprehensive literature review, a questionnaire, and descriptive research methodology were utilized to answer the following questions: (a) What are the criteria and processes for a cost recovery plan that would provide for a system of invoicing facility costs equitably to Regional Users, (b) What, if any, are the fees charged by other Regional Training Centers to organizations that use the facility, (c) What, if any, are the fees that California, Region 1, mutual aid partners should be charged for using the Alhambra Fire Department Regional Training Center, and (d) What, if any, fees should private training partners be charged for using the Alhambra Fire Department Regional Training Center? The results identified several foundational criteria and processes necessary for a cost recovery plan.

Regional training is widely used to enhance training capabilities and reduce costs. Identification of partners is crucial to the development of Regional Training Centers. Regional Training Centers are vitally necessary throughout California. A Joint Powers Authority agreement or business plan was found to foster professionalism, limit liability, and delineate costs and fees. It further identified that Cost Recovery Programs are utilized nationwide to subsidize the maintenance and upkeep of training centers, and fee generation is used to augment costs for agreement participants. It is recommended to identify key partners to develop a Joint Powers Authority agreement for the Regional Training Center. Key partners shall develop the rules, regulations, hold harmless requirements, guidelines and fees to recover and charge for the use of the facility.
# Table of Contents

Certification Statement ...........................................................................................................page 2

Abstract .................................................................................................................................page 3

Table of Contents ..................................................................................................................page 4

Introduction ...........................................................................................................................page 5

Background and Significance .................................................................................................page 6

Literature Review ....................................................................................................................page 13

Procedures .............................................................................................................................page 23

Results .....................................................................................................................................page 26

Discussion ...............................................................................................................................page 31

Recommendation ....................................................................................................................page 36

Reference List .........................................................................................................................page 38

## Appendices

Appendix A: .................................................Questionnaire - Fire Departments without training centers

Appendix B: ..................................................Questionnaire - Fire Departments with training centers

Appendix C: .................................................North Net Training Center Fee Schedule

Appendix D: ...............................................Rio Hondo College Draft agreement and Fee Schedule

Appendix E: .................................City of Fremont Fire Training Center Strategic Business Plan
Building Public/Private Partnerships to Support Regional Training Programs and Facilities

In early 2002, the City of Alhambra completed the development of a Regional Training Center funded partially by a Housing and Urban Development grant for regional needs and the remainder by the City of Alhambra general fund. The City of Alhambra provided the land for the training center located at 911 S. New Avenue, Alhambra, California. In 2004, the site was identified as one of seven locations within Los Angeles County, through the Urban Areas Securities Initiative, to support Urban Search and Rescue training for the 18 recently created Type 1, Heavy Rescue teams. The site was completed on January 10, 2010. The City of Alhambra and potential area partners must now agree on how to fund the maintenance and upkeep of the facility. The problem is that there is no cost recovery process in place to share fiscal responsibility for facility maintenance, upkeep, and associated costs. The purpose of this research paper is to identify the criteria for a cost recovery plan that will maintain the Regional Training Center assets.

A comprehensive literature review, a questionnaire, and descriptive research methodology were utilized to answer the following questions: (a) What are the criteria and processes for a cost recovery plan that would provide for a system of invoicing facility costs equitably to Regional Users, (b) What, if any, are the fees charged by other Regional Training Centers to organizations that use the facility, (c) What, if any, are the fees that California, Region 1, mutual aid partners should be charged for using the Alhambra Fire Department Regional Training Center, and (d) What, if any, fees should private training partners be charged for using the Alhambra Fire Department Regional Training Center?
Background and Significance

The City of Alhambra is a charter law city with a council/mayor form of government. The City of Alhambra is located in Los Angeles County, six miles from Los Angeles City Hall. The west border of Alhambra is adjacent to Los Angeles City, the east border is shared with the City of San Gabriel, the south border is shared with Monterey Park, and the north border is shared with South Pasadena and San Marino. The city was incorporated in 1902 and the fire department was formed in 1906. The city is 7.65 square miles with an estimated population of 92,000. The fire department is part of the Office of Emergency Services, Region 1, Area C. Area C is composed of 11 cities that include Alhambra, Arcadia, Burbank, Glendale, Monrovia, Monterey Park, Pasadena, San Gabriel, San Marino, Sierra Madre, and South Pasadena. Area C has three training centers, one located in the southeast portion of Area C in the City of Alhambra, one in the City of Glendale, and one in the City of Burbank, both at the furthest northwest section of the area. The City of Alhambra is part of the California Disaster and Civil Defense Master Mutual Aid Agreement, as well as having automatic aid agreements with neighboring agencies.

The Alhambra Fire Department has four fire stations geographically located throughout the city that divide the community into four districts. At Station 71, nine personnel staff one paramedic engine company, one truck company, a paramedic rescue ambulance, a battalion chief and a Type 1 Heavy Rescue that acts as a reserve truck when the truck company is out of service. It is cross-staffed by Station 71 personnel as necessary. At Station 72, three personnel staff one paramedic engine company and maintain a reserve ambulance. At Station 73, three personnel staff one paramedic engine company and maintain a reserve engine company. At Station 74, five personnel staff one paramedic engine company and one paramedic rescue ambulance. Minimum
staffing is 20 persons daily. Currently, the Fire Chief manages the administrative division with two fire prevention specialists and four clerks.

In 1999, research and development of a training center within the City of Alhambra opened the doors to regionalized training. There was minimal input from area departments since the land and the money to finance the project came from the City of Alhambra general fund. A portion of the funding was derived from Housing and Urban Development for regional needs. The remainder was general fund money used for a necessary capital improvement. City of Alhambra land was developed for the training center located at 911 S. New Avenue. In early 2002, the training center was completed and dedicated. Area fire departments began training together more without ever discussing the cost of maintaining the facility and a cost recovery process.

September 11, 2001, Al Qaeda attacks, December 26, 2004, Indian Ocean Earthquake, and August 28, 2005, Katrina, changed the face of emergency services. The Federal Government created Homeland Security grant programs to strengthen response capabilities of first responders nationwide for large catastrophic events. The NFPA, Urban Fire Forum, recommended the following:

(a) The use of the National Incident Management System is essential to the successful coordination of preparedness, response, and recovery for all incidents. (b) The mandated implementation of NIMS must be accelerated and enforced at all levels of government, without exception. (c) The director of FEMA must be elevated to a Cabinet-level position to ensure that prevention, response, mitigation and recovery efforts pertaining to natural and manmade disasters/emergencies receive appropriate commitment and support. (d) Qualified individuals with appropriate fire service/emergency management experience
must be appointed to the following key positions: FEMA director, under secretary for preparedness and administrator of the U.S. Fire Administration. (e) The American fire service developed the Incident Management System and has demonstrated experience in emergency preparedness, response and recovery. The leadership role of the Fire Service in Emergency Response and Public Safety must be used through appointments to key positions in the DHS and FEMA. (Metro Chiefs, 2005, ¶ 2)

After September 11, 2001, the nation’s leaders met and decided that the face of disaster management had changed. Concurrently, several large calamities rocked the world. The California Seismic Commission and public safety officials identified the need for additional resources and training to meet the new face of emergency services in conjunction with the NFPA, Urban Fire Forum. According to the California Seismic Safety Commission:

On September 11, 2002, AB 2002 (Alquist) was signed into law establishing the Urban Search and Rescue Emergency Advisory Committee. Guided by the California Seismic Safety Commission and in consultation with the Governor’s Office of Emergency Services, the Committee was directed to prepare a strategy, plan and recommendations addressing the resource needs of emergency urban search and rescue teams in California (California Seismic Safety Commission [CSSC No. 03-05], September 2003, p. 4).

Because of these requirements and recommendations, the Metropolitan Fire Chief’s Association met and discussed critical areas of concern and needs to meet the ever-increasing demand during large-scale disasters and calamities. The Los Angeles Area Fire Chief’s Association, in conjunction with the Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Association’s recommendations, identified the need for 18 additional Type 1 Hazardous Materials units, 18 Type 1 Heavy Rescue units, multiple Mass Casualty Units, multiple Mass Decontamination Units, upgraded interoperable
Building Public/Private Partnerships

communications, compatible self-contained breathing apparatus, and interoperability between Emergency Operations Centers regionally, statewide, and nationally.

The Alhambra Fire Department Fire Chief recognized the need to assist the area and region in developing additional resources for major catastrophes. Immediately, only 15 agencies volunteered to take on the responsibility of accepting a new resource capability as stipulated in the recommendations of the Los Angeles Area Fire Chief’s Association. Fire Chief Vincent L. Kemp volunteered to accept the new capability. Eventually, 21 were allowed with several as existing resources. The City of Alhambra does not have a large Hazardous Material issue within the city, but does have a significant amount of pre 1933 construction in the downtown districts and a significant amount of industry with heavy floor, heavy wall construction. Urban Search and Rescue was a much higher need for the community. The management team was tasked with identifying the core necessities to managing a robust program. It was presented to the area fire chief’s that five key issues should be addressed to sustain new resources and support a robust program: 1) The proper equipment to do the job, 2) The proper training of personnel to safely complete the assignments of specialty teams, 3) The proper apparatus to transport the equipment, 4) The facility to support training of personnel, and 5) The personnel trained to the train-the-trainer level necessary to sustain an ongoing program once grant funding is reduced.

Five to ten years later, public entities are encountering increased budgetary issues across the nation that transcend through states and counties, to the deepest levels of local governments, holding every department accountable to every aspect of their budgets. Homeland Security grant funding has been declining annually for the Los Angeles- Long Beach Urban Area. Emergency services are not exempt from the scrutiny of a recession or depression, being asked to do more with less during difficult times. Many public safety entities are reducing staffing levels, both
temporarily and permanently, deepening the need for not only physical resources, but personnel training, and personnel resources used for specialized services and teams in major incidents.

In 2002, the Urban Areas Securities Initiative, Los Angeles- Long Beach, developed a plan to meet the needs of the new face of emergency services. Alhambra was one of eighteen fire departments to receive a Type 1 Heavy Rescue and one of seven sites in Los Angeles County identified as a Regional Satellite Training Center for the delivery of Urban Search and Rescue training to regional partners. Grant funding was secured to develop the site. The site additions were completed January 10, 2010. The process of identifying partners and the development of fair and equitable use agreements and fee schedules has presented a challenge during tough economic times. Since the opening of the Alhambra Fire Department Training Center in 2002, Los Angeles County Sheriff Search and Rescue, Los Angeles County Coroner, Drug Enforcement Agency, Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms, Department of Homeland Security, Alhambra Police Department, and almost all Area C Fire Departments have utilized the training center in conjunction with Instructional Service Agreements with East Los Angeles College, Rio Hondo Community College, California Firefighters Joint Apprenticeship Committee, and Peace Officer’s Standards and Training. In difficult recessionary times, the city management questioned the fairness and equity of one city financing the costs related to maintaining the training facility. In 2002, the economy had peaked, and started a downturn. However, costs of maintaining the training facility had not been addressed or identified. In 2008, at the low of this economic downturn, all aspects of the budget were scrutinized and questioned as to the validity and fairness, identifying the fact that a significant cost was being incurred by the City of Alhambra for maintaining the training facility.
Area fire departments and chief’s associations must now decide how to maintain, upkeep, and certify, annually per NFPA, the developed sites. The Alhambra Fire Department agreed to develop a Regional Training Center that will need annual testing and certification, maintenance, utilities, prop upkeep, and supplies for daily use by area partners. The Regional Training Center is a vital necessity for mandated training that would likely not be met otherwise. With the pressure on annual budgets, fire departments are apprehensive to allocate any new funds and agreements for services. An agreement between individual partners has not been completed largely because of the lack of identifying committed partners in the Regional Training Center.

This research project is a critical element to the completion of the regional training concept and capability. It identifies solutions to challenges enabling a process for cost recovery for maintenance and upkeep of the facility, as well as fee generation to enhance training programs for area firefighters throughout the region. This project relates to the following goals and objectives of the Executive Development course: (a) Building high-performance teams, (b) Adaptive/Transformational leadership, (c) Approaches to leading and managing change, and (e) Applied research. The Executive Development course, addresses teams, leadership, change, creativity, and service quality. The Alhambra Regional Fire Training Center exemplifies all of these areas covered in the course. Training together, as a region, when we respond together, builds teams while learning together. It breaks down barriers between departments while eliminating duplicity in requirements. The City of Alhambra’s necessity to develop a cost recovery plan provides a creative way to sustain assets for future years equitably to all users. Fee generation can be utilized to offset operational costs and lower overall costs to users. Developing an agreed upon, fair and consistent, fee structure and cost recovery process, directly relates to the significance of this research project and listed sections of the Executive Development course.
The problem this research seeks to answer is related to the United States Fire Administration (USFA) operational objectives: (c) Reduce the loss of life from fire of firefighters and (e) To respond appropriately in a timely manner to emerging issues. Increasing capabilities and training levels will reduce injuries and deaths in daily firefighting operations. Since this is a new Regional Training Center, it is an emerging issue.
Literature Review

Today’s fire service has changed from twenty years ago. In 1990, Chief Steve Merger wrote, “The combined effect of increasing requirements and decreasing resources is forcing fire service managers to do more for less.”(Merger, 1990, p. 28-29) Today, it is exacerbated with the increase of population and housing, with little or no growth to personnel and resources in many areas. A litigious society, mixed with increased training mandates, coupled with increased community expectations has created somewhat of a quagmire for fire service leaders. Merger notes that fire departments are faced with decreased resource availability, most evident in the areas of financial and personnel resources (Merger). Automatic and mutual aid agreements are being depended upon on greater levels daily. These leadership challenges must be dissected to figure out how to do more for less. The question has to be raised as to the need of resources to meet the goals of emergency management at all levels. Once the resource needs are identified, the next question to arise is how to fund the cost of those resources, whether human or physical.

Larson acknowledged that consolidating and reorganizations cut costs (Larson, 1996). One option is to consider consolidation of resources through regionalization. Regionalization takes on many faces. A full consolidation may include the merging of multiple fire departments. However, this option may be too radical or unnecessary for the needs assessment or community acceptance. Regionalization may be the consolidation of a division of the fire department. Larson noted:

Support services are one of the first items to fall to the budgetary axe, and a department without a progressive training division has a liability. Consolidated fire service training, even among agencies not otherwise consolidating, may become a model for the 21st century.(Larson, 1996, p. 65).
Acknowledging that training as a support service, is costly, and one of the first areas to be cut, helps to illuminate the requirements of mandated training for the fire service. Training mandates include minimum hours of subject completion by fire department members for ISO ratings that affect community insurance rates and increased liability due to Occupational Safety and Health Association mandates. The City of Fremont Fire Training Center Strategic Business Plan (Appendix E) has broken down some of the basic requirements:

Each firefighter must receive at least 20 hours of training per month that includes four single company drills and four multi-company drills, one at night. Fire officers must receive yearly training in managing simulated incidents where they have an opportunity to practice tactics and strategy, incident command, and fire-ground communications. In addition to the above, apparatus drivers/operators must complete four training sessions per year. New drivers must complete a minimum of 40 hours of specified training in driving and pump operations. (The Interact Group, 2006, p. 33-34)

Some of the basics are becoming more difficult due to Air Quality Management requirements and difficulty in acquiring structures for mandated live burn evolutions. Training centers offer secure areas for training, especially in ever-increasing land locked communities. It is difficult to locate land to develop an adequate training center that addresses training needs in urban and suburban environments. Master mutual aid does not address non-emergency shared resources.

The California Disaster and Civil Defense Master Mutual Aid Agreement states:

It is desirable that each of the parties hereto should voluntarily aid and assist each other in the event that a disaster should occur, by the interchange of services and facilities, including, but not limited to, fire, police, medical and health, communication, and transportation services and facilities, to cope with the problems of rescue, relief, evacuation, rehabilitation, and
reconstruction which would arise in the event of a disaster (California Disaster and Civil Defense Master Mutual Aid Agreement, 1950/).

Since California Master Mutual does not address the sharing of resources in nonemergency situations, agreements between departments to facilitate sharing of facilities and training infrastructure is recommended. Twelve San Gabriel Valley area fire departments have successfully merged into the Verdugo Fire Dispatch consortium to reduce costs and provide more efficient regional responses. A shared dispatch building and center facilitates the dispatch of each entity to all fire related emergency events within the area. The Alhambra Fire Department has recognized a faster response to mutual aid and automatic aid requests within Area C at a similar initial cost and probable long-term savings. The cost of shared dispatch is a fee generation for the primary operators of the Joint Powers Authority Agreement between Burbank, Glendale, and Pasadena. The City of Glendale, California, shared the initial benefit of the successful development of a Joint Powers Authority history as:

On August 1, 1979, Verdugo was established as the founding cities of Burbank, Glendale and Pasadena were faced with limited local resources, voluntary mutual aid with an average 45-minute delay, unfamiliarity with neighboring cities geography, nonstandard firefighting tactics, incompatible equipment, and a lack of common radio frequencies. (The City of Glendale, California, 2009, p. 1)

This same type of merger or agreement is possible in many areas of the fire service. In this case, regional training and the increasing costs related to training mandates is the leadership challenge. Many fire departments have already experienced successful divisional mergers or consolidations.

Ron Coleman, the ex-Fullerton Fire Chief, states, “The entire purpose of consolidating is to have economies of scale that provide a mutual benefit to the entities agreeing to contribute to it.” (Coleman, 2003, ¶ 9) Fire service leaders are faced with the challenge of maintaining high
training standards that meet the regulatory mandates, while reducing budgets to economies of scale during recessionary conditions. Smaller departments have many of the same challenges, with the same regulatory demands, duplicated by personnel in the same positions. Kellam notes that shared instructors and instructional materials should result in similar or standardized operating procedures resulting in greater efficiency and effectiveness during mutual aid operations (Kellam, 1992). The reduction of duplicated work can lead to reduced costs and better training. Wilson acknowledged that it is much more cost effective on a regional basis rather than having departments duplicate the same classes (Wilson, 2008). Booth identified that these costs of training often forced agencies to join with other public service organizations or departments from other jurisdictions (Booth, 2000). Partnerships have never been more important than today in the fire service. Anaheim Fire Department, located in Orange County California, formed a Joint Powers Training Facility, referred to as North Net in Orange County, California:

Established in 1978, North Net is managed in cooperative agreement with the cities of Anaheim, Garden Grove and Orange. The facility also develops and administers various educational and training programs such as: promotional exams, certification exams for fire apparatus operators, Urban Search and Rescue skills training, technical rescue training, and re-certification exams for fire department E.M.T. personnel. (North Net Training, 2001, ¶ 2)

Today, the North Net participants include Anaheim, Orange, Brea, Garden Grove, and Fullerton Fire Departments. The facility shares costs under a cost recovery basis and generates fees based off a fee schedule that help offset training costs. The classrooms are available for a fee to the community (North Net Training, 2001). A common platform of training is shared that enables
agencies to work together more efficiently and cost effective. Huntington Beach, California, participates in a Joint Powers Agreement with Fountain Valley, referred to as Central Net:

The Central Net Training Center is funded and operated through a formal Joint Powers Agreement entered into by the cities of Fountain Valley and Huntington Beach for the purpose of training firefighters in the most effective and up-to-date firefighting methods. Under the supervision of Huntington Beach Battalion Chief Andy Arledge, the training center staff coordinates and facilitates a variety of mandatory specialized suppression-personnel training for the two cities; provides access to the training grounds and classroom space for-a-fee to several outside agencies; and provides free classroom space to various citizen groups for CPR and Emergency Services Training. (Central Net Training, n.d., ¶ 1-2)

Huntington Beach and Fountain Valley Fire Departments, California Region 1 partners, exhibit the benefits of shared training and resources to meet the needs of today’s fire service training mandates through this JPA. The facility shares costs under a cost recovery basis and generates fees based off a fee schedule that help offset training costs.

What is a partner? Identification of partners and the parameters should address whether they are moneymaking entities. A *for profit* partner is different from a not *for profit* partner. Usually it has to do with money. Wikipedia defines not for profit, “A nonprofit organization (abbreviated NPO, also not-for-profit) is an organization that does not distribute its surplus funds to owners or shareholders, but instead uses them to help pursue its goals.” (nonprofit organization, n.d., p. 1) Wikipedia defines for profit, “Profit generally is the making of gain in business activity for the benefit of the owners of the business. The word comes from Latin
meaning "to make progress", and is defined in two different ways, one for economics and one for accounting.” (Profit, n.d., p. 1) Public safety entities are non-profit organizations, whereas Fire Brigades are for profit entities that exist to increase protection and reduce insurance premiums for the increase of profitable returns to the shareholders or owners. Companies that benefit from product advertisement are for profit. All of these partners present policy decisions to be delineated within the Joint Powers Authority Agreement.

Life experiences have shown that partnerships can be problematic and should be backed with formal agreements. Bill Booth aptly noted:

Any new business venture is enhanced by a straightforward, well-researched business plan, and training centers are no exception. A business plan for the development of a training center is imperative to fully assess the needs of the fire department and other participating agencies, as well as the cost of building and maintaining the facility. (Booth, 2000, ¶ 5)

First, the partners have to be identified, the rules have to be agreed upon, and the fees to be charged for use. A needs assessment, a cost assessment, and a formal agreement will guide the process of implementing a regional training center. San Bernardino City Fire Chief, Larry Pitzer, found that a Joint Powers Authority agreement and business plan provided the fundamental information necessary to market the plan to the governing bodies. (Booth, 2000) Kellam noted that the agreement should cover “hold harmless” agreements for any anticipated damages, destruction, injuries, deaths or loss of equipment (Kellam, 1992). Joint Power Authority agreements list the partners and the parameters of the agreements and assist in convincing partners that the facility was for everyone (Gorham, 1992).
Who are the partners in a Regional Training Center? Area departments, regional departments, state organizations, federal organizations, educational organizations, law disciplines, fire disciplines, emergency preparedness disciplines, as well as health and medical disciplines are some of the partners to be considered in the agreement. Booth identified a California solution to linking fire training programs to 107 different State community colleges, through the signing of Instructional Service Agreements (ISA) between college districts and public agencies (Booth, 2002, ¶ 7). These agreements provide legal structure and a funding source to help offset the cost of training and maintenance of the props and facility while allowing the colleges to capture funds for teaching in the occupational development of firefighters.

Joint Power Authority agreements list the participants and the parameters of the agreements. Kellam recommends the establishment of a policy making body comprised of personnel from the involved departments, charged with making operational policies that define the boundaries for the regional program (Kellam, 1992). The participants of the greatest need may be the people that choose to sign the agreement. However, others could still utilize the facility, as needed, under the agreement of the ISA for the Joint Powers Authority, as delineated in the agreed upon policy. Regional training has decreased the cost of training in many instances. In Santa Clara County, Capt Dixon shared, “We’re applying 21st century fire service method. We’re practicing working together, utilizing joint resources, experiencing a reduction in costs that almost halved what agencies used to pay, and emphasizing camaraderie and teamwork.” (Larson, 1996, p. 74)

State committees, chief’s organizations, and local entities all agree that the fire service has been asked to do more with less. The need for resources had to be identified in order to plan for the future face of emergency services. The California Seismic Safety Commission (2003),
Building Public/Private Partnerships 

Building Public/Private Partnerships

through AB 2002, identified the following fire service resource needs for disasters and emergency preparedness:

a) It is imperative for public health and safety that trained and equipped local US&R first-responders are available for emergency response throughout the state; b) Local US&R units are vulnerable to local-area disasters (such as earthquakes) and could be compromised in their capabilities to deliver prompt life-saving services; c) Local governments alone cannot shoulder the financial burden of developing and maintaining the needs of local US&R resource teams; d) The benefits of well-maintained and equipped local US&R resource teams extend to regional and State jurisdictions; Emergency response equipment being utilized by many local agencies is aging and less effective than newer equipment; and e) Emerging technological advances are continuing to develop emergency response equipment that is more effective and efficient, yet costly to local governments.(p. 4).

With the identification of the actual need for more specialty resources, several other key indicators where recognized that established the need for training facilities to support the training for the maintenance of the highly technical skills. The California Seismic Safety Commission (2003) also recognized that additional facilities to support and deliver effective training to first responders as the single most important aspect of disaster preparedness in the modality of Urban Search and Rescue (p. 22). The critical element currently being examined is the maintenance and upkeep of these assets that include personnel training costs, physical facilities, and the infrastructures to support training for firefighting personnel. The California Seismic Safety Committee (2003) also recommended dedicated funding for training for these highly technical specialty teams (p. 25). National, Metropolitan, State and Regional Fire Chief’s Organizations
followed suit in developing resource allocations to local participants for preparation, mitigation, response, and recovery using the Homeland Security Grants as an avenue for funding. The California Seismic Safety Commission (2003) further identified future influences for local government participation:

The willingness of county and local government to participate in a statewide program providing these additional resources is also an influence that could have significant affect on the success of providing adequate urban search and rescue and hazardous materials capability throughout the state. The size, composition, and organization of local responder agencies and fiscal resources are factors that may influence a jurisdiction’s decision to participate in this program (, p. 27).

Funding a training center is expensive. Many fire departments and emergency managers have been successful in obtaining funds for training through the Federal Government. Wilson illustrates, “The FEMA-AFG regional grant program represents an under-subscribed opportunity to partner with other agencies to achieve interoperable communication systems as well as regional training and operational opportunities.”(Wilson, 2008, ¶ 14) Consolidation of this division presents many benefits to cutting costs. McCormick found, “The high cost of a training facility, instructors and other staff, equipment and educational materials makes consolidation attractive to cost-conscious fire managers.”(McCormick, 2000, p. 23) In the same article he shared, “As financial resources are dwindling, progressive fire service leaders are willing to consider non-traditional funding alternatives.”(McCormick, p. 24) Sometimes, cost recovery and / or fee generation may poise a separate option to support fire service programs such as the training division. Instructional Service Agreements generate funds for training that can support these services and facilities. There are legal ramifications to not meeting training mandates that
may make cutting training a dangerous option. Community involvement is imperative to making these decisions. Chief Giorgio recognized the need to, “Clearly evaluate the public’s expectations of their fire and rescue services, so the new department can include these in its long-term planning.” (Giorgio, 2000, p. 108) Reducing budgets in these areas increase exposure to litigation and safety of firefighters. Cost recovery and fee generation address this challenge by maintaining assets and producing funds for training if fees are generated from the sites.

The literature clearly indicates the leadership challenge faced by city managers and fire service managers in providing for the training and safety of public safety personnel. The need for training in dangerous environments is clearly defined by legal mandates. The literature review secures the fact that after every large disaster, the screaming need for additional resources is reiterated by those fire service leaders and public figures responsible for addressing the leadership challenge. It identified that training of personnel is costly and time consuming requiring all firefighters to meet the same expectations. Furthermore, the literature review identified that support services is often one of the first areas to be cut in budgetary constraining times, when it is vitally necessary to prepare, mitigate, respond, and recover from large scales disasters and calamities as well as the most basic of first responder activities. The fundamental finding of the literature review was the need to identify and capture partners that have the same responsibilities and goals, agree to work towards proactive cost saving ventures that meet the leadership challenge.
Procedures

This applied research project employed a descriptive research methodology to answer the questions by utilizing inductive logic to place the resulting data in a theoretical context. Historical research was conducted through literature review to examine the criteria and processes of other fire departments with Regional Training Centers. A questionnaire was utilized to identify agencies associated with Regional Training Centers, operating as Regional Training Centers, and whether fees were associated with those agreements and users. This information will be utilized for determining and assessing possible outcomes to current emerging issues relating to Regional Training Centers in the fire service.

Literature Review

The literature review was initiated in Emmitsburg, Maryland, at the National Fire Academy, while attending the first class of the Executive Fire Officer Program, Executive Development, July 6, 2009 through July 17, 2009. Additional research was conducted throughout the six months using internet resources and online access to the Learning Resource Center. The objective of the literature review was to gather information contained in professional journals, previous fire service associate’s Applied Research Projects, and professional manuals and articles.

Questionnaires

Two questionnaires were developed to assist in the gathering of data pertinent to answering the research questions regarding cost recovery and fee generation. Appendix A contains the questionnaire for those fire departments without training centers. Appendix B contains the questionnaire for those fire departments with training centers. The questionnaires were used by the author to gather facts regarding the use of cost recovery programs and fee
generation as it pertain to training centers. They were also used to elicit information as to the number of agencies that participate in regional training programs. The questionnaires were distributed through a commercial survey website via email invitation on December 30, 2009, to 609 past NFA/EFO graduates and 220 California Training Officers to identify agencies associated with Regional Training Centers and operating Regional Training Centers and whether fees were associated with those agreements and users.

Assumptions

The procedures utilized to conduct the research, maintain several assumptions. It is assumed that the authors cited in the Literature Review used an accepted research methodology to gather and utilize the information in an unbiased manner. The second assumption is that those people answering the questionnaire are qualified to answer the questions for their respective organizations. The final assumption is that the number of respondents provided for an adequate sampling for a qualitative analysis.

Limitations

Originally, the survey was going to be limited to California training officers, but due to the number of respondents, the pool of potential respondents was increased to include the NFA/EFO graduates.

All applicable information, gathered by way of questionnaire feedback, pertaining to this Applied Research Project was used to answer and address the research question.

Definitions

Fee Generation, for this research, is defined as costs associated with maintenance and upkeep of the facility plus a profit margin.
Cost Recovery, for this research, is defined as costs associated with maintenance and upkeep of the facility with no profit margin.
Results

1. What are the criteria and processes for a cost recovery plan that would provide for a system of invoicing facility costs equitably to Regional Users?

As part of the criteria for a cost recovery plan, a foundation was established that illustrated the need for a formal agreement and a business plan. The foundation also included the need for and existence of Regional Training Centers. The literature review illustrated that not only is regional training responsible, it is being used by fire service managers across the nation to reduce costs while providing better service and training. Question #4 in Appendix B indicated that 43.9% (18) of the respondents were part of a Regional Training Center, and 56.1% (23) were not part of a Regional Training Center. Question #4 in Appendix A indicated that 20.9% (8) of respondents without training centers were part of a Regional Training Center and 79.1% (31) were not part of a Regional Training Center.

A component identified in this research suggests a business plan and an agreement between the involved parties. Several noted local departments in Southern California, Orange County and San Bernardino Fire Departments, have developed Joint Powers Agreements to structure and contain the parameters of the agreements. Modesto, California used the same concept for their regional academy. Many fire departments have Instructional Service Agreements with educational organizations that generate money as partners with colleges to provide vocational education and training for the advancement within vocational careers and professional development. In both questionnaires, 79 people responded with 31 agencies having Instructional Service Agreements in place and 48 without an Instructional Service Agreement (Appendix B- Question #6; Appendix A- Question #8). Only 8 out of the 80 respondents use the
Instructional Service Agreement as funding to support the training center (Appendix B- Question #7; Appendix A- Question #9).

The second criteria established was the identification of the partners/users. Potential partners identified in this applied research paper may include educational organizations, law disciplines, fire disciplines, health and medical disciplines, emergency management disciplines, private contractors, foundations and industrial fire brigades. The City of Fremont provided a copy of a Strategic Plan for their Regional Training Center, which addressed the partners, justification or needs, fees, and vision for the project (Appendix E).

The final criteria established that fees were utilized across the nation to maintain, upkeep, and provide profit for use to advance training. It was common for non-profit cost recovery funds to be utilized for the maintenance of Regional Training Centers.

2. What, if any, are the fees charged by other Regional Training Centers to organizations that use the facility?

California Master Mutual Aid Agreements allow participating resources to share equipment during disasters and mutual aid requests through signed agreements (California Disaster and Civil Defense Master Mutual Aid Agreement, 1950/). California Master Mutual Aid does not pertain to non-emergency situations. Joint Powers Authority agreements are forged throughout the Nation and State that allow for shared fire services including shared training facilities during non-emergency situations, as well as dispatching, fire prevention, and disaster management. Grants that are secured under the premise of regional need should not collect fees for the purpose of anything other than the recovery of costs for the facility, props, and equipment maintenance and upkeep within agreed upon aspects of a business plan or Joint Powers Authority agreement.
Costs are being recovered by fire departments nationwide. Fees are being generated from these same training facilities. Anaheim, California, North Net Training charges hourly rates for fire departments that are different from non-fire agencies (Appendix C). Question 8 of the questionnaire, identifies 41 people that responded to this question: 48.8% (20) have a fee structure in place, 51.2% (21) did not have a fee structure in place (Appendix B). Question 9 identified that 38.5% (15) have cost recovery processes in place, while 17.9% (7) did not have a cost recovery process in place (Appendix B). If these processes are not in place and an agency has a Regional Training Center, the concept is being considered. Fremont Fire Department will open a training center in June 2010 that fees are envisioned (Question 18- Appendix B). In addition, Bruce Martin, Fremont Fire Chief, developed a business plan with the Interact Group, which guided the process and modeled the vision of creating and maintaining a state-of-the-art training center. Santa Fe Springs Fire Department, California, and Rio Hondo Community College have collaborated and are completing a Regional Training Center currently. A fee schedule and hold harmless agreement is envisioned and attached (Appendix D).

Literature review showed that many organizations are searching for equitable funding for training centers with all regional partners. Partners were identified as for profit and not for profit partners. Not for profit users were identified as public entities not making money as surplus funds for stockholders or a business owner (nonprofit organization, n.d.). For Profit was identified as businesses making money as surplus funds, distributed to stockholders or business owners (Profit, n.d.).
3. **What, if any, are the fees that California, Region 1, mutual aid partners should be charged for using the Alhambra Fire Department Regional Training Center**

Mutual aid partners are non-profit organizations and part of Region 1. The training center was purchased from general fund money and grant funds derived from a regional need for a training center for regional partners to train personnel. As a non-profit organization and a regional partner, fee generation was not observed through any of the literature review or questionnaire questions. However, the literature review illustrated that it was common throughout many agencies for costs to be recovered and used to maintain the training infrastructure.

In California Disaster Management Region 1, Anaheim, Orange, Garden Grove, Brea, Fullerton, Fountain Valley and Huntington Beach Fire Departments, participate in Joint Powers Authority agreements known as Central and North Net Fire Training or Joint Powers Training Facility, Central Net or Joint Powers Training, North Net. The fee schedule is attached as Appendix C. These partnerships have been in place since the late 1970’s. Costs of running the facilities are shared with partners and fees charged to non-participants. North Net Training Fee Schedule is attached as Appendix C. Santa Fe Springs Fire Department, in California, has collaborated with Rio Hondo College to form a Regional Training Center. Proposed fees are attached as Appendix D.

4. **What, if any, fees should private training partners be charged for using the Alhambra Fire Department Regional Training Center?**

The questionnaire illustrated that there are multiple large private partners that contribute to Regional Training Centers across the nation. Fees generated from private partners may be allowed to exceed those of public partners for the advancement and purchase of additional props
and training for the site and personnel training. Some of them included Utility Companies, EMS Helicopters, Fire Expositions, Industry Fire Brigades, Transit Authority, Movie Industry, Fire Protection Companies, Construction Contractors, and Regional Occupation Programs. Each of these people poised opportunity for cost recovery, and in some cases, fee generation for future development of training props or programs. One area that none of the respondents have addressed was fees from advertising. Question #17 illustrates that, of those that responded, none of the respondents recuperates funds from advertising.
Discussion/Implications

The qualitative analysis of the questionnaire and the literature review indicate that many fire departments are participating in Regional Training to address the training mandates of today’s fire service and reduce cost during distressed budgetary times. As part of the criteria and processes for a system of invoicing, the need for personnel training and training facilities had to be established in the Area, State, and the Nation. September 11, 2001, solidified that need for additional resources and training to mitigate large-scale disasters effectively. Hurricane Katrina and the Indonesian Earthquake etched the necessity into the eyes of Americans. Assembly Bill 2002 identified the need for additional resources, training, and facilities for training specialty teams (C.S.S.C., 2003). The quagmire was clear: more resources, training, and the proper facilities were necessary to secure our freedoms, but money was scarce, and would become scarcer as the recession crept closer. The etchings in the eyes of Americans would slowly be clouded by the lack of jobs and food on the table. Chief Steve Merger (1990) recognized the combined effect of increasing requirements and decreasing resources as a necessity of fire service managers to do more with less. This was exacerbated by the recessions experienced in 1990 and 2008.

Regionalization is becoming more prevalent in all facets of the fire service, whether by division or departments. Question #4 in Appendix B indicated that 43.9% (18) of the respondents were part of a Regional Training Center, and 56.1% (23) were not part of a Regional Training Center. Question #4 in Appendix A indicated that 20.9% (8) of respondents without training centers were part of a Regional Training Center and 79.1% (31) were not part of a Regional Training Center. The literature clearly revealed that the high cost of training, personnel resources, and the facilities necessary to conduct such training, created regional training
opportunities. Wilson (2008) acknowledged that training was much more cost effective when provided on a regional basis while preventing the duplication of efforts. Some organizations would like to train, but are not able to use such facilities due to proximity, department size, and/or fiduciary agreements. Many fire service leaders recognize the cost savings to providing regionalized services, often allowing for higher standards and capabilities by pooling resources. One such leader recognized a mutual benefit to entities agreeing to contribute to it (Coleman, 2003).

Another obvious criteria identified was the potential partners in a regional training program. Question #12 in Appendix B, identifies public non-profit partners and private profit partners that include all emergency management disciplines, fire brigades, public utilities, construction companies, educational organizations, and private healthcare. No one recognized advertisers as potential partners, however I believe there is a large market for exploration pertaining to this area that can provide a mutually prosperous relationship. California allows for partnerships with colleges, capitalizing on firefighting training as vocational education. Booth (2002) described a process that links fire training programs to 107 different State community colleges, through the signing of Instructional Service Agreements (ISA) between college districts and public agencies. The legal structure of these agreements provide for shared cost recovery between parties. Appendix B, question #6, 16 out of 40 respondents participated in an ISA. Appendix A, question #8, 15 out of 39 respondents participated in an ISA. The cost of training is expensive. Literature review indicated that Region 1 fire departments with regional training facilities utilize cost recovery and fee generation systems to secure the training assets for future generations. They utilize JPAs to organize the parameters of the consolidations. If they do not currently utilize a system to recover costs, they are beginning to explore the concept.
This author interprets the literature review and the qualitative analysis of the questionnaire the same as many of the respondents and journal authors. Equity amongst partners is acceptable and necessary. The Alhambra Fire Department has embraced open access to the use of the facility in the past. We continue to move forward with the intention of providing training without charging fees for use. Fee generation for partner use of the facility is unacceptable. The facility was partially built and justified through grants based around regional training necessity. However, it would be a misuse of funds from the citizens of Alhambra to incur the costs of training for other regional partners. One partnership not utilized to the fullest potential is that agreed upon with community colleges as an Instructional Service Agreement. Many fire departments do not participate in ISAs, evident in Appendix A- Question #8 where 38% of the respondents have ISAs. Of those 38.5%, only 9.7% provide a portion to Regional Training Centers illustrated in Appendix A- Question #9. The ISA in place at Regional Training Centers can be utilized to help support the costs by submitting hours trained at the facility through the facility’s ISA rather than its own ISA.

A critical element was omitted early in this process of overall development of the Alhambra Fire Department Regional Training Center. The partners were not established early in the process and a Joint Powers Authority agreement was not entered into with those interested. The City of Fremont, California, contracted with the Interact Group to develop a plan that justified the need and recognized potential partners in the Regional Training Center (The Interact Group, 2006).

This author believes a critical element and potential partners were not identified by the questionnaires or the literature review. Fee generation may be possible by private companies by forming advertising partnerships the benefit the fire service and the company itself. By forging a
business relationship with fire service suppliers that provide services and equipment to fire departments, avenues to fund or provide equipment can be offered as a cost reduction for fire departments and marketing opportunities for private companies. A major tool manufacture may want to provide tools to be used by specialty teams in the hopes that they will sell product to personnel training at the regional training center. A simple advertising sign on a training tower may assist in creating a realistic cityscape environment while generating funds to be utilized for training firefighters or maintaining the facility. As a Regional Training Center, the potential for firefighters from distant places to hone skills and try new products is increased. Recently, a major extrication tool company used our training site to market their tools while showing the new materials and safety ratings of a major automobile manufacture on national television. These win-win relationships can help market fire service equipment while reducing training costs to facility managers.

The implications of the results for the Alhambra Fire Department is understanding and addressing the need to identify the partners and forge an agreement to finalize the Regional Training Center concept. It is further understood that fees for regional *non-profit* partners is not acceptable based on the fact that grant funding was obtained for a regional need for training. However, costs for maintaining the facility should be shared amongst users. The leadership challenge being the recovery of costs during difficult economic periods while realizing the need to meet mandated training requirements as a priority with the proper tools to meet those mandates. Safety has risen to the top of every fire service topic. Whether it is the fitness of personnel or the skills necessary to complete their job safely, we have a responsibility to meet these challenges creatively and responsibly. As an advocate of providing the companies with the proper tools to meet the objectives, fire service managers have the responsibility to provide fire
companies with the facilities, equipment, props, and tools to effectively train personnel. Critical evaluation of training has identified that didactic training must to be followed up with manipulative skills training to increase knowledge retention and muscle memory. Watching someone ventilate on a rooftop and cutting pallets cannot constitute rooftop ventilation. The lack of ability to acquire flat commercial roofs for truck company operations has to be addressed. There is a cost associated with training personnel appropriately. Developing lifelike scenarios to replicate real emergencies is mandatory for the proper training of personnel. There is a cost to maintaining a full service facility that meets these objectives. Booth (2000) illustrated that the costs of training forced agencies to merge with other departments from other jurisdictions to obtain required training. Open, responsible, and creative leaders must be employed and tasked with addressing the needs and priorities for training our personnel. Regionalization has been the answer for many organizations. Larson (1996) acknowledged that consolidating and reorganizing cut costs. Similar agreements have worked throughout the nation and more notably in Region 1, within Orange County. North Net provides facilities for fee and maintains a place for regional partners to train for the cost of maintenance and upkeep through a Joint Powers Agreement (Appendix C). Central Net provides facilities through an agreement with Santa Ana College, Huntington Beach, and Fountain Valley Fire Departments (Central Net Training, n.d.).
Recommendations

Based on research results of this Applied Research Project, it is recommended that potential partners are identified and explore the viability of forging a Joint Powers Authority agreement that limits liability to all agencies and addresses mutually pertinent issues. Once the partners have been identified, the group should gather similar agency’s agreements to conduct research for applicable content. Participating partners should be directed by organization leaders to examine the content and extent of the agreements, and design an agreement to present to respective city managers and/or organization leaders. City management should share the developed agreement with city legal services to address any legal issues not captured or foreseen.

Appropriate, interested, transparent partners should be assimilated to begin the processes of building a team that can openly study and discuss goals and objectives of a Joint Powers Agreement mutually beneficial to all participants, maintaining options for new participants, and non-participants, public, private, for-profit, not-for-profit. After identifying the team of participants, it is recommended that the group develop a robust agreement addressing the wide range of factors identified within this Applied Research Paper and any others the group can foresee. Costs and fees schedules should be delineated within the plan that clearly defines partner relationships. Rules and regulations should be identified and delineated within the Joint Powers Agreement that addresses the broad nature of the goals and objectives. A robust hold harmless agreement and process should be identified within the plan. The plan shall identify a Board of Directors to manage the maintenance and adherence to the plan. It is suggested that the initial Board of Directors be the developing partners of the balanced Joint Powers Authority. Once all participants have agreed upon the developed plan, it shall be forwarded to the organization leaders for input and clarification. Following any clarifications or changes, it shall be forwarded
to legal services to be vetted for missing or unforeseen items that must be addressed to meet legal concerns.

Once the plan has been completed, approved, and signed by all participants, the established Board of Directors should develop goals and objectives to provide training in conjunction with Foothill Training Officer’s Association, California State Training Officer’s Association, area colleges, and department experts to meet the goals of the identified training mandates. Board participants shall meet as determined to identify fee generating ideas and concepts to provide for the advancement of the training center and programs. In addition, they should develop a plan for monitoring progress of the plan while updating the plan as necessary.
References


California Disaster and Civil Defense Master Mutual Aid Agreement, Section 8561
http://www.oes.ca.gov/Operational/OESHome.nsf/PDF/California%20Master%20Mutual
%20Aid%20Agreement/$file/CAMasterMutAid.pdf §§ 8561, 8633, 8618, 8652, 8643
(1950 & Suppl. ).

California Seismic Safety Commission . (September 2003). *Findings and Recommendations on
the Resource Needs of California’s Urban Search and Rescue Teams* (California Seismic
Safety Committee, Urban Search and Rescue Emergency Advisory Committee).
Sacramento, California: Author.

Central Net Training (n.d.). *About Central Net* [Fact sheet]. Retrieved from
http://www.cntraining.com/about.htm

http://firechief.com


Chief*, v. 36(4), 108-110.

Kellam, J. (1992). Regional training: cooperation to produce a better product for less. *The Voice*,
v. 21((4)), 35-36.


Journal*, (v. 52), 22-25.


nonprofit organization. (n.d.). Retrieved 01/10/10, from Non-profit organization:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Non-profit organization