



# EUROPEAN FIRE SPRINKLER NETWORK

## **February 2009 Report**

In February I participated in a meeting of the NFPA 502 committee, which prepares the standard used in the United States to design for fire safety in tunnels, bridges and limited access highways. The standard is becoming more positive about fire suppression and will now recommend it for longer tunnels or those with serious traffic congestion. Our efforts in France are intensifying, with applications coming in for the role of Country Manager for the EFSN. Vinci, the leading French sprinkler contractor, has joined the EFSN to participate in this campaign.

### **New Member**

Vinci, probably the largest French sprinkler contractor, agreed to join the EFSN in February. Tyco Fire & Integrated Solutions, another major French sprinkler contractor, is also becoming active in the promotion of the sprinkler concept in France, all of which is a very positive change from the position a year ago.

### **Recruitment of French Country Manager**

An advertisement in *Face au Risque* generated several applications. A second advertisement will appear in *Soldats du Feu* at the beginning of March. French-speaking members of the EFSN Council have received the applications and will participate in the interview process, which is to begin at the end of March.

### **Keith MacGillivray**

Keith MacGillivray will step down from the EFSN Council at the AGM in March, following his retirement in December from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Fire Services for Scotland. For many years Keith has been a very effective campaigner for sprinkler systems and has influenced policy across Scotland. As a result sprinklers are required in schools by 32 out of 33 local authorities in Scotland and this requirement is about to be introduced to the Scottish building code. One Scottish local authority requires sprinklers in new social housing and another intends to sell land on the condition that sprinklers are fitted. Keith has also assisted me with lobbying in Brussels and we even did a joint presentation in France a few years ago which greatly influenced thinking about sprinklers in the Paris fire service and began to change thinking in the French building code.

There is scope for more positive change in Scotland, for example by spreading the policy to fit sprinklers in new social housing or to sell land on the condition that sprinklers are fitted. The two main political parties are sympathetic to sprinklers but need to be encouraged to act. Therefore jointly with the British Automatic Fire

Sprinkler Association and NFSN, the EFSN will employ Keith's services on a part-time basis to lobby for sprinklers in Scotland.

### **House of Lords Seminar**

On 2<sup>nd</sup> February a seminar on non-regulatory approaches to increase the use of sprinklers was held in the House of Lords in London. Unfortunately due to a very rare, major fall of snow much of British public transport did not run so only half of those who had paid to be present were able to attend. Nevertheless the event gave momentum to the theme and ideas for fire services and others to lobby in their jurisdictions. Presentations from Jim Shannon, the President of NFPA, on NFPA's campaign for residential sprinklers; Les Sziklai of the Vancouver Fire Department on the impact of residential sprinklers in Vancouver; and from Gösta Holmstedt of Sprinklerfrämjandet on the new Nordic residential and domestic sprinkler system design standard were particularly well-received.

### **NFPA 502 Committee Meeting**

In February I attended an NFPA 502 committee meeting. This committee writes the standard used in the United States for the design of fire safety in tunnels, bridge and limited access highways. I am a member of this committee, representing the International Fire Sprinkler Association. Changes in NFPA 502 influence changes in PIARC, the World Road Association standard which is widely referenced in Europe.

In the previous review of NFPA 502 the committee added new text to explain that the old, negative references to sprinklers were now known to be incorrect. It also introduced a requirement to fit fire suppression systems in urban tunnels if traffic could be blocked inside them due to congestion after the tunnel.

In this review the proposed changes would:

- Recommend fire suppression systems in tunnels longer than 3,000 feet (914m)
- Remove all the negative references to fire suppression completely but discuss the concerns in a positive way
- Introduce a fire test protocol for tunnel fire suppression systems based on the UPTUN protocol
- Introduce design criteria for water spray systems, based on fire test reports and the design criteria successfully used in Australia and Japan
- Permit fire suppression systems to be used as a full or partial alternative to passive fire protection of the tunnel structure

Meanwhile new tunnel designs in the United States are already including fire suppression systems. The next NFPA 502 meeting will be in September and the new edition is to be published in late 2010 as the 2011 edition. In parallel, the EFSN will work with the PIARC members of the NFPA 502 committee and other PIARC members to seek for similar changes in the PIARC document.

### **APICI Seminar**

I chaired a session of the Spanish Fire Protection Engineering Association, APICI, seminar in Madrid. APICI is the Spanish Chapter of the Society of Fire Protection Engineers, SFPE, and is a member of EFSN. Many APICI members are consultants.

Russ Fleming of NFSA, who is the past President of SFPE, gave a presentation on the use of sprinklers in fire engineered building designs. He also explained that the building codes used in the United States contain alternative solutions, one of which often incorporates sprinklers, which are based on a fire engineering approach. Fire engineering offers an avenue to introduce sprinklers as an alternative to the standard solution, which in Europe is passive fire protection.

### **Justine Greening MP**

In February I met Justine Greening, who is my local Conservative Member of Parliament. Edward Lister of Tyco Fire & Integrated Solutions, who is an EFSN Council member, knows her well and recommended I meet her. According to opinion polls it is likely that there will be a change of government in the UK at the next election, which will probably be held in May 2010. Justine Greening was recently appointed as the Conservative Shadow Minister for Communities and Local Government, which is the department that writes Approved Document B, in effect the fire safety building code for England and Wales.

At our meeting I was joined by Iain Cox, Fire Chief of Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service and President of the National Fire Sprinkler Network, NFSN. Our conversation was cordial and she was very supportive of our aims. While there is no guarantee that she would be given this portfolio in a Conservative government it is likely that she will have a senior role somewhere so it is useful for us to start making these contacts now.

Meanwhile we continue to lobby the current, Labour government and Ronnie King of the NFSN has arranged a meeting with Sadiq Khan, the Minister for Communities and Local Government, on 5 May.

### **Online Seminars**

On Monday, 9<sup>th</sup> February Russ Fleming of NFSA gave an online seminar on “Design of Sprinkler Systems in Earthquake Zones”. This was the sixth online seminar and although most of Europe does not need to consider earthquakes in building design, there was nevertheless good participation. The next seminar will be at 15:00 Central European Time (14:00 UK time) on Monday, 9<sup>th</sup> March February and will be given by Brendan MacGrath of FM Global on “High Rise Building Fire Sprinkler Protection”. Full details of all the seminars are on [www.eurosprinkler.org](http://www.eurosprinkler.org). Participants can register and pay online using a credit card. Seminars cost €200 for non-members and €100 for EFSN members. All you need is an internet connection to participate. The full list of seminars is:

- Introduction to Sprinklers
- Sprinkler System Hydraulics
- Commodity Classification
- General Storage
- ESFR Sprinkler Systems
- Design of Sprinkler Systems in Earthquake Zones
- High Rise Building Fire Sprinkler Protection
- Piping for Sprinkler Systems
- Pumps for Sprinkler Systems

### **Next Steps**

- 1) Participate in EU Sprinkler Forum Meeting in Strasbourg on 10<sup>th</sup> March.
- 2) Review applications for French Country Manager and plan interviews.
- 3) Attend AGM of the French Chapter of the SFPE.
- 4) Visit ENSOSP training centre in Paris to conduct a training seminar for French fire-fighters and to discuss the introduction of a standard sprinkler training module for all French fire-fighters.
- 5) Participate in EFSN AGM in Paris.