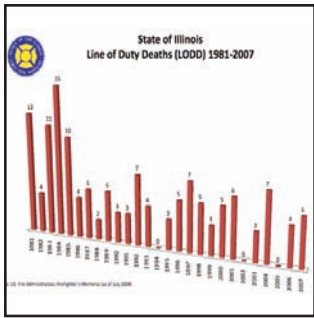
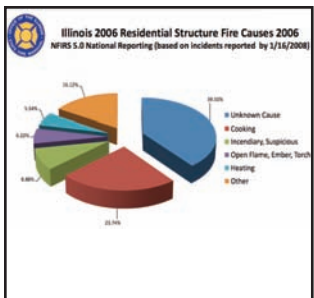


Firing out the Facts: A look at Illinois



Provided by the US Fire Administration

The most firefighters died in 1994. There were 15 deaths in the line of duty.



Provided by the Office of the State Fire Marshall

Causes that were unknown led to the most residential fires. Cooking was then the second most leading cause of fires.

A glance into the fire science program

By Melissa Pointer
Correspondent

With a 70-80% successful graduate rate, COD's fire

science is claimed to be "widely recognized as one of the top service-oriented fire programs in Illinois."

College of DuPage offers two fire science as-

sociates degrees to its students, emergency medical services (EMS) A.A.S. and fire science technology A.A.S. The fire science technology degree focuses on both

firefighting and emergency medical services and includes instruction in the theory and techniques required by most local fire departments. The EMS degree covers the same, but with a stronger focus on emergency medical services in all situations. Both degrees are transferable to a four year program at several of the local universities.

For a student who is not able or willing to commit two to four years on education, COD offers five programs with lower credit requirements: EMT, firefighter, fire prevention, fire officer, and paramedic. These programs range from 8 to 33 credit hour requirements as opposed to the traditional 64 credit hours required for a two year degree.

Over the past ten years COD has expanded its fire science program with about 20 additional classes, 15 online classes, and more to come this spring. While COD offers 43 fire science related classes, a student in the program is only required to take five specific courses; FS1100, FS1111, FS2201, FS2210, and FS2215. The remainder of the courses needed for a fire science A.A.S. degree is the same as a general A.A.S. degree.

There are no entrance exams or special requirement to enter the program. Any student wishing to earn a fire science degree only needs to take the classes required. COD's fire science graduates are not required to meet any specific state requirements. The requirements are placed on them by the fire departments they elect to apply at. Their final step after graduation is to apply for and take a fire departments physical fitness test, along with meeting the selected fire departments education requirements.



Photo by Melissa Pointer

Gauges on side of a Bollingbrook fire truck grab the attention of students in the Fire Sciences program.

Student job prospects under fire

By Melissa Pointer
Correspondent

With waiting lists for fire department testing getting longer, fire science graduates compete for fewer firefighter positions.

As budget cuts strike city fire departments across the state, it is be-

coming increasingly difficult to find employment after graduation. Bollingbrook has made the decision to cut 3 firefighters from its payroll according to Bollingbrook firefighter Chris Sarcletti. Still, enrollment in the fire science program increases each

year. The estimated salary for a new fire science graduate is anywhere from minimum wage to \$40,000 a year with basic training. Former firefighter and instructor Rich Stoehrmann urges his students to consider paramedic training to in-

crease their salary possibilities to approximately \$50,000 a year.

Students spend two years training for a degree and may risk their lives running into burning buildings for low salaries. "It's in the blood and not for money," says Stoehrmann.

Daryl Haefner, coordinator of COD's fire science program, and Stoehrmann tell students who are interested in the program to be sure it's what they want to do.

"Not everyone can be a firefighter or paramedic, it takes a certain person. Read all you can about the profession and look at my Web site. This has a lot of good information about classes, programs, how to be a firefighter, and firefighter testing," Haefner said.



Photo by Melissa Pointer