

# New??

- You have heard that this is new...
  - 2004 resolutions were passed by the General Assembly commending the fire service for its planning efforts. (SR 898)
  - 2005 the strategic plan was published and updated in 2006 and Copies were distributed to the General Assembly and to the Georgia Delegation in Washington goal #11
  - Late in the session in 2005 SB 320 was dropped to consolidate two agencies into one “Fire College” and was held to “study” because of time.
  - April 2009—SR 615 study committee passed Senate didn’t make it to the house... passed 1 nay vote—Moody of the 56<sup>th</sup>.
  - 2010—SR 513 passed both houses but wasn’t funded.
  - Fire Service formed a study committee in April 2010
    - Worked through the issues without a final report...
    - Their last meeting basically ended with ...”it is a good concept—let’s wait to see who is elected Governor and see what their agenda would be”.

## **Goal Area 11 - Fire Service Structuring**

This goal addresses how the Fire Service is to continue as an effective coalition and how it is to operate in the future.

The following questions need to be addressed by Fire Service leaders:

- 1) Should the Fire Service only be a coalition concentrating on five or six areas of program emphasis, e.g., Public and Stakeholder Relations, Statewide Projects to Support Official Goals, Legislation, Image Building, Information Management and Mutual Aid, or
- 2) Should the aforementioned activities be assigned to participating organizations authorized to represent the Fire Service? or
- 3) Should there be Fire Service employees or a management contract with a firm to guarantee program continuity, or will an all-volunteer operation be effective in serving the needs of the participating organizations? or
- 4) What are the most effective state models in existence today and how are their operations structured and funded? What are the implications for Georgia? or
- 5) Should an examination be made to ascertain whether or not the Fire Service should be part of a government operation, e.g., State Fire Marshal's Office, GEMA, etc? and
- 6) In the future, how should the Fire Service be financially supported?

**The initiative suggested for achievement of this goal:**

**Create a task force of leaders from participating organizations to study and make recommendations for the future.**

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# SB 186

- Shortly after the Governor's inauguration we were contacted by Senator Mullis to come to his Capitol office.
- He put together a group of leaders...Chief Camp, Chief Carter, Chief Gibbs, Chief Kimbrell, Chief Tully, and Michael Shelnut.
- He said the political atmosphere was right, the Governor wanted consolidation, and he was ready to drop a bill. He asked us to help him draft the Bill that would streamline the Fire Service.
- Asked us to hold the content to ourselves until the bill was drafted.

- This makes a “Cabinet” level position for the Governor to have contact with the Fire Service...
- Shortly after the snowed out inauguration On January 24<sup>th</sup> Governor Deal re-issued an old Executive Order establishing the Emergency Operation Command...The press conference held in the Capital...the Governor was flanked by GBI Director Vernon Keenan, Colonel Bill Hitchens, DOT Commissioner Vance Smith and the Adjutant General...no fire guy...this Bill brings a person directly under the command of the Governor for fire issues and will still saves money and reduce Government...
- Exactly what the Governor charged all of us to do in his Inauguration and State of the Union speeches.

# Copied from Governor Deals Inauguration Speech

- *“Let us refocus State Government on its core responsibilities and relieve our taxpayers of the burden of unnecessary programs. Let us be frugal and wise. Let us restore the confidence of our citizens in a government that is limited and efficient. Together let us make Georgia the brightest star in the constellation of these United States.”*

# Copied from Governor Deals State of the State speech shortly after his inauguration:

- *We are now entering a **new era of smaller government** and greater personal responsibility. Government must pull back, but Georgians and our strong communities, big and small, have what it takes to fill the gap. **I am calling on all Georgians to support us in this time of transition.***
- *Some may have lost optimism, but I have not. **I believe that the citizens of this great State are ready to rally in this time to achieve great things...and to create a better Georgia. As elected leaders we must sound the call and demonstrate a new form of statesmanship. I call on all Georgians to support their elected officials when they make the tough choices to ensure our future prosperity.***

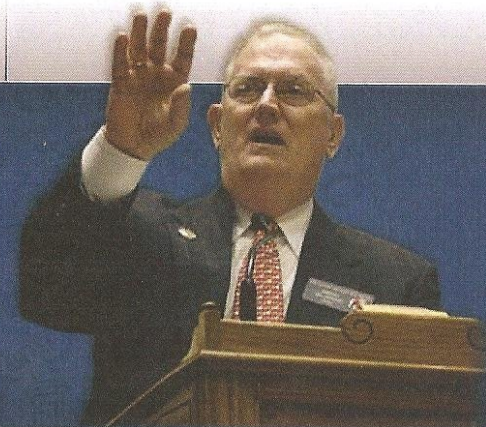
# Copied from Lt. Gov. Cagle's response to the Governors State of the State

- *By looking for **efficiencies in government and making cuts where appropriate, we can ensure that our state's most critical priorities – economic development, education, and public safety – are appropriately funded, even in these challenging economic times. While some of the decisions we face may not be easy, I look forward to working with Governor Deal, Speaker Ralston, and our colleagues in the legislature to make the wise choices that will move our state forward.***



RALPH  
**HUDGENS**  
Insurance Commissioner

*Experience is the Difference*



## Hudgens Endorses Consolidation of Fire Agencies

Senator Ralph Hudgens (R-Hull) is calling for the consolidation of the various state agencies, councils, and departments that support the state's fire service into one centralized agency. These agencies are tasked with inspecting facilities, regulating codes and standards, implementing training programs, and providing emergency rescue services. The current system limits communication between these entities, duplicates administrative services, and is not the best utilization of the state's valuable and limited fire safety resources. Consolidation of these agencies would eliminate confusion, create consistency, streamline services and save money. Hudgens stated, "The idea of a single state fire agency is something that many in the state's fire service have called for for years. It is a concept that has been adopted successfully in several other states. With our state's population growing at such a fast pace, and the demands on our fire service increasing daily, it is time we put fire safety at the top of our priority list."


A consolidated state fire agency would be headed by a State Fire Commissioner, who would be appointed by the governor. Hudgens further stated, "In these times of limited budget resources we must look at ways to streamline government. Consolidation of these agencies would cut costs as well as providing a better service for our citizens."

### Get Involved!


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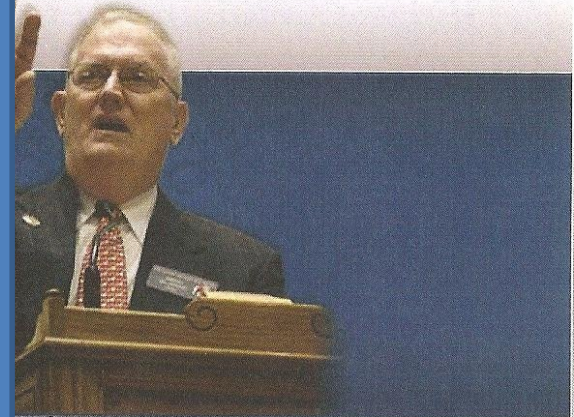
Your Contribution  
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#### CONTACT

Contact Ralph  
With Questions. 


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- To GAFC membership,
- There is a significant piece of legislation that has been dropped concerning the Georgia Fire Service. As the Executive Committee of the GAFC we feel it is imperative that you are made aware as soon as possible. Under the new administration of Governor Deal, there continues to be a major effort to “streamline” state government. His administration continues to search out efficiencies and opportunities to stream line the processes and working areas of State Government. A working group consisting of members of both GAFC and GSFFA boards, and others were approached to provide input and participate in discussions. We have had opportunity to provide input into the drafting of a bill that streamlines multiple areas of the Georgia Fire Service into a single agency. This will be a good bill long term for the fire service. We feel this legislation will have a major, positive impact on the fire service. Its purpose is to create the “Georgia Department of Fire Safety.” This concept was one of the goal areas [goal area number 11] in the 2005 Georgia Fire Service Strategic Plan.
- Several key factors were considered and discussed during this process. The fire service in Georgia is and has been splintered, some agencies working perpendicular to other agencies instead of parallel with them to move the fire service forward; confusion into who to call and who is responsible for various aspects of firefighters and their careers.

Some key points this bill will accomplish:

1. Will combine multiple different state agencies into one. This will allow for local fire departments to have a one stop shop for the needs of the fire service. Instead of being bounced from one place to the next, there will be one place to go. Stop duplication of services and provide seamless support for the fire service. This bill will combine the State Fire Marshal's Office, Georgia Firefighter Standards and Training Council, Georgia Fire Academy and all of the fire service portions [engineering, fire safety, arson etc] of the Insurance Commissioner's office.
2. The fire service will have a direct "Governor's Cabinet" position that will elevate the caliber of the fire service to this higher professional field.
3. The primary mission of the department is to "empower local jurisdictions" with resources and assistance to enhance their service at the local level.
4. This bill will create a Commissioner who is accountable for and accountable to the fire service of Georgia. This Commissioner will be advised by an advisory council and the President of both GAFC and GSFFA have a seat on that council.

- The Executive Committee of the GAFC feels that this is a positive move for all of Georgia's Fire Service. **We want to make sure that you stay informed throughout the process and let you know we are following this legislation very closely. Please pay close attention as we send out information, and please provide feedback to your board as we move forward.**
- There are still many questions to be answered, we will continue to work diligently to address these as we progress.

# Gov. Deal expects to run for re-election

By Shannon McCaffrey (The Associated Press)



There has been some speculation that the 68-year-old would only serve one term. Not so, says Deal. (AP file photo)

ATLANTA - As Georgia Gov. Nathan Deal worked late on one of the waning days of 2011 legislative session, he got hungry.

Instead of making staff order takeout food or spiriting off to a nearby restaurant, Deal wandered out into the Capitol - teeming with legislators and their aides - grabbed a plate of baked ziti and sat at a folding table, nearly indistinguishable, except for the telltale security detail.

It was a fitting move for the Gainesville Republican, who won fans and much of his limited agenda during the busy 40-day legislative session with a low-key willingness to make himself available to lawmakers and compromise.

Deal will mark his 100th day as Georgia's governor on Tuesday - and says he has "every expectation" that he will run for the office again. That milestone comes just days after the end of the session, the critical first test of his ability to translate campaign rhetoric into governing results. By many accounts, he passed with flying colors, sticking to a limited agenda but delivering what he promised.

Deal has already signed a landmark overhaul of the state's cash-strapped HOPE scholarship into law after helping to hustle the bill through in just three weeks. The \$18.3 billion budget, which had to account for about \$1 billion in lost federal stimulus dollars, passed without much controversy and largely resembles the spending blueprint he proposed. He's earmarked \$32 million in bond money for water infrastructure projects.

Deal is not a backslapping pol but he has a reserved, "everyman" quality. He's made himself accessible, holding regular legislative office hours to hear what's on lawmakers' minds. Intimately with familiar with the give-and-take of the legislative process from his nearly two decades in Congress, Deal has spent his early months as governor working collaboratively and shown willingness to compromise. When educators and parents voiced worries about sweeping changes he'd proposed to the state's pre-kindergarten program to cut costs, he listened and changed course.

"It's been refreshing," state Rep. Calvin Smyre, a Columbus Democrat who has served in the House since 1975.

"Having worked with maybe seven governors, I find he's one where, although you are on the different side, he's still receptive to dialogue."

It remains to be seen what he will do with the hundreds of other bills that will now cross his desk.

"My goal is not to be somebody who racks up a long list of vetoes, because a veto is a rather abrupt conclusion to what, in most cases, represents a lot of hard work," Deal said. "If there are differences that you can work out during the legislative process then you should."

Looking forward, Deal, a former prosecutor, is setting his sights on revamping the Georgia's tough sentencing laws, with an eye toward scaling back the state's exploding prison costs. Tax reform, which died this session, could also be back on the agenda with Deal's stamp on it. He said he wants to push for a reduction of the corporate income tax, a key campaign pledge.

And although Georgia's economy is showing some encouraging signs of life, that doesn't mean government won't continue to slim down under the Deal administration.

**Deal said the thing that has surprised him most since taking the helm of state government has been the sheer, sprawling size of it.**

**"To realize how many agencies and how many boards, we have. That's a little shocking," Deal told The AP. "I think we need to continue to consolidate and downsize."**

Democratic state Rep. Tyrone Brooks, of Atlanta, said he wants to see what Deal will do as revenues start to pick up.

- The bill remains in Committee.
- Now you have the entire history and all the facts.
- HB232—Lobbyist bill
  - Took just over 10 days to make the entire process through the Legislature and be signed by Governor Deal...retroactive to January 10, 2011

# Jarrett Little

- SB 155 by Senator Albers
  - Then was attached to SB58 and passed

# 911 Bills

- 2 major
  - Pre-Paid Wireless funds
  - Money spent for other purposes when center is “fully funded”.

# HB 223

- Exempts certain agriculture buildings from the building code.

# HB 247

- A BILL to be entitled an Act to amend Article 3 of Chapter 11 of Title 31 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to emergency medical services personnel, so as to authorize the Department of Community Health to require fingerprinting and criminal background investigations of all applicants for licensure and currently licensed emergency medical services personnel; to provide definitions; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

- This year
  - 291 Senate bills
  - 641 Senate Resolutions
  - 667 House Bills
  - 1093 House Resolutions
- 2692 Pieces of Legislation