



**ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT TRANSMITTAL FORM**

**Agency Name:** South Carolina Forestry Commission

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## South Carolina Forestry Commission

Annual Accountability Report

Fiscal Year 2008 – 2009

### SECTION I – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

#### 1. *Agency Purpose, Mission, Vision and Values:*

The South Carolina Forestry Commission (SCFC) Purpose:

Protect, manage and enhance the forest resources of South Carolina.

The SCFC Mission:

The mission of SCFC is to protect, promote, enhance, and nurture the woodlands of South Carolina, and to educate the public about forestry issues, in a manner consistent with achieving the greatest good for its citizens.

The SCFC Vision:

Across all ownerships, South Carolina's forest resources are managed sustainably to support an expanding forest products manufacturing industry while providing environmental services such as clean air, clean water, recreation, and wildlife habitat.

The SCFC Values:

- Integrity
- Fairness
- Respect
- Passion
- Efficiency
- Hard Work

#### 2. *Major achievements from past year:*

- **Strategic Plan Implementation/Progress** – The Commissioners, State Forester, Deputy State Forester, and the executive team continue to monitor accomplishments for goals and action items on a quarterly basis. Potential new initiatives for action are identified and initiatives are translated into objectives and success criteria for respective program areas and employees. Strategic Planning Meetings were held in October and November 2008 within the 3 regions and in Columbia. During these meetings key personnel re-visited our current plan and denoted what may need re-financing and the challenges that lie before us. In addition, during these meetings opportunities for financial savings were identified and many have been implemented.
- **Highway 31 Fire and Incident Management Team (IMT) Deployment** – In partnership with local and statewide emergency response agencies, the Forestry Commission led control efforts for the most costly wildland fire in state history. Although 173 homes were damaged or destroyed and 19,130 acres of forestland was burned, there were no significant injuries and no fatalities reported. This event was the first significant in-state deployment for the agency's Incident Management Team.
- **Forestry Legislation** – Significant progress was made on two important legislative initiatives. The Forest Management Protection Act was passed and will promote a business climate that encourages landowners to actively manage their forestlands. An amendment to the SC Prescribed Fire Act was introduced and assigned to the House Judiciary Committee. This legislation addresses legal

liability for smoke from prescribed burning and if enacted, will allow this valuable management tool to be applied more broadly across the state.

- **Budget Management** – In spite of significant reductions in state funds, the Forestry Commission continued to address its goals of protecting the forest resources and raising awareness of the importance of forestry to the state’s economy. By reacting quickly to declining appropriations, the Forestry Commission was able to reduce operating and personnel expenses, increase activities to generate revenue and avoid layoffs.
- **Services Program** – Under this program, the SC Forestry Commission supplies special forestry services to landowners. In FY 09, revenue from this program increased by 56% over last fiscal year. Increases in revenue and accomplishments were achieved in prescribed burning, firebreak construction and erosion control measures on forest roads and firebreaks.
- **Unit Assessments** – Program managers in forest protection and forest management completed internal performance reviews on all six agency field units that deliver services directly to landowners. Results of these reviews will lead to improvements in efficiency and effectiveness across all agency programs.

### 3. *Key strategic goals for present and future years:*

- Protect life, property, and the forest resource from the increasing threat of wildfire and other hazards as the population expands into forested areas. In partnership with the SC Prescribed Fire Council, continue the increased emphasis on the use of prescribed burning as a means for reducing hazardous fuels.
- Continue to train and qualify one State Incident Management Team (IMT) and coordinate the training and qualification of four Regional IMTs. During FY 09, most members of state IMT completed classroom training and focus has shifted to incident exercises, training assignments, and completing task books.
- Maintain an effective, well-trained, well-equipped, and diverse workforce, while continuing to assess and realign in response to on-going retirements and the changing needs and desires of customers. Undertake steps to transition to a more competitively paid firefighter workforce with firefighters reporting to an agency facility daily to reduce employee turnover and incident response time.
- Improve the effectiveness of internal communications, stressing individual employee roles in the implementation of the strategic plan.
- Raise awareness among the public and decision-makers of the economic, environmental, and social benefits of a well managed, healthy forest resource.
- Provide the data needed to assess the forest resource, its condition, and the potential for the development or expansion of sustainable markets for forest products and ecosystem services in support of SC’s Competitiveness Initiative.
- Expand technical assistance to landowners, communities, and state agencies.
- Continue to develop land ownership/management policies, procedures, and plans to enhance the management and effectiveness of the state forest system and increase awareness of benefits of state forest management model.
- Strengthen existing alliances and develop new alliances that will assist with accomplishing key strategic goals.

#### 4. *Key strategic challenges:*

- Public demands for forestry services, including fire prevention and suppression and forest management, have increased while SCFC staffing and budgets have declined. Foresters and forest technician supervisors have increased areas of responsibility and geographical coverage. Budget reductions have required agency leadership to hold many key positions vacant for extended periods creating waiting lists for some public services.
- Past budget reductions, with increasing equipment costs have made it necessary to lengthen the replacement schedule for firefighting equipment (Graph 7.3-5b). Rising operating costs are increasing the cost of detecting and suppressing wildland fires. These factors decrease the agency's ability to keep pace with technological advances in equipment needed for mission critical functions. Loss of firefighter positions and funds to replace firefighting equipment on a safe and efficient replacement schedule have placed the agency's capacity to respond to critical fire emergency needs in jeopardy. Should weather conditions create severe fire conditions for a prolonged duration, the agency's ability to respond to wildfires would be inadequate putting lives and property at great risk. Improvements in technology to provide communication necessary for emergency response are available, yet implementation of new technology lags due to budgetary limitations.
- Loss of experienced personnel through retirements, with more stringent employment requirements and mandated training for firefighters and dispatchers, coupled with very low starting salaries, makes hiring and retaining qualified personnel very difficult. The agency is faced with challenges of a rapidly retiring workforce; training and transfer of knowledge are a top priority. Salaries have not kept pace with increased responsibilities, nor with salaries in other organizations.
- The state's changing demographic and population expansion into rural areas have contributed to the fragmentation of forest ownership, increased the risk of fire to lives, homes, and property and created a large number of new forest landowners. Lacking a rural background, these landowners are unaware of basic management techniques needed to keep their woodlands healthy, safe and productive. This is having an especially adverse impact on the use of prescribed fire in the state. Agency personnel must monitor and assist with proposed regulations at the state and local level to ensure the ability to manage woodlands is retained.

#### 5. *How the accountability report is used to improve organizational performance:*

The accountability report is utilized by the SCFC in developing budget requests, monitoring established performance measures, updating or establishing benchmarks, and documenting continuous improvement efforts. Performance measures are tied directly to the agency's mission, strategic plan and implementation/status of goals and action items in the plan. Specific goals and action items are incorporated into employees' performance planning stages.

## **SECTION II – ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE**

### 1. *Main products and services and the primary methods by which these are delivered:*

#### **Protect the Resource**

The SCFC has a statewide wildfire prevention, detection and control network in place. According to the South Carolina Code of Laws, Section 48-23-90, "It shall take such action and afford such organized means as may be necessary to prevent, control and extinguish fires, including the enforcement of any and all laws pertaining to the protection of the forests and woodlands in the State."

The SCFC conducts wildfire prevention and 'Firewise' programs, including the assessment of risk for communities located in areas where wildfires have historically occurred and in new developments with

significant fire hazards. Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) are developed to provide homeowners, community planners, Fire Departments, and SCFC wildland firefighters with an outline of the actions needed to reduce wildfire hazard.

The SCFC provides landowners with wildland fire suppression through a network of firefighters and equipment strategically located throughout the state. Dispatching the closest available firefighting unit is accomplished through three regional dispatch centers. To further minimize the effect of wildfire, SCFC personnel conduct prescribed burns to reduce hazardous fuels, improve wildlife habitat, and prepare sites for reforestation.

The Law Enforcement Program reduces wildfire occurrence, woods arson and forest product theft and fraud through the enforcement of state laws.

The SCFC trains and develops Incident Management Teams (IMT) to improve the capability of the state to manage wildfires, natural disasters, or other large incidents. The IMT Coordinator facilitates the development of nationally-qualified IMTs within the Forestry Commission and ensures consistency among four multi-disciplinary (non-SCFC) IMTs located in each region of the State.

SCFC educates landowners and organizations in how to minimize impacts from non-fire hazards like tornados, ice storms, insect and disease. In actual incidents we assist the public and other agencies with damage and disaster response.

The SCFC periodically surveys the state for forest insect and disease infestations and provides agency foresters and landowners access to up-to-date information, diagnosis of specific problems and recommendations for control. Agency staff includes an entomologist, a forester, and a technician working from a fully equipped diagnostic lab. The SCFC has instituted a Southern Pine Beetle Prevention/Restoration Program to provide advice to landowners and a cost-share program to aid them in restoring areas impacted by the beetle and treating areas to minimize future SPB damage.

The SCFC is the designated agency in South Carolina to provide public oversight and guidance for technical forest management practices. The agency has established approved Best Management Practices (BMPs) and routinely monitors compliance with BMP guidelines on sites where timber harvesting or other forestry practices are in progress to ensure protection of water quality and soil productivity and compliance with state and federal laws and policies.

### **Manage the Resource**

SCFC foresters examine woodlands at the request of landowners, with an emphasis on assisting new landowners and landowners that previously have not utilized the assistance of a professional forester. According to the South Carolina Code of Laws, Section 48-23-90, "It shall give such advice, assistance and cooperation as may be practical to private owners of land ..."

SCFC foresters write woodland management plans that include descriptions of each forest stand, recommended practices to meet the objectives of the landowner, and a property map. Foresters provide guidance relating to timber harvesting, site preparation, timber stand improvement, reforestation, and prescribed burning. They refer landowners to private consulting foresters when assistance needed is extensive or prolonged.

SCFC foresters recommend appropriate financial assistance programs to help landowners complete forestry improvement projects and assist landowners with the application process and implementation of forestry practices. The agency serves as a critical link by acquiring, administering and delivering state and federal funds to private landowners. Prescribed burning services, firebreak plowing and timber marking services are offered for a fee.

To assist the state's landowners with reforestation, the Commission produces and sells bareroot and containerized seedlings grown at its nursery in Edgefield, SC. Native pine and hardwood species are available to fill niche markets and demands and ensure citizens access to high quality growing stock.

The SCFC Nursery and Tree Improvement Program operate solely on the receipts from seedling, cone, timber and seed sales.

The SCFC manages Sand Hills, Manchester, Harbison, Poe Creek and Wee Tee State Forests for sustainable forestry, wildlife management, recreation and public education purposes. Seventy-five percent of the revenues from state forest activities, primarily sale of forest products, fund all state forest activities, and 25% of the revenue is returned to county governments of origin for their educational systems. The SCFC provides forest management assistance to other state agencies including the Department of Natural Resources, Department of Corrections, Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism, Department of Mental Health, Department of Transportation and University of South Carolina.

One statewide Urban Forestry Coordinator and three regional urban foresters work with urban residents, city planners, developers, contractors and local government to improve their capability to manage forest resources within urban environments. They provide technical and/or educational assistance regarding community forest inventories and management plans, community and county tree ordinances, grant project implementation, how to become a Tree City USA, proper tree selection, installation, care and maintenance, distribute educational information, coordinate and conduct training workshops, and promote SC's Arbor Day. Primary assistance is provided to personnel working for towns, cities, and counties. Secondary assistance is provided to professional associations, civic and volunteer organizations, state agencies, educational institutions, and businesses.

### **Raise Awareness about the Resource**

The SCFC is responsible for educating the public about the economic and environmental benefits of a well-managed forest resource. According to the South Carolina Code of laws, Section 48-23-90, "It shall...promote...a proper appreciation by the public of the advantages of forestry and the benefits to be derived from forest culture and preservation." Information and Education staff members produce technical and information materials, news releases, web-based material and audio-visual programs to explain forestry programs, promote SCFC services, and educate various publics about the benefits of forests, fire prevention, and forest management. Education staff writes curricula, schedules, and instructs formal forestry education programs for school groups and teachers. SCFC staff support the agency's popular Wood Magic Forest Fair and Teachers Tour programs.

SCFC personnel, from both headquarters and field offices, take an active role promoting the value of forestry to the state and the benefits of managing the forest resource. Presentations are made at landowner association meetings and tours, professional meetings and civic and environmental organizations. SCFC foresters manage the certified Forest Stewardship program and actively support the Tree Farm program, recognizing landowners who manage forestland according to professional standards.

State forests provide education about forest management through demonstration of sound forest management, programs, brochures and signage.

## **2. *Key Customer groups and their key requirements/expectations:***

### **Owners and users of forestland**

Requirements/expectations: protect their woodlands, lives, and property, help manage forests by providing professional assistance; enhance forest resources to help insure that state's forest industry and markets for forest products remain financially healthy and positively impact forest law and policy to enhance owner opportunities.

**Other State Agencies (who own woodlands)**

Requirements/expectations: protect their woodlands and property, help manage forests by providing professional assistance, and assist them in being good stewards of the public lands for which they are responsible.

**SC Law Enforcement Division/SC Emergency Management Division**

Requirements/expectations: enhance state capability to respond to catastrophic events by developing all-hazard IMTs; provide incident command system (ICS) training to other agencies to ensure that natural and man-made disasters are managed effectively.

**City and county fire and emergency services**

Requirements/expectations: partner with them in wildland/interface fire control; raise the awareness regarding the challenges facing this state with wildland fires, especially the fires occurring in wildland urban interface (WUI) areas.

**Rural-Urban interface residents and interest groups**

Requirements/expectations: protect their lives and property from wildland fire; raise the awareness regarding the challenges facing this state from wildland fires; enhance the forest resource to provide better stewardship of all the state's natural resources.

**Forest industry**

Requirements/expectations: protect their woodlands; provide management assistance to private forest owners to help insure stable wood supplies; enhance the resource to help insure future wood supplies and a strong forest industry within the state; help prepare to meet the future demands that will be placed on our forest resources.

**State forests visitors and user groups**

Requirements/expectations: protect the state owned woodlands, provide management to meet their recreational needs; enhance our state forests by being good stewards of the land; raise awareness about the importance and benefits of our state forests.

**Urban residents and businesses**

Requirements/expectations: provide management assistance with the urban forests located in the towns and cities of this state; assist in the protection of our urban forests from insect, disease and fire threats; raise awareness about the importance of our urban forest.

**Earth science teachers and students**

Requirements/expectations: help raise the awareness about SC forest resources by providing educational training, resources, and opportunities to teachers and students.

**3. Key stakeholder groups (other than customers):**

- Employees
- Commissioners
- County Forestry Boards
- Local governments: county and city councils
- Governmental Regulatory Agencies
- State Legislative members
- State Congressional members
- Citizens of South Carolina

**4. Key suppliers and partners:**

**Suppliers:** Vehicle equipment manufacturers, heavy equipment manufacturers and dealers, gasoline vendors, vehicle repair garages and parts suppliers, federal excess property inventory system,

communication equipment dealers and repair businesses, forestry equipment suppliers, office supply vendors, printing businesses and media outlets, herbicide contractors, site preparation contractors, tree planting contractors, consulting foresters and aerial detection contractors

**Partners:** State and Federal Agencies such as South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC), South Carolina Emergency Management Division (SCEMD), South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) -State Climatology Office, Clemson University, South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism (SC PRT), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service, USDA Farm Services Agency (FSA), United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), National Park Service (NPS), Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), US Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Defense, National Weather Service, and United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Other organizations include National Association of State Foresters (NASF), Southern Group of State Foresters (SGSF), South Carolina Wildlife Federation (SCWF), National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf), Private Consulting Foresters (PCF), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), The Conservation Fund, South Carolina Timber Producers Association, South Carolina Forestry Association, Palmetto Agribusiness Council, National Arbor Day Foundation, SC Prescribed Fire Council, SC Urban & Community Forestry Council, Hunting With A Hero and Longleaf Alliance

**5. *Operating locations:***

Personnel are assigned positions throughout the state through a series of zone, unit, regional, and headquarter offices. The largest single group of employees, initial attack firefighters, report directly from their residences in responding to wildland fires. Regional administrative and support offices are located in Newberry, Florence, and Walterboro. Central emergency dispatch centers are co-located at the regional office sites. A forest seedling nursery is located in Edgefield County, and a forest seed orchard is located in Jasper County. Major property holdings include Manchester State Forest in Sumter County, Sand Hills State Forest in Chesterfield and Darlington Counties, Harbison State Forest in Richland County, Poe Creek State Forest in Pickens County, and Wee Tee State Forest in Williamsburg County.

**6. *Number of employees segmented by employee category:***

The SCFC has a total of 362 employees. Two of these positions are unclassified.

**7. *Regulatory environment:***

SCFC Operations are authorized by the South Carolina Code of Laws, Section 48-23-10 to Section 48-23-295.

The major products and services of the SCFC are authorized and required by the South Carolina Code of Laws, Section 48-23-90, *General Duties of Commission* as stated below:

The Commission shall inquire into and make an annual report to the General Assembly upon the forest conditions in the State, with reference to the preservation of forests, the effect of the destruction of forests upon the general welfare of the State and other matters pertaining to the subject of forestry and tree growth, including recommendations to the public generally as to reforestation.

It shall take such action and afford such organized means as may be necessary to prevent, control and extinguish fires, including the enforcement of any and all laws pertaining to the protection of the forests and woodlands of the State.

It shall give such advice, assistance and cooperation as may be practical to private owners of land and promote, so far as it may be able, a proper appreciation by the public of the advantages of forestry and the benefits to be derived from forest culture and preservation.

It shall cooperate with the Federal Government in the distribution of funds allotted to the State for forestry purposes and shall assist in the enforcement of all laws pertaining thereto. It shall have the control of the expenditure of all funds received by it.

**8. *Performance improvement system(s):***

The accountability report is utilized by the SCFC in developing budget requests, monitoring established performance measures, updating or establishing benchmarks, and documenting continuous improvement efforts. Performance measures are tied directly to the agency's mission, strategic plan and implementation/status of goals and action items in the plan.

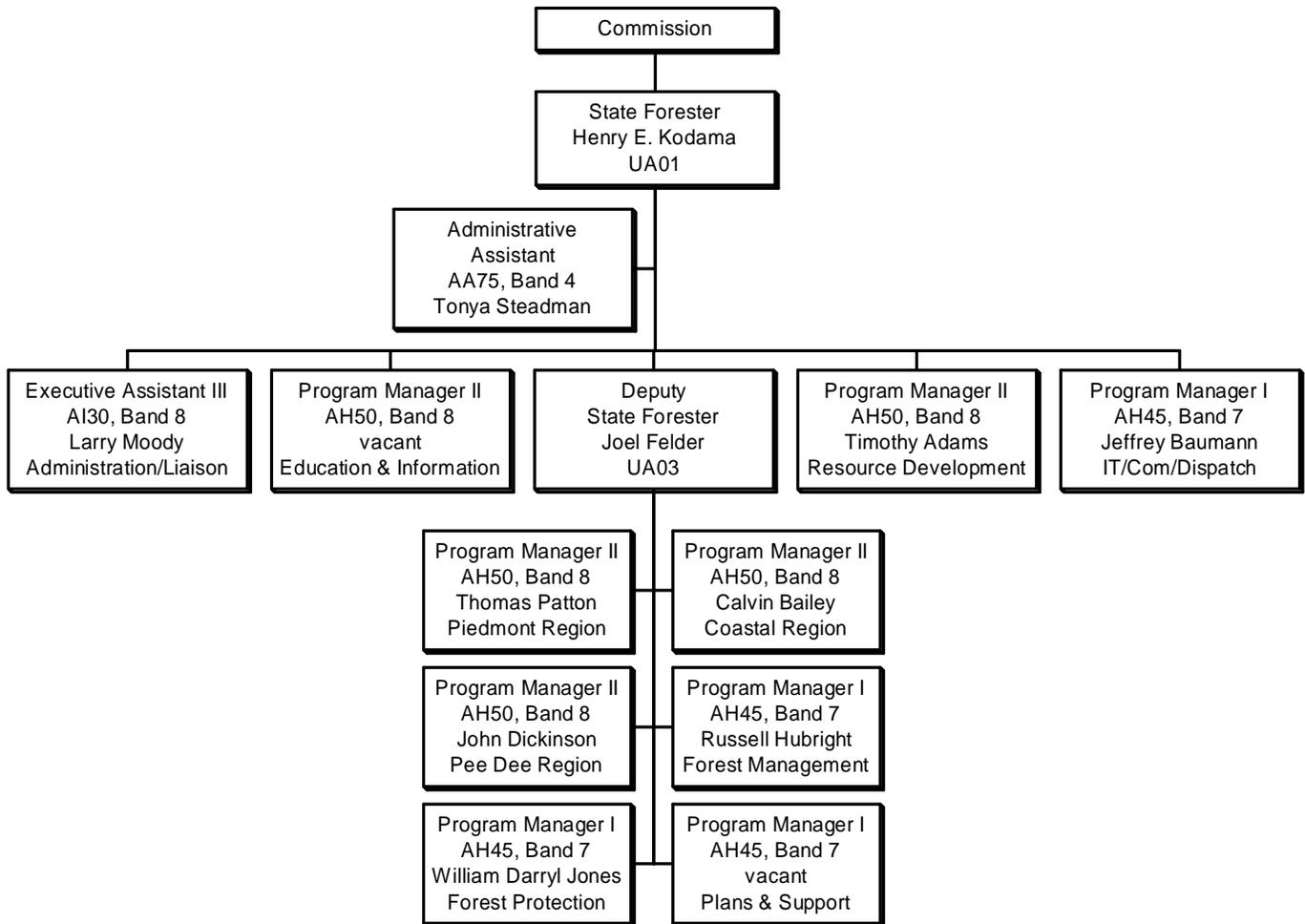
Performance expectations are determined through one or more of the following: review of past organizational performance, review of other organizations' performance, input from employees primarily responsible for carrying out and monitoring the program, and feedback from customers. The results of the review and input are assessed and evaluated to ensure the current needs of the customers are met. Performance expectations may be modified based on the information. Progress toward strategic goals and objectives is monitored and reported on by the Senior Consultant within the Division of Administration.

Performance expectations are deployed and communicated through the strategic and action plans, the performance review planning process, and follow-up meetings/discussions. Commitment and performance are achieved and supported through periodic and on-going reviews of expectations and progress. Specific goals and action items are incorporated into employees' performance planning stages to the lowest supervisory level within our organization.

9. Organizational Structure Chart:

# South Carolina Forestry Commission

## Organizational Chart



**10. Expenditures/Appropriations Chart**

**Accountability Report Appropriations/Expenditures Chart**

**Base Budget Expenditures and Appropriations**

Major Budget Categories	FY 07-08 Actual Expenditures		FY 08-09 Actual Expenditures		FY 09-10 Appropriations Act	
	Total Funds	General Funds	Total Funds	General Funds	Total Funds	General Funds
Personal Service	\$12,552,947	\$10,220,544	\$12,051,175	\$9,088,672	\$11,234,914	\$8,633,854
Other Operating	\$7,634,687	\$4,051,606	\$4,937,674	\$1,011,111	\$7,675,169	\$1,238,700
Special Items	\$866,529	\$200,000	\$808,879	\$200,000	\$1,000,000	\$200,000
Permanent Improvements	\$74,643				\$0	\$0
Case Services						
Distributions to Subdivisions	\$1,798,502		\$2,003,987		\$3,023,100	\$0
Fringe Benefits	\$4,678,347	\$3,885,422	\$4,772,275	\$3,734,965	\$4,081,545	\$3,178,825
Non-recurring	\$150,000	\$150,000				
<b>Total</b>	\$27,755,655	\$18,507,572	\$24,573,990	\$14,034,747	\$27,014,728	\$13,251,379

**Other Expenditures**

Sources of Funds	FY 07-08 Actual Expenditures	FY 08-09 Actual Expenditures
Supplemental Bills	\$150,000	\$0
Capital Reserve Funds	\$0	\$0
Bonds	\$0	\$0

**11. Major Program Areas Chart:**

**Major Program Areas**

<b>Program Number and Title</b>	<b>Major Program Area Purpose (Brief)</b>	<b>FY 07-08 Budget Expenditures</b>	<b>FY 08-09 Budget Expenditures</b>	<b>Key Cross Reference for Financial Results*</b>
<b>II Forest Landowners Assistance</b>	<b>Forest Protection</b> To ensure their future health, South Carolina’s forests must be protected from harm to include fire, disease, pests and other natural and human-caused factors.	State: 14,286,196 Federal: 2,901,571 Other: 367,582 Total: 17,555,349 % of Total Budget: 63%	State: 10,729,723 Federal: 3,300,514 Other: 855,851 Total: 14,886,088 % of Total Budget: 61%	7.3-1
<b>II Forest Landowners Assistance</b>	<b>Forest Management</b> The SCFC delivers financial and technical assistance to forest landowners, communities and the public while addressing social and environmental concerns.	State: 1,961,732 Federal: 984,660 Other: 978,904 Total: 3,925,296 % of Total Budget: 14%	State: 1,847,863 Federal: 947,413 Other: 1,062,768 Total: 3,858,044 % of Total Budget: 16%	7.3-1
<b>III State Forests</b>	<b>State Forests</b> Management, development and protection of timber, wildlife and endangered species and other resources. An ample productive forestland base and an economic climate conducive to forestry based business are essential if forest landowners of South Carolina are to practice sustainable forest management.	State: 0 Federal: 0 Other: 2,746,865 Total: 2,746,865 % of Total Budget: 10%	State: 0 Federal: 0 Other: 2,991,593 Total: 2,991,593 % of Total Budget: 12%	7.3-1

**Below: List any programs not included above and show the remainder of expenditures by source of funds.**

<b>Remainder of Expenditures</b>	State: 2,259,644	State: 1,457,162
<b>Resource Development</b>	Federal: 611,591	Federal: 581,135
<b>Best Management Practices</b>	Other: 656,910	Other: 799,968
<b>Nurseries and Tree Improvement</b>	Total: 3,528,145	Total: 2,,838,265
<b>Forest Information &amp; Outreach</b>	% of Total Budget: 13%	% of Total Budget: 11%
<b>Administration</b>		

\*Key Cross-References are a link to the Category 7 – Business Results. These References provide a Chart number that is included in the 7<sup>th</sup> section of this document.

## SECTION III – ELEMENTS OF THE MALCOLM BALDRIGE CRITERIA

### CATEGORY I– SENIOR LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE, AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

#### ***1.1 How do senior leaders set, deploy and ensure two-way communication for:***

##### ***1.1a Short and long term organizational direction and organizational priorities?***

Senior leaders (agency director, his staff, and division directors) meet with Commissioners, employees, stakeholders, and customers during the year to discuss and review direction and priorities. The strategic plan serves as the primary guide for short and long term direction and priorities for the present through the next three to five years. Additionally, agency leadership and staff monitor for new issues that may arise in the Executive & Legislative branches of state government, the federal government, as well as within the forestry community across the state, the region and the nation. The agency director and a number of program managers and employees serve on local, state, regional, and/or national forestry related committees.

Deployment and communication are accomplished through the agency’s weekly news bulletins and various meetings with employees, customers, and stakeholders. Selected action items are included in employee performance evaluation planning stages.

##### ***1.1b Performance expectations?***

Performance expectations are determined through one or more of the following: internal review of past performance, review of other organizations’ performances, input from employees responsible for programs, feedback from customers, audits, program reviews by the USDA Forest Service.

Performance expectations are deployed and communicated through the strategic and action plans, the performance planning stage and review process, monthly staff meetings and discussions with personnel. Commitment and performance are achieved and supported through periodic and on-going reviews of expectations and progress with employees.

##### ***1.1c Organizational values?***

Organizational values have been reviewed and revised by agency leadership. Agency leadership strives to lead by example and demonstrate these values during regular interaction with employees.

##### ***1.1d Ethical behavior?***

The senior leadership of the agency reviewed the mission, vision and values of the agency. There is a genuine understanding of the concept of leading by example and the senior leaders strive to provide guidance, make decisions and represent the agency according to the SCFC values. Employees of the agency carry out their responsibilities according to the ethical standards of their individual professions (i.e. forestry, accounting, human resources.) There have been conscious efforts and actions taken to demonstrate the stated values of the agency. For example, the lines of communication between senior leadership and employees, partners and stakeholders have increased. This action touches on several of the agency’s values. The agency also solicits feedback from landowners regarding the services and professionalism received.

#### ***1.2 How do senior leaders establish and promote a focus on customers and other stakeholders?***

Agency leaders periodically meet with customers and stakeholders to discuss agency, customer and stakeholder priorities and needs.

Customer feedback and input on forestry services and issues such as seedling sales, services work, technical forest management assistance, stewardship management assistance, and notification of wildfires are solicited through surveys, and focus groups. Recreational users of state forests participate in advisory councils.

**1.3 *How does the organization address the current and potential impact on the public of its programs, services, facilities and operations, including associated risks?***

Current and potential impacts and risks are identified by seeking Commissioner, employee, customer, public, and partner input/feedback.

Impacts and risks are addressed through review by program managers, agency leaders and Commissioners, as well as through legal, financial, and insurance consultations.

**1.4 *How do senior leaders maintain fiscal, legal, and regulatory accountability?***

Fiscal, legal and regulatory accountability are maintained through the use of policies, procedures, and internal and external controls. Controls are in place to maintain a separation of duties in the fiscal area. This, along with the use of Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), insures fiscal responsibility and eliminates opportunity for fraud. Monthly reviews of budget status in relation to appropriations and adherence to the State Procurement Code sustain legal accountability. Use of the State Attorney General's Office and private attorneys to deal with Human Resource complaints, lawsuits or other legal and regulatory issues insures accountability. The Internal Auditor, State Auditor's Office and the USDA Forest Service regularly conduct audits and reviews to insure compliance with State and Federal laws, rules and regulations.

**1.5 *What performance measures do senior leaders regularly review to inform them on needed actions?***

- Customer satisfaction levels for forest tree seedlings, services, and forestry assistance, (Graphs 7.2-1; 7.2-2; 7.2-3)
- Forest based economic development impact (Graphs 7.1-1a&b)
- Forest Inventory Analysis Productivity (Graph 7.1-2)
- Fire response times & Southern states average fire sizes (Graphs 7.1-3; 7.1-4)
- Timber theft recovery rates (Graph 7.1-5)
- Law Enforcement Investigations/Prosecutions (Graph 7.1-6)
- Best management practices compliance trends (Graph 7.1-7)
- Southern Pine Beetle losses (Graph 7.1-8)
- Raise the Awareness About the Resource (Graphs 7.1-9a&b & 7.1-10)
- Financial (Graphs 7.3-1 through 7.3-8)
- Employee turnover rates/ satisfaction (Graph 7.4-1)
- Safety and Health (Graph 7.4-2)

**1.6 *How do senior leaders use organizational performance review findings and employee feedback to improve their own leadership effectiveness, the effectiveness of management throughout the organization including the head of the organization, and the governance board/policy making body? How do their personal actions reflect a commitment to organizational values?***

The Chairman of the Commission communicates on an on-going basis with Agency leadership. Organizational performance is reported and discussed at quarterly Commission meetings.

Senior leaders discuss and use employee feedback and organizational reviews to determine if leadership/management:

- adequately communicates direction and priorities to employees
- identifies and removes barriers that may hinder employees' performance
- sets realistic performance expectations
- should modify or change priorities

Agency leadership maintains an open door approach to business with employees, customers, and stakeholders, participates in the physical fitness work capacity tests with employees, and continues to support additional employee recognition efforts.

**1.7 *How do senior leaders promote and personally participate in succession planning and the development of future organizational leaders?***

Senior leaders regularly review an organizational chart that identifies opportunities for succession planning and proactive solutions are sought. The agency director/deputy actively participates in selecting candidates for leadership programs such as the Certified Public Manager. Leadership continues to review and discuss the status of these efforts and identify additional needs/opportunities on a regular basis.

**1.8 *How do senior leaders create an environment for performance improvement and the accomplishment of strategic objectives?***

Input for update of the strategic plan was sought from employees at all levels of the organization. Major goals and objectives and their status are discussed at staff meetings and input for performance improvement and innovation is encouraged through various employee councils and program personnel. Committees are charged with identifying opportunities for improvement.

**1.9 *How do senior leaders create an environment for organizational and workforce learning?***

An environment for organizational and workforce learning is created by selecting individuals to participate in the Certified Public Manager Program. Projects completed within the program are evaluated, considered, and implemented where feasible. Individuals have also previously participated in the Executive Institute and the Associate Public Manager Program. SCFC supports our personnel by assisting them with memberships in professional organizations, registration fees and related expenses for attending relevant conferences. A Tuition Assistance Policy and Procedure is also in place whereby employees can request assistance for work related courses.

**1.10 *How do senior leaders communicate with, engage, empower, and motivate the entire workforce throughout the organization? How do senior leaders take an active role in reward and recognition processes to reinforce high performance throughout the organization?***

A weekly newsletter is distributed to all personnel. The Agency Director submits an opening article each week to communicate his activities and current forestry issues.

Senior leaders also participate in regional meetings with staff and other key partners.

Senior leaders actively participate in recognition ceremonies for employee service and retirements. They also attend the graduations for employees' major milestones such as completion of the Law Enforcement Training and Certified Public Manager Program. Senior leaders also make special efforts to recognize employees upon receipt of letters acknowledging a customer's appreciation for the services delivered.

**1.11 *How do senior leaders actively support and strengthen the communities in which your organization operates? Include how senior leaders determine areas of emphasis for organizational involvement and support, and how senior leaders, the workforce, and the organization contribute to improving these communities.***

Senior leaders actively support and strengthen communities by supporting employee participation in professional and community organizations and associations, with emphasis on encouraging employees to monitor forestry issues at the local level as addressed in our Strategic Plan under Raise the Awareness. The agency also supports local school districts in which state forests are located by

returning 25% of the gross receipts generated from the sale of forest products on each forest to the district (Graph 7.3-8). SCFC employees routinely provide advice and assistance, as well as training and grant opportunities to communities, organizations, and local governments, especially through the agency's Urban and Community Forestry Program, cooperation with rural and volunteer fire departments, and reforestation efforts. Employees' community involvement includes participation in and support of local fire, law enforcement, and forestry associations; participation in the United Way, Red Cross & Blood Connection blood drives, Harvest Hope food drive, various walk & bike-a-thons, Good Health Appeal, Special Olympics, Palmetto Pride, Hunting with a Hero, fishing rodeos for youth, state forests and state park events, as well as festivals in towns, cities, and communities.

## **CATEGORY 2 - STRATEGIC PLANNING**

### **2.1 *What is your Strategic Planning process, including key participants, and how does it address:***

The agency's strategic plan is the basis for short term, mid term and long term planning. Over the last 10 years the agency's strategic plan has been revised three times with the most recent revision completed in June 2006. The revision process took place over several months involving the collection of input and data from agency Commissioners, employees, customers, cooperators, and the public. Information/data was analyzed and its content verified, like issues consolidated, strategies identified, the plan developed and disseminated, with reviews and monitoring occurring as the plan is carried out. For example, in the Fall of 2008 Strategic Planning Meetings were held within the 3 regions and in Columbia where key personnel re-visited the Plan and denoted what may need re-financing and challenges that lie ahead. During this process, opportunities for financial savings were identified and many have since been implemented.

#### **2.1a *Organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats:***

Through the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) portion of the strategic plan process we continue to keep focused on our customers and stakeholders. Doing this helps us to identify SWOT that could impact our goals and actions.

#### **2.1b *Financial, regulatory, societal and other potential risks:***

Specific financial, regulatory, societal, or other risks are addressed in individual action items in the strategic plan. This includes reviewing the agency's financial and staffing levels and needs.

#### **2.1c *Shifts in technology and customer preferences;***

The SCFC evaluates staffing, equipment, and technology to ensure adequate response to all wildfires, forest health issues, and other activities and events within the scope of the SCFC's mission. Wildland Urban Interface initiatives, Wildfire Prevention teams, and Incident Management teams are designed to address societal and potential risks to our natural resources and the citizens of South Carolina. When forest health risks are identified appropriate measures are taken to inform customers. Customer satisfaction surveys assist in determining the opinions and needs of our customers and their preferences.

#### **2.1d *Workforce capabilities and needs:***

The strategic plan reflects the agency's intent to plan effectively for the use of human resources, with a strong emphasis on training and safety for firefighters and foresters. In response to ongoing budget concerns and to initiate systematic planning for vacancies created by retirement, the SCFC reviewed its structure, programs, and staffing levels, and reorganized and realigned the workforce. Efforts continue to develop a stronger cross-functional workforce in the performance of forest protection and forest management services through the development of Incident Management Teams and Emergency Response Teams. Succession planning strategies continue to be utilized to minimize knowledge loss through attrition.

### **2.1e *Organizational continuity in emergencies.***

The SCFC is a primary point of contact for 9-1-1 centers, fire departments and the public. SCFC statewide dispatch operations will be kept current with technology, equipment, and staffing to support the agency's fire dispatch, smoke management and emergency communications roles. There is an increased emphasis on training SCFC personnel and cooperators in the Incident Command System (ICS) and general wildfire suppression tactics. In an effort to ensure continuity of essential functions in the event of a disaster an agency Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) has been completed. In addition, we have completed the Commission's portion of the COOP at SCEMD. Both of these documents will require monitoring and updates to reflect any staff changes etc. Part of this framework is based on the Southern Group of State Foresters Disaster Response Handbook. The agency cooperates with the SCEMD, fire departments, and other emergency response organizations. The SCFC seeks out opportunities to train and utilize private and/or non-traditional cooperators.

### **2.1f *Your ability to execute the strategic plan.***

Our efforts have been focused on linking employees' position descriptions and evaluations to the strategic plan. This enables us to provide for an effective way to execute our strategic plan as well as conform to the Malcolm Baldrige Criteria. Targeted goals and action items have been selected as performance objectives for employees in the line organization.

### **2.2 *How do your strategic objectives address the strategic challenges you identified in your Executive Summary?***

Our strategic objectives lead us toward solutions for the strategic challenges that we have identified. These challenges are closely aligned with our primary strategic plan goals of protecting the resource and raising awareness of forestry issues and the agency's role in addressing those issues.

### **2.3 *How do you develop and track action plans that address your key strategic objectives, and how do you allocate resources to ensure the accomplishment of your action plans?***

Action items are identified for each goal in the strategic plan and are included in the plan. Agency leaders and program managers further identified steps needed to achieve the action items and the personnel involved. These action items have been included within the Employee Performance Management System (EPMS) and specific employees' planning stages, with managers and supervisors responsible for tracking progress. The action items are tied to performance measures. In addition, the Senior Consultant within the Division of Administration is dedicated to monitoring and reporting on action items toward strategic goals and objectives. This information is reported to the Commissioners, State Forester, Deputy State Forester, and employees on a quarterly basis.

### **2.4 *How do you communicate and deploy your strategic objectives, action plans and related performance measures?***

The agency's strategic plan is published on the SCFC website (see 2.7). All managers review and update strategic plan action items each year when performance appraisals are due. Employees are reminded of objectives, review performance measures, and discuss new action plans to improve performance measures with supervisors at that time. Employees are aware of the progress being made on performance measures via e-mail and on a weekly, monthly and quarterly basis.

### **2.5 *How do you measure progress on your action plans?***

Since the action items are used to determine the agency's goals and are incorporated into our daily activities, the measure of them is reflected in the measures which have been developed for this accountability report. Graph 7.1-7, which measures compliance with BMPs, relates directly to *Protect the Resource – Goal Five – Action Item 5* in our strategic plan which states: "Continue BMP monitoring to document success and provide opportunities for education of landowners, loggers, and forestry professionals."

Accomplishments on action plans are tracked and compiled into a quarterly report which is presented to the executive staff and the Commissioners at each scheduled Commission meeting.

**2.6 *How do you evaluate and improve your strategic planning process?***

The Commissioners, State Forester, Deputy State Forester, and the executive team monitor existing initiatives on a quarterly basis and identify potential new initiatives for action. The initiatives are then translated into objectives and success criteria for relevant program areas and employees. Periodically, additional stakeholders are brought in to evaluate and improve the process as well.

**2.7 *If the agency's strategic plan is available to the public through the agency's Internet homepage, please provide a website address for that plan.***

The web address for the agency's strategic plan is [www.trees.sc.gov/stratplan.pdf](http://www.trees.sc.gov/stratplan.pdf)

2.8 Strategic Planning Chart:

<b>Strategic Planning</b>			
<b>Program</b>	<b>Supported Agency</b>	<b>Related FY 08-09 and beyond</b>	<b>Key Cross</b>
<b>Number</b>	<b>Strategic Planning</b>	<b>Key Agency Action Plan/Initiative(s)</b>	<b>References for</b>
<b>and Title</b>	<b>Goal/Objective</b>	<b>and Timeline for Accomplishing the Plan(s)</b>	<b>Performance Measures*</b>
II Forest Landowners Assistance Protection	<u>Protect the Resource</u> 1. Ensure prompt & effective response to wildfire & other natural disasters. 2. Re-evaluate protection strategies, priorities, capabilities as urban areas expand into woodlands. 3. Lead in law enforcement in wildfire & timber theft & fraud investigation. 4. Ensure prompt response to insect & disease outbreaks. 5. Enhance water quality protection.	1. Utilize technology to reduce average warden fire response time, with a target of 30 minutes or less, by end of FY 10. 2. Conduct workshops for homeowners in fire-prone areas to educate them about the wild land-urban interface during FY 10. 3. Utilize appropriate technology (GPS, cameras, arson investigation techniques) to improve conviction rates on wildland arson & timber theft cases during FY 10. 4. Conduct aerial surveys to locate and control insect & disease outbreaks by 2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter of FY 10. 5. Conduct 20 BMP related training programs for forestry professionals by June 2010. Publish BMP Monitoring report & expert review for the latest survey by September 2009. Develop, produce & begin distribution of BMP-related outreach materials by December 2009.	Graphs 7.1-3, 7.1-4, 7.1-5, 7.1-6, 7.1-7, 7.1-8 and 7.3-7
II Forest Landowners Assistance Forest Mgt.  IV Education	<u>Raise Awareness about the Resource</u> 1. Develop & promote forestry education programs for all audiences. 2. Enhance the image of SCFC as source for forest management information & assistance.	Conduct 20 forest management field studies for local schools at Harbison State Forest by the end of FY 10. Conduct Wood Magic Forest Fair in 3 locations throughout the state to serve approximately 2,000 participants by the end of 2009. Organize & conduct SC Teachers Tour in the Pee Dee area by the end of FY 10. Conduct 25 Project Learning Tree professional development workshops for educators by the end of FY 10. Deliver shared state forest revenue to county councils and describe forestry and SCFC importance each fall.	Graphs 7.1-9a, 7.1-9b, 7.1-10, and 7.3-8
II Forest Landowners Assistance Forest Mgt.  III State Forests IV Education	<u>Manage the Resource</u> 1. Provide improved land management services to all SC landowners. 3. Provide technical, financial, & educational assistance in urban forestry. 4. Use landholdings to demonstrate management techniques.	1. Complete Unit Assessments by March 30, 2009. Complete a state assessment of the forest resources by May 2010. Tasks include holding a stakeholder meeting by June 30, 2009 to identify issues; conduct a customer survey to prioritize issues by August 30, 2009; form working groups by October 31, 2009 to assess issues. 3. Provide herbicide training for SCFC foresters by June 30, 2009. Apply for additional federal funds to supplement annual allocation from US Forest Service. Apply for federal funding by August 30, 2009 for professional development for municipal, county, & regional planners to make them more aware of issues facing forestry in SC.	Graphs 7.1-11, 7.2-2, and 7.2-3
II Forest Landowners Assistance Forest Mgt.  III State Forests IV Education	<u>Enhance the Resource</u> 1. Serve as catalyst for promotion, development, expansion of forest resource & markets in SC. 3. Provide timely information on forest inventory & health. 4. Provide landowners with optimum quality seedlings.	1. Complete primary forest product directory by 12/2009. Publish & distribute biomass report by 12/2009. 3. Publish & distribute South Carolina's Forests, 2006 by September 2009. Complete measurement of FIA plots in the 3 <sup>rd</sup> panel in cycle 10 by 12/2009. Complete measurement of 18 logging and utilization study sites by 12/2009. 4. Complete grafting for 3 <sup>rd</sup> cycle loblolly pine orchard by Spring, 2010. Complete seedling customer satisfaction survey by June 2010 with goal of 90+% satisfaction.	Graphs 7.1-1a, 7.1-1b, 7.1-2 and 7.2-1
I Admin. II Forest Landowners Assistance Forest Mgt. III State Forests IV Education	<u>Prepare to Meet Future Demands</u> 1. Maintain a capable, satisfied, diverse work team. 2. Enhance professional development for all agency staff. 3. Review staffing levels & organizational structure to ensure continued forestry services. 4. Reduce job-related injuries.	1. Meet or exceed FY 09 turnover percentage rate by FY 11(due to Retirement Incentive Plan effective 7/1/09). 3. Increase number of firefighter positions 5% by FY 11; Increase project forester positions 20% by FY 12. 4. Reduce workers compensation premium 10% by FY 11 by maintaining a low Experience Modification Factor.	Graphs 7.4-1 and 7.4-2

## **CATEGORY 3 – CUSTOMER FOCUS**

### ***3.1 How do you determine who your customers are and what their key requirements are?***

Our key customers were generally identified in the South Carolina Code of Laws, Section 48-23-90 *General Duties of Commission*. As our services and products have evolved over the years our customer base has expanded to include other non-traditional forestry customers. For example, urban populations have expanded into the more rural and forested areas of our state and we are responding to this population's need for assistance on their personal property, as well as providing information on their surrounding natural environment.

Our agency uses a variety of methods to determine requirements, expectations, preferences and satisfaction of customers and stakeholders:

- Customer Surveys
- Focus Groups
- Public Forums and Workshops
- Collaboration with Partners and User Groups
- Outreach Publications for Targeted Audiences
- Interviews
- County Forestry Board Meetings
- County Council Meetings
- Monitoring of Legislative Activities
- Visiting Congressional Delegation Annually
- Homeowner Association Meetings
- Forest Landowner Association Meetings

The SCFC has conducted surveys of customers to determine their expectations and preferences. Survey forms soliciting feedback are sent to landowners that receive forest management assistance or services. Customers are asked about the length of time it took to complete the service, the results of the service, follow-up on the service, and courtesy and professionalism of the employees.

The SCFC served on the Advisory Board of the Sustaining Family Forest Initiative (SFFI) that is housed at Yale University. The mission of this organization is to gain comprehensive understanding about family forest landowners and to develop effective methods of communicating with landowners in order to encourage sustainable forestry.

Each year, agency leadership also participates in meetings of county forestry boards to discuss current forestry issues and agency programs.

Federal grants dictate to whom we provide assistance in Community Forestry, Best Management Practices, and the Wildland/Urban Interface programs.

Periodic mailings, such as surveys to new forest landowners, help the agency acquire new customers and determine their interests and needs.

### ***3.2 How do you keep your listening and learning methods current with changing customer /business needs and expectations?***

The SCFC seeks input and information through customer surveys and employee feedback, as well as through participation in a number of partnerships and councils, to determine changing customer/business needs and expectations. These include: SC State Government Improvement Network, Urban and Community Forestry Council, SC Statewide Outreach Council, Wildland Fire Protection Partnership, the Prescribed Fire Council, South Carolina Foresters Council, SGSF, NASF,

SCEMD, SFM Division, SCFA, many local landowner associations, professional organizations, Firewise Community Homeowner Associations and the South Carolina Firemen's Association.

As part of the South Carolina Forest Resource Assessment, the SCFC hosted a stakeholder's meeting to identify key issues affecting forest sustainability in South Carolina. Ninety-one partnering organizations were invited to participate.

**3.3 *What are your key customer access mechanisms, and how do these access mechanisms enable customers to seek information, conduct business, and make complaints?***

Key customer access mechanisms include telephone (landline and cell), mail and fax to SCFC offices (county, unit, region, headquarters and dispatch); personal contact at public meetings, forums, workshops, and individual meetings; internet (website and email) and customer satisfaction surveys. The agency's dispatch centers and statewide 1-800-777-FIRE (3473) number provide customers with 24/7 access to the Forestry Commission for reporting wildfires, burn notifications, smoke complaints and other requests for assistance. An automated system for handling over 400,000 vegetative yard debris notifications per year provides an efficient and consistent message on current fire danger and requirements to conduct an outdoor burn safely. The agency also maintains a web site that is constantly updated to provide an online source for forestry information, point of contacts, and services. We also have implemented online permit sales. All of these mechanisms allow customers to obtain information, conduct business and make complaints either verbally or in writing.

Requested information can be mailed, faxed, emailed and/or delivered in person to the customer. Other government agencies (i.e. SCDNR, Clemson Extension, NRCS, FSA, USDA Forest Service, Counties, etc) have and provide information about SCFC services, programs, and contact information to customers.

**3.4 *How do you measure customer/stakeholder satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and use this information to improve?***

Customer satisfaction surveys regarding forest management plans, stewardship management plans, forest services, and forest tree seedlings are provided to customers to fill out and return in self-addressed postage paid envelopes. Survey information since 1998 is available for forest seedling customers (Graph 7.2-1); since 1999 for services (Graph 7.2-2) and management plans (Graph 7.2-3). However, only the last 5 years are reflected in the graphs. Results from these surveys are reviewed to determine if there are areas that can be improved. SCFC personnel respond to all specific customer complaints on an individual basis.

**3.5 *How do you use information and feedback from customers/stakeholders to keep services and programs relevant and provide for continuous improvement?***

Input is reviewed by program managers and agency leaders and evaluated to ensure that services and programs in five key areas (forest protection, forest management, state forests, seedling production, and forestry education) are not only relevant to the current needs of customers/stakeholders but also to our mission and strategic goals. Positive services and programs are continued and those less effective are improved or eliminated. This information is also used to identify new services and programs needed.

**3.6 *How do you build positive relationships with customers and stakeholders to meet and exceed their expectations? Indicate any key distinctions between different customer and stakeholder groups.***

Complaints are recorded and promptly investigated to determine where problems exist and efforts made to resolve them quickly.

The SCFC meets with state forest user groups on a timely basis to discuss and plan for future recreational opportunities on Forestry Commission owned land.

The SCFC makes timely responses to elected officials seeking input.

The SCFC's Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Program reaches out to community planners and developers, residents and business owners in the state's expanding wildland urban interfaces. WUI is a hazard mitigation and education program designed to help these customers reduce the risks of wildfire in their communities and to protect lives and property.

The SCFC reaches educators, young people, and other interested citizens with exhibits and interpretive signage on Harbison State Forest. The agency cooperates with other natural resources agencies and organizations as well as forest industry to provide two popular forestry education programs. The Wood Magic Forest Fair is an award-winning, weeklong program on the benefits of forests and forestry offered to 4<sup>th</sup> grade classes statewide. (Graph 7.1-9a) The SC Teacher's Tour is offered for graduate credit during the summer. (Graph 7.1-10) Items discussed in this paragraph and those paragraphs immediately preceding show how the SCFC strives to meet and exceed the expectations of their customers and stakeholders.

## **CATEGORY 4 – MEASUREMENT, ANALYSIS, AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT**

### ***4.1 How do you decide which operations, processes and systems to measure for tracking financial and operational performance, including progress relative to strategic objectives and action plans?***

Historically, measures have been used to monitor program accomplishments based on the primary mission and funding sources. The SCFC is actively shifting its key measures from a focus on activity levels to developing performance measures that are linked to the mission of the organization and the objectives of the strategic plan. Recently, new measures have been developed based on their importance to the overall success of our agency. The SCFC has continued to strengthen its focus on improving efficiency, effectiveness, quality, and outcome measures. Also, the SCFC has defined our key customer groups and related key requirements. The use of a variety of approaches to listen and learn from our customers provides opportunities for process improvements.

We continue to design measures linked directly to our mission and the objectives outlined in our strategic plan. Senior management seeks to find measures that track our progress in achieving strategic objectives and implementing action plans. The SCFC has a strategic planning process in place that includes active participation by senior management, a comprehensive SWOT analysis that includes a variety of customers and stakeholders from throughout the state, and employee input.

### ***4.2 How do you select, collect, align, and integrate data/information for analysis to provide effective support for decision making and innovation throughout your organization?***

New data/information is reviewed to determine accuracy and relevance to our strategic goals. Data and/or information which meet these criteria are utilized to encourage the continuation of positive processes and to improve less effective aspects of our operations.

We also conduct cost/benefit analysis on new technology as it becomes available and relevant to our organization. The SGSF has sponsored Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment and Forest Assessment projects. These Geographic Information System (GIS) based assessments will facilitate strategic decisions related to the prioritization of services and delivery of them in key program areas such as Wildfire Prevention Teams and Forest Stewardship Management Plans.

### ***4.3 What are your key measures, how do you review them, and how do you keep them current with organizational service needs and directions?***

During FY 2009, the Commission held focus group meetings to review services and direction. These meetings were held in October and November 2008 within the 3 regions and in Columbia. During

these meetings key personnel re-visited our current Strategic Plan and denoted what may need re-financing and the challenges that lie before us. In addition, during these meetings opportunities for financial savings were identified and many have been implemented.

Back in FY 2008, we revised our process regarding Customer Satisfaction Surveys. Customers now return their surveys to our Senior Consultant in the Division of Administration where surveys are reviewed, analyzed, and summarized on a statewide basis by a disinterested party and opportunities for improvement identified and addressed.

By going to a centralized process, opportunities for improvement have been identified. For FY 2009, the surveys were minimally revised and color coded by region to aid in tracking data. The distribution process was also revised in an effort to streamline the process and increase our response rates. The process was changed so the Forest Management and Stewardship Surveys would be distributed consistently from the regional offices and managed by one employee within.

Implementation of BMP measures is constantly being monitored with field inspections by the Environmental Management Section to insure that a high level of compliance is being maintained.

Wildland fire occurrence and suppression efforts are reviewed monthly to track trends for the current year.

Additional measures are collected and analyzed annually to be used in our mid- to long-range planning.

### **Enhance the Resource**

- Forest-Based Economic Development Impact (Graphs 7.1-1a&b)
- Forest Inventory and Analysis Plot Production (Graph 7.1-2)

### **Protect the Resource**

- Average Fire Response Time in Minutes (Graph 7.1-3)
- Ten Year Average Fire Size for Southern States (Graph 7.1-4)
- Timber Theft and Fraud Cases Settled (Graph 7.1-5)
- Five Year Occurrence, Extended Investigations, and Prosecutions (Graph 7.1-6)
- Red-Cockaded Woodpecker (Graph 7.1-11)
- BMP Harvesting Compliance Trends (Graph 7.1-7)
- SPB Losses in SC (Graph 7.1-8)

### **Raise Awareness about the Resource**

- Participation and Demand for Wood Magic (Graph 7.1-9a)
- Participation and Demand for SC Teachers Tour (Graph 7.1-10)

### **Customer Satisfaction**

- Customer Satisfaction Level for Seedling Products (Graph 7.2-1)
- Customer Satisfaction with Forestry Services (Graph 7.2-2)
- Customer Satisfaction with Forest Management Plans (Graph 7.2-3)

### **Financial**

- Appropriations – State General Funds (Graph 7.3-1)
- Voucher Transactions as a Result of Visa Card Usage (Graph 7.3-2)
- Agency Fuel Costs (Graph 7.3-3)
- Federal Grants (Graph 7.3-4)
- Declining Purchasing Power (Graph 7.3-5a)
- Number of Dozers by Year Model (Graph 7.3-5b)
- 1-800 Charges per 10,000 Calls Received (Graph 7.3-7)
- State Forests Payments to Counties (Graph 7.3-8)

### **Employee Satisfaction, Involvement, and Development**

- Employee Turnover Rate (Graph 7.4-1)
- E-Mod Factor (Graph 7.4-2)

### **Regulatory/Legal Compliance**

- Smoke Management Notifications Average Processing Time (Graph 7.5-1)

#### **4.4 *How do you select and use key comparative data and information to support operational and strategic decision making and innovation?***

Comparative data from before and after changes or innovations are made is used to measure its impact on the agency or its operations. Examples include cost savings achieved in 1-800 calls by routing more types of burn notifications to an automated system; improved dispatching times with a new computer aided dispatch system; and others.

During joint meetings with program managers from other forestry agencies in southeastern states common issues are discussed. Comparative data from similar state forestry organizations is available on a limited basis and each state records data differently. However, we strive to get the best comparative data available. Contacts made with southeastern states reveal that most state forestry organizations are just beginning to track meaningful performance measures. South Carolina is the only southeastern state which tracks dispatch response times through a statewide real time Computer Aided Dispatch System (CADS). The SGSF has adopted the moderate level work capacity test as the standard to measure wildland firefighter physical fitness.

Trips to other states and phone surveys have been used to collect information about operational decisions in other forestry agencies. Consultation with our stakeholders and partners is used to gain insight for improving our agency.

#### **4.5 *How do you ensure data integrity, reliability, timeliness, accuracy, security and availability for decision making?***

Measures and data have been used during program reviews at the area/unit and state levels. Senior management has instructed regional foresters and division directors to begin sharing performance data with personnel at all levels as a means of improving processes and generating feedback.

Our CADS has been updated to streamline our internal dispatch processes to improve our service to the public and data reliability. The updates have positively affected our data collection and thus have improved our data analysis and process improvement efforts. The overall management goal with the ongoing feature changes with the CADS is to produce improved outputs with the overall system. Calculations to determine if a burn notification is compliant with smoke management guidelines have been automated with the new system to reduce human errors. Numerous processes and checks have been added to insure spatial locations (latitudes and longitudes values) of notifications, wildfires and other incidents entered in CADS and the Records Management System (RMS) are verified and within South Carolina. The SCFC Dispatch Management Team and the Regional Foresters constantly review and analyze the data outputs associated with dispatch and initial attack response in the field to ensure correctness of figures. Dispatch Center telephone and two-way radio communications are also recorded and time stamped. This system has instant recall capability and can be used to verify caller information and when reviewing the accuracy of actions recorded in CADS.

Within our forest management programs we have begun development of a new enterprise geodatabase to facilitate data collection and analysis. Once operational, this system will consolidate data collection for several programs and facilitate tracking and reporting of outcomes for new federal and state reporting systems.

The Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) program must adhere to the requirements placed by the USFS – Southern Research Station – Forest Inventory and Analysis Unit for data integrity and accuracy. All FIA employees are required to successfully pass a certification exam with a minimum score of 80% and maintain an annual average of 87%, thereafter. The USFS – Southern Research Station conducts a minimum of 8% field checks on data collected by SCFC employees.

We undergo annual audits of financial records and processes. Our Internal Auditor reviews and analyzes data collection processes on an ongoing basis.

**4.6 *How do you translate organizational performance review findings into priorities for continuous improvement?***

The SCFC has outside reviews conducted by state and federal entities. Almost each fiscal year, the SCFC is required to go through some type of review of its forest protection and forest management programs. In February 2009, the USDA Forest Service conducted a Cooperative Management Review. Such review was designed to examine our partnership, key programs, and current issues and to look for ways to improve. In May 2009, the Commission participated in a periodic Forest Service Program Review. Such review examined service delivery and program structures for several federally funded program areas. Review findings were positive. Improvements recommended by these reviews are studied to determine cost/benefit ratios, feasibility of implementation, and effectiveness. The SCFC regards all reviews as opportunities to improve our overall operations. In addition, SCFC uses various program meetings as opportunities to benchmark with other state and federal forestry agencies to enhance continuous improvement with their forest protection and forest management programs.

**4.7 *How do you collect, transfer, and maintain organizational and workforce knowledge (knowledge assets)? How do you identify, share and implement best practices, as appropriate?***

The SCFC has a state of the art Computed Aided Dispatch System that captures a tremendous amount of data about our daily operations. In addition, we utilize customer surveys, monthly staff meetings, and work teams to brainstorm solutions to challenges facing us. We share this information using communication tools such as a weekly bulletin, which is distributed to every employee and an annual report. Critical positions, occupied by personnel with known retirement dates, are targeted for early hiring of replacements to facilitate transfer of knowledge.

In FY 2009 we conducted unit level reviews of the Forest Protection and Forest Management workforce. Results of these reviews will be used for continuous improvement and to identify, share and implement best practices, as appropriate.

**CATEGORY 5 – WORKFORCE FOCUS**

**5.1 *How does management organize and measure work to enable your workforce to 1) develop to their full potential, aligned with the organization's objectives, strategies, and action plans; and 2) promote cooperation, initiative, empowerment, teamwork, innovation and your organizational culture?***

The South Carolina Forest Fire Protection Act states the State Commission of Forestry shall direct forest fire protection work. The agency leadership developed the agency mission on the responsibility directed by the Forest Fire Protection Act. The Commissioners and senior managers, including regional foresters and program managers, define the strategic goals and objectives to accomplish this responsibility. Unit foresters, state forest directors, and supervisors develop action plans. Division and department employees complete the tasks. The agency provides professional development seminars covering diversity, ethics, and hiring practices to aid our employees in fulfilling their supervisory responsibilities.

The agency accomplishes forest protection and management activities through established regions, which are further subdivided into units. The regions include Piedmont, Pee Dee and Coastal. The regions have common goals and objectives, and the implementation of protection and management activities within the regions take into account geographical concerns and other considerations. The unit forester, supervisor, specialty foresters (BMP, Stewardship, Urban, and FIA) develop specific implementation tasks for the area. The unit management considers employee input before implementing the tasks. The state forest system, which is comprised of five (5) locations, also establishes specific action plans. Employee involvement at all levels increases the commitment to the agency's mission and goals.

The agency uses teams to accomplish several activities. For example, Incident Management Teams, fire review teams, accountability report, and interview and selection teams. The use of teams allows collaboration and cooperation among work units. In addition, the teams allow for knowledge sharing and employee empowerment and input toward the agency's goals and objectives. The nature of the work requirements of foresters and firefighters requires them to make decisions on the front line. Therefore, employee empowerment is a part of the assigned responsibilities. For example, when dealing with a forest fire, the employee must assess and make decisions based on the situation at hand. In addition, the Best Management Practices (BMP) foresters make assessments concerning logging sites that could result in the site ceasing to operate. The agency emphasizes extensive training, which prepares the employees to respond appropriately to situations at hand.

The structure of the organization encourages and requires cooperation among divisions and departments to accomplish the mission of the agency. There is great cooperation among departments, particularly with forest fire activities. Employees whose normal day-to-day activities may involve forest management are fire line qualified and available to assist with fire control when necessary. The agency's dispatch centers, which are critical to the Forest Protection division, continually utilize technology to assist the staff in accomplishing tasks and assessing the results. For example, the CADS provides information on response times, number of acres burned, and initial responder.

Employees' input and involvement are encouraged locally, regionally and nationally. Employees make presentations to civic organizations and local government, and they represent the SCFC on committees. Since the agency's core competency is forest fire protection, employees have opportunities to serve on external teams with other law enforcement and protection agencies as subject matter experts.

## **5.2 *How do you achieve effective communication and knowledge/skill/best practice sharing across departments, jobs, and locations?***

Communication within the agency occurs daily with an intranet morning report, which indicates employees who are out of the office for the day or traveling, program and administrative information. The agency distributes the e-mail to approximately 70% of the workforce. The agency distributes Tree Country SC, a weekly bulletin, to all employees by either e-mail or regular mail. The bulletin captures department updates, highlights of agency information, or employees, agency history, etc. The senior management conducts monthly employee meetings with program and department managers. The agenda for the meetings include program updates, changes, problems and lessons learned. The program and department managers communicate the information to their respective employee groups or departments. The firefighters hold monthly meetings to exchange administrative information and any job specific discussions. In addition, specific programs or departments have regularly scheduled meetings on a quarterly basis. In addition to meetings, portable radios, pagers, cell phones and dispatch calls/messages are communication methods utilized.

Some specific formal methods of knowledge/skills/best practice sharing include fire reviews, training and safety council, and program manager meetings. The agency also conducts internal self-assessments for forest protection and forest management activities. In addition, several employees are instructors for

established training programs. Employees, who are Certified Public Manager participants, share project information results.

**5.3 *How does management recruit, hire, place, and retain new employees? Describe any barriers that you may encounter.***

State government implemented an electronic recruitment program September 2007. The agency utilizes the system as its main recruitment source. It is an internet based system and therefore is able to reach a broad and diverse applicant pool. In addition to the electronic recruitment system, the agency also advertises in local newspapers and forestry journals/bulletins for some positions. Recruitment barriers the agency faces include minority recruitment, decline in the number of forestry graduates, and competitive salaries particularly for foresters and firefighters. The agency participates in school and community career fairs. The agency utilizes individual and group interview methods during the recruitment and selection process. A candidate may interview for a specific location or several locations depending on position. In order to assist employees with making changes on their records (i.e. address, withholding request), interactive forms are on the agency's intranet, which employees can access at a convenient time to complete. The agency's policies and procedures manual is easily accessible through the intranet also. The agency sends detailed benefit and resource sites to new hires to review prior to their start date in order to help answer questions and prepare them for their orientation process. The agency's retention of employees remains higher than the state's average. The agency's workforce has discretion and flexibility within established guidelines and goals to achieve their job functions.

**5.4 *How do you assess your workforce capability and capacity needs, including skills, competencies, and staffing levels?***

Methods to determine workforce capability include observation, interviews between management and employee, exit interviews, group meetings, review of data and reports, evaluation and response to perceived problems, and post training tests. Most of the methods are used with all groups of employees; however, the testing method is primarily used with the forestry technician training program. Capacity needs are determined based on evaluations of data related to forest protection and forest management such as number of fires, response times, management plans completed versus number of requests. The senior managers, regional and program managers evaluates and assess the data results.

SCFC participates in state government surveys on Information Technology (IT) skills and needs assessments. IT staff is kept informed of training opportunities in related technology that are being offered through state contracts, by technical colleges, software companies, and IT training vendors. The agency utilizes outside consultants or interns for specialized short-term skill, competencies, and staffing needs.

**5.5 *How does your workforce performance management system, including feedback to and from individual members of the workforce, support high performance work and contribute to the achievement of your action plans?***

The agency assesses and evaluates employee performance with the Employee Performance Management System (EPMS), the appraisal system designed for SC state government agencies. The EPMS is a continuous performance process. The three components of the system include planning stage, on-going communication, and evaluation stage. Upon hire or job classification change, a planning document is prepared which involves reviewing the employee's position description and establishing performance goals for the upcoming evaluation period. The success criteria established for the performance goals are measurable units of accomplishments. Managers may establish additional objectives for the employee to complete during the evaluation period.

There should be ongoing communication between the employee and the manager concerning performance expectations. The system encourages communication between the employee and supervisor. The supervisor and employee jointly establish goals and there is interim follow-up on progress during the year. The evaluation and appraisal interview are the main components of the yearly review process. The supervisors and managers evaluate an employee's performance as below, meets, exceeds or substantially exceeds on the previously established performance goals. The agency has implemented the EPMS throughout the agency. The agency incorporates a universal review date for all employees with at least one year of service with the agency. The universal review date assists managers and supervisors with establishing annual goals for all employees on a consistent timeframe.

Managers and supervisors, along with input from the employee, establish the success criteria for performance. Some criteria are established based on policy, or they may be deadline driven. The agency continues to work on aligning individual employee's performance success criteria to stated strategic objectives. For example, one goal outlined in the agency's strategic plan is to improve contacts and communication with state and local levels of government concerning forestry related issues. The action item to accomplish this goal is to increase participation in public hearings, including county council and planning commission meetings. The employee attending the meetings submits a summary report, which is a standard operating practice. The agency follows up with any forestry related issues on the agenda. Thus far, the following job groups' EPMS have components directly linked to strategic objectives: regional foresters, assistant regional foresters, unit foresters, project foresters, warden technicians, law enforcement, and firefighting supervisors. The requirement of a reviewer in the supervisor's chain of command, to review the employee's final evaluation assists in assuring deployment of success criteria linked to strategic plan items.

**5.6 *How does your development and learning system for leaders address the following:***

***a. development of personal leadership attributes***

***b. development of organizational knowledge***

***c. ethical practices***

***d. your core competencies, strategic challenges, and accomplishment of action plans***

The senior leadership for the agency has participated in the South Carolina Executive Institute. The Executive Institute is for senior government officials in South Carolina seeking to sharpen their leadership and management abilities. Sessions deal with decision making at the policy level and strengthen specific management skills and techniques. The South Carolina Executive Institute does not currently exist; however, the agency continues to seek other developmental and training programs, which may offer similar skill development.

The agency director, Henry E. Kodama, proactively continues to build relationships with agency partners, stakeholders and customers. The agency director and deputy director participate with the Agency Director Organization programs and SC Human Affairs programs that cover the importance of senior leadership and support for programs the agency may be implementing.

A key component of our development and learning system for leaders is a genuine understanding of the concept of leading by example, and the senior leaders strive to provide guidance, make decisions, and represent the agency according to the SCFC values. Employees of the agency carry out their responsibilities according to the ethical standards of their individual professions (i.e. forestry, accounting, human resources.)

Program managers provide monthly and quarterly reports to agency leaders concerning core competencies, strategic challenges and accomplishments of action plans.

**5.7 *How do you identify and address key developmental training needs for your workforce, including job skills training, performance excellence training, diversity training, management/leadership development, new employee orientation and safety training?***

Program managers recommend changes to ongoing training programs and identify new training for employees. The SCFC's training council developed training guides to set minimum training requirements for each position. The council meets periodically to review changes or additions to training needs. The SCFC implements new national wildfire training standards and revises current courses as needed. The Training Director schedules necessary training and maintains a training record database for each employee.

The agency conducts a Hiring Practices training course for supervisors. The course includes interviewing techniques, affirmative action policies and specific agency procedures. All supervisory personnel are required to complete the Supervisory Practices course offered by Office of Human Resources (OHR). Agency managers have completed a training course in diversity. Leadership development is encouraged by identifying and inviting key employees to participate in the Certified Public Manager program. There are agency managers who completed the Executive Institute. Supervisors and program managers attended Professional Development workshops to improve skills in working with citizens and local government leaders.

Supervisors complete training guides for new employees upon completion of orientation and training on agency and safety policies. All equipment operators must complete 'Fire Suppression Equipment Operator Essential Task Orientation' within 30 days of employment. Successful completion of the following training: Effectiveness of Wildland Firefighting, Incident Management, First Aid/CPR, and Forest Technician are evaluated by testing.

Familiarity with new technology helps an employee complete his or her work more efficiently. For example, foresters take GIS mapping training in order to provide required data to the U. S. Forest Service for stewardship plans. The Deputy State Forester makes expectations clear to supervisors about training that is required to develop new skills. Expectations are included on employees' EPMS.

**5.8 *How do you encourage on the job use of new knowledge and skills?***

The agency recognizes the importance of development and training of its workforce. The agency awards salary increases for forestry registration, completion of the forestry technician program, progression through established career paths (i.e. foresters, dispatchers, and mechanics) and criminal justice academy graduation. Experienced employees are instructors for the forestry technician program, community educational programs, and agency representatives on state and regional committees. The agency has established Incident Management Teams (IMT) and employees are encouraged to participate. While many of the positions on the teams are for employees with forestry and wildfire background, there are available positions for administrative staff. Participation on the teams provides opportunities for employees to increase their skills and knowledge outside of normal day-to-day responsibilities and allows development of leadership skills.

**5.9 *How does employee training contribute to the achievement of your action plans?***

Employee training will allow the SCFC to meet future demands and provide quality service with well-trained, qualified staff that enjoys a safe and rewarding work environment. Our main achievements would be:

- Maintain a capable, satisfied and diverse work team.

- Enhance professional development for agency personnel to efficiently, safely, and professionally provide better services.
- Review staffing levels and organizational structure to ensure the agency is in a position to supply needed services.
- Implement plans and establish performance measures to reduce the number of job-related injuries.
- Establish goals and implement vehicle and equipment operations safety training to reduce the number of accidents.

**5.10 *How do you evaluate the effectiveness of your workforce and leader training and development systems?***

Indicators of the effectiveness of training include application on the job and successful mock exercises. The agency's forestry technician training program is a combination of classroom and fieldwork. The employees take a test on the objectives of the classroom training and the application of the skills is through fieldwork under supervision. The comprehensive training program takes approximately 2 years to complete. The duration allows employees to experience real time fire and forest management situations discussed and simulated during training. The agency has established incident management teams. There have been numerous classroom training hours and exercises for these teams. During this fiscal year, the employees on the incident management team utilized developed skills during the major Highway 31 fire in Horry County.

Employees who have completed Certified Public Manager and Executive Institute programs and are successfully handling additional responsibilities for the agency is an indicator of the effectiveness of developmental skills taught in the respective programs. In addition, employees, completing job specific training (i.e. Excel), are evaluated based on improved performance. The agency completes a review of accidents and incidents to determine if employees followed safety-training procedures. Based on the review, the agency determines if employees need supplemental training.

**5.11 *How do you motivate your workforce to develop and utilize their full potential?***

The agency utilizes the following tools and mechanisms to assist with motivating employees to develop and utilize their full potential:

- Service Award Presentations for 10, 20, 30 and 40 years of state service;
- Agency Service Awards for 5, 15, 25, 35 and 45 years of service;
- Public Service Recognition Week acknowledgement with lunch or gift;
- Recognition of accomplishment and achievements in the Weekly News Bulletin;
- Career path development defined by agency structure or specific job groups;
- Recognition and compensation increase for Forester Registration;
- Tuition assistance for course work related to job responsibilities;
- Flexible work schedules allow employees opportunities to balance professional and personal responsibilities;
- Successful completion of specific training courses provides opportunities for out of state fire detail and selection on incident management teams;
- Performance increases and bonuses for work performance or task completion which has a significant impact on the agency;
- Manager discussion with employees on career goals;
- Periodically individuals have represented senior management at designated meetings, which leads to professional development.

The tools and mechanisms provide a means for the agency to recognize employee milestones related to service time, professional growth and individual development. The agency recognizes and shows appreciation to the employees for their contributions. The recognition of accomplishments also

provides an opportunity for other employees to learn from their coworkers and to share professional knowledge.

**5.12 *What formal and/or informal assessment methods and measures do you use to obtain information on workforce well-being, satisfaction, and motivation? How do you use other measures such as employee retention and grievances? How do you use this information?***

Some of the assessment methods and measures the agency uses as indicators to determine employee well-being, satisfaction, and motivation include: gatherings with the State Forester; exit interview information; follow up with managers and employees; open door policy; flexible work schedules; employee assistance program; career path development; workers compensation claims; and tuition assistance program. The agency uses the feedback received from these methods and measures to assess the strengths and weaknesses of processes and procedures. The agency values and considers employee input before implementing modifications or establishment of processes or procedures.

The agency uses employee retention and grievance rates as indicators of employee satisfaction and motivation. Employees remaining with the agency have acquired valuable knowledge and they share information with new employees or internal and external teams or partners. The agency did not have any formal grievances filed during the fiscal year. However, the agency assesses any employee complaints or grievances received formally or informally for improvement of applicable processes and communication with employees. The agency also reviews the types and number of workers compensation claims filed to determine training needs or refreshers needed.

The agency carefully reviews and analyzes information obtained from all methods and measures. Priorities for improvement are determined based on meeting the agency's mission, employee well-being, and available budget. The agency recognizes the importance of employee well-being, satisfaction, and motivation with successful accomplishment of goals and objectives.

**5.13 *How do you manage effective career progression and effective succession planning for your entire workforce throughout the organization?***

The agency has evaluated the current workforce to determine staff that meets eligibility requirements to retire over the next five years. The analysis indicated approximately 30% of the workforce meet or will meet retirement eligibility within the next five years. The analysis also details individuals by location and supervisor and therefore assists in areas of concentration for preparing employees and the agency for the potential changes. The agency fills positions early on planned departures, when possible, to allow the newly selected individual to work with the outgoing employee to facilitate a smooth transition. The agency utilizes temporary job assignments to fulfill current needs but also as a method to broaden employees experience and prepare for other responsibilities. The agency will evaluate job rotations as a method to prepare employees for future vacancies.

**5.14 *How do you maintain a safe, secure, and healthy work environment? (Include your workplace preparedness for emergencies and disasters.)***

The SCFC stresses safety throughout its training and operations. Normal procedure is for all meetings to start with safety issues. The training program for many employees includes First Aid/CPR, Driver Improvement, and an annual refresher for fire line employees on fireline safety and the use of a fire shelter.

The SCFC requires wildland firefighters to participate and encourages voluntary participation in the Physical Fitness Program. The agency has an incentive program to complete the physical fitness test. During FY09, 80% of the agency employees participated in the physical fitness program. The SCFC puts an emphasis on personal safety and has policies and procedures on the use of Personal Protective

Equipment (PPE) and safe fireline procedures. Employees are encouraged to participate in health screenings and health fairs.

The Safety Coordinator reviews all accidents and injuries to look for developing trends and to make recommendations to reduce future problems. He performs an annual inspection of agency facilities to ensure the agency and employees are following Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and state regulations. Evacuation plans for each of our facilities are being developed.

Facilities that allow public access have audible alarms on most doors that are away from the main reception area. The agency locks the entrance to the Dispatch Centers after business hours to increase security to the area. In addition, a keyless entry system assists with security to the area. Dispatch Centers have windows shuttered during major storm events and are equipped with emergency backup power and communication systems. The agency provides transportation in four- wheel drive vehicles to dispatchers during severe weather events.

The SCFC has a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP), which includes preparedness for a pandemic and plans for creating employee awareness about pandemics and the plan.

## **CATEGORY 6 – PROCESS MANAGEMENT**

### **6.1 *How do you determine and what are your organization's core competencies, and how do they relate to your mission, competitive environment, and action plans?***

Core competencies are identified within our agency's mission and strategic plan. Through Memorandums of Understanding with other natural resource agencies we attempt to focus on our core competencies and eliminate any overlap or duplication. Some of our core competencies are listed below:

- Fire Suppression & Detection
- Fire Dispatch
- Forest Resource Data & Interpretation
- Forest Inventory Analysis
- Forest Management Prescriptions for Forest Landowners
- Incident Management Teams
- Forestry Law Enforcement (Timber Theft/Woods Arson etc.)

### **6.2 *How do you determine and what are your key work processes that produce, create or add value for your customers and your organization and how do they relate to your core competencies? How do you ensure these processes are used?***

The agency Strategic Plan and Legislative Mandates are the main factors in determining what our key processes are.

The agency offers products and services to forest landowners and the general public in five key areas: forest protection, forest management, state forests, seedling production, and forestry education.

#### **Forest Protection**

The SCFC provides landowners with wildland firefighting assistance through a network of firefighters and equipment stationed throughout the state. Dispatching the closest available firefighting unit is a key process in protecting the forest resource. The agency has three dispatch centers, located in Newberry, Florence, and Walterboro. These centers operate using a Computer Aided Dispatch System (CADS). A Statewide Dispatch Operations Coordinator provides operational and technical oversight

of the dispatch centers. At this level, detailed and independent analyses of key success criteria are performed annually to facilitate consistency. Field personnel are provided with the tools to monitor their own activities. Reports with information such as response times, individual fire reports, monthly fire reports and non-emergency dispatches are distributed to supervisors monthly.

On July 1, 2005, the SCFC, utilizing National Fire Plan grants, upgraded to a commercial “off the shelf” 9-1-1 software system to provide Computer Aided Dispatch (CADS) for wildfire and emergency dispatch. The new CADS has improved the efficiency of our dispatch efforts (Graph 7.3-7) to wildland fire incidents (Graph 7.1-3). This technology gives us state-of-the-art dispatching capabilities unique throughout the nation. Such improved dispatch operations will help reduce the losses of life, property and natural resources to wildland fires.

The SCFC takes notifications of forestry, agriculture, and wildlife outdoor burning at the regional dispatch centers. All other notifications for outdoor burning, including construction debris, right-of-way debris, trade waste and yard debris, are received by an automated voice mail system. This system is an efficient way to process large numbers of calls (400,000+ per year) in a timely fashion and to deliver a consistent fire safety message to the burner. (Graphs 7.3-6 & 7.3-7)

New technology for detection of forest pests is constantly being evaluated. An example of technological advance is the use of the Global Positioning System (GPS) in conducting aerial surveys. By using a preprogrammed GPS, the SCFC was able to eliminate one of three personnel required for the survey. GPS technology reduces the time required for each survey by providing the aircraft pilot a constant and continuous flight track throughout the survey.

The SCFC, with funding from the National Fire Plan, has designated 137 communities at extreme to high risk of wildfire and is working with them in conducting wildfire risk assessments. These on-going assessments provide homeowners, community planners, Fire Departments, and SCFC wildland firefighters with mitigation recommendations for reducing wildfire hazards including the risk of catastrophic wildland fires. A community that takes actions to reduce the risk of wildfire by developing a Community Wildfire Protection Plan, based on assessments made by the SCFC, and implementing some the recommended Firewise action items becomes eligible to receive national recognition as a “Firewise Community USA”. The planning and presenting of homeowner and community leader education workshops is on-going throughout South Carolina. Sixteen Firewise presentations were made at various conferences, including the Horry Georgetown Home Show, Horry County Solid Waste Authority, SC Landscape & Turfgrass Association Annual Conference and Trade Show, and various homeowner associations to encourage Firewise development. Cooperative efforts with Clemson Extension Service were made to promote Firewise with neighboring communities around the Sand Hills Research and Education Center. The Firewise mobile exhibit was used 15 times by SCFC, NPS and USFS personnel during the year to reach over 7,100 people, including a set up for the public to visit during a prescribed burn at Kings Mountain National Park, Congaree National Park Nature Festival and at North Myrtle Beach area after the Highway 31 fire, which is the State’s most damaging WUI fire. A table top Firewise home exhibit was used several times including participation at the SC Wildlife Expo. The Assistant Regional Foresters in each administrative region of the state ensure that homeowners, planners, and developers receive technical assistance and information regarding methods to reduce the risk of wildfires in their communities.

The SCFC administers National Fire Plan Volunteer Fire Assistance grant funds to assist Fire Departments in purchasing wildland fire fighting equipment, communication equipment, and personal protective equipment. Some of the funds are used by Fire Departments for Wildland fire training especially in the Wildland Urban Interface. This cooperative effort between the SCFC and Fire Departments is critical in achieving success in reducing losses to life, property, and our natural resources. Approximately \$200,000 is allocated annually to about 160 participating Fire Departments.

Wildfire Prevention Teams are deployed in historically high areas of wildfire occurrence across the state. This year's goal was to canvas the entire state utilizing traplines to reach all the rural communities in every county of the state. The *Think Before You Burn* message and campaign were disseminated by posters in country stores and disturbing brochures with the prevention message. The goal is to increase public awareness on how to conduct debris burning in a safe and lawful manner. Escapes from debris burning (mainly yard debris burning) are the number one cause of wildfires in South Carolina and on average account for more than 43% of wildfires.

Publications and products developed with the message *Think Before You Burn* have been used in the last several years to where the public is beginning to recognize the logo, as well as the slogan. The inclusion of law enforcement personnel in the burn site inspections and follow-up enforcement actions has helped to emphasize compliance with outdoor burning laws. This message was distributed to local businesses, recycling centers, fire departments, and schools throughout the targeted areas.

### **Forest Management**

The SCFC provides forest landowners with assistance in managing their woodlands. This involves a wide range of services including the development of management plans, the monitoring of environmental guidelines, and the re-inventory of South Carolina's forests. We perform on-site completion checks to ensure reforestation plans were followed and work performed properly, especially for customers receiving cost-share funds. We also provide training for loggers and contractors and provide courtesy exams while they are still on-the-job site performing the work. We utilize forest inventory data to encourage industry growth and development in South Carolina. We share this information with various development boards and the Department of Commerce.

Compliance with agency-approved environmental guidelines is monitored biannually on federal, state, industrial, and private woodlands. Results are published and widely distributed both in hard copy and over the Internet.

A key activity of the SCFC is continuous inventory of the state's forestland. Three two-person crews measure Forest Inventory and Analysis sample plot locations every five years to exacting national standards. The USDA Forest Service – Southern Research Station is required to check the accuracy of our plot work to ensure quality control at a minimum rate of 4% of the total number of locations as mandated by the program nationally, but strive for 8% of the total number of locations regionally. (Graph 7.1-2)

### **State Forests**

The SCFC's state forests demonstrate sustainable multiple-use management to forest landowners and the general public. In FY 01, the state forests began developing a long-range plan. The plan was completed in June 2002 and approved by the Commissioners. Implementation of action items is now well underway.

The SCFC has completed a process to enhance management of the state forest system. This process combined a formal financial analysis and implementation of a Forest Resource Information System (FRIS) to provide managers with better information to ensure sustainable management and more predictable cash flow.

The system was developed by combining GIS and data based management systems with common forestry applications, including forest inventory software, growth and yield models, and forest planning models.

Completion of this project will allow the SCFC to optimize revenue from the state forests while ensuring the multiple uses and ecological values are maintained.

In accordance with the SC Code of Laws, twenty-five percent of revenue received from the sale of timber products on state forests is returned to the applicable county for their education system (Graph 7.3-8).

Local recreation advisory groups continue to provide assistance in implementing our recreation plans on state forests. They meet quarterly with the local forest directors.

### **State Lands**

The SCFC provides forest management assistance to other state agencies that own woodland, providing for the opportunity to manage for multiple uses, including wildlife habitat, recreation, environmental education, and sustainable forest products. SCFC foresters develop forest management plans for these properties, provide timber marking and cruising services, and assist in obtaining the best price for forest products. During FY 09 the SCFC provided assistance to six state agencies (SC Department of Corrections, SC Department of Natural Resources, SC Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism, SC Department of Transportation, John de la Howe School, and the University of South Carolina). Once sales are completed, this assistance will generate an estimated \$238,829 of revenue for these agencies.

### **Seedling Production**

The Nursery and Tree Improvement (N&TI) Section of the SCFC supplies forest landowners with high-quality forest tree seedlings. Approximately 6.2 million seedlings were produced during FY 09. A 10% customer survey is implemented annually as a feedback mechanism to direct future product design. Eighty-eight percent of those responding are satisfied with the overall quality of the products and services provided by the N&TI Section of the SCFC (Graph 7.2-1). In response to our survey, we learned that:

- Most customers are generally satisfied with their seedling purchases from the SCFC.
- Dissatisfaction is highly correlated with seedling mortality after planting. Customers acknowledge that weather, seedling quality, and planting techniques all affect mortality. Customers' primary issue in this survey was the small size of some bareroot longleaf seedlings.

An annual financial analysis is completed to adjust seedling production and price. This analysis is critical as the SCFC nursery program is supported by the sale of seedlings and seed. In January 2006, the N&TI Section of the SCFC entered into a research agreement with Cellfor, a forestry biotechnology company, to develop and produce the high quality genetic planting stock specifically suited to South Carolina. Genetic development of new plant material will be completed at the agency's Niederhof Seed Orchard in Jasper County. 61,500 Cellfor seedlings were produced at Taylor Nursery for the 2008-2009 planting season.

### **Forestry Education**

One of SCFC's primary missions is to promote an awareness and appreciation by the public of the ecological, social, and economic functions and benefits of the state's forests. The agency's Environmental Education Program has been decimated by budget cuts and loss of dedicated personnel due to retirements and internal restructuring. However SCFC state forests and Information & Education Division continue to support the agency's popular Wood Magic, Project Learning Tree and the Teachers' Tour programs and produce technical and general informational materials on forestry and forest-related subjects. School groups from throughout the state continue to use Harbison State Forest as a resource for forestry education and the staff at Harbison conducts numerous activities each year for these field studies. With fewer staff available for direct classroom instruction, formal and non-formal educators in grades K-12 have become focal points for professional development training. SCFC has led the field in correlating educational training and programs to the SC Department of Education's

Curriculum Standards in order to stay current with changing educational reforms. All programs and training are content oriented and standards-based to ensure that they meet the requirements of the State Department of Education (SDE). Computer based and web based educational programs are used whenever possible. Partnerships have been formed with federal and state agencies and the private sector to provide our remaining educational programs at low cost.

All educational programs offered by SCFC are evaluated and adjusted to meet perceived needs. The demand for these quality programs exceeds SCFC's ability to accommodate requests. (Graphs 7.1-9a & 7.1-10)

### **6.3 *How do you incorporate organizational knowledge, new technology, cost controls, and other efficiency and effectiveness factors such as cycle time into process design and delivery?***

A new Computer Aided Dispatch System (CADS) has been installed containing features, functions, and enhancements outlined in a request for proposals that incorporated suggestions and recommendations from dispatchers, fire managers, and information technology professionals. An "off-the-shelf" solution was selected over a custom developed system to control costs and to utilize technology and functions developed for 9-1-1 systems. Enhancements utilizing the power of GIS software and 911 address data have improved the efficiency in taking Smoke Management Burn Notifications, locating wildfires, and identifying and notifying the closest available resources to an incident.

In recent years, the SCFC has gone through numerous changes. Some of these changes have caused a reduction in our ability to provide services, primarily due to a decrease in staffing levels. During these years of change, the agency's leadership has continued to seek ways of becoming more efficient and effective. The SCFC surveys customers regarding our performance. (Graphs 7.2-1, 7.2-2 & 7.2-3) Our web site has been improved and updated so that citizens can obtain information and more easily contact us. We have continued to develop and conduct an extensive training program for our employees. Our aim is to seamlessly weave new technologies and improved employee performance into a tightly integrated system to deliver the best possible service to the people of South Carolina.

### **6.4 *How does your day-to-day operation of these processes ensure meeting key performance requirements?***

#### **Forest Protection**

The new CADS automates the process of determining compliance with Smoke Management Guidelines when dispatchers take burn notifications. This has reduced the process time (Graph 7.5-1) and increased accuracy in complying with state regulations. Several key processes for dispatching resources to wildfires are now automated and/or improved to help reduce overall response times (see table 7.1-3). Closest available units are determined by CADS based on the road system. The new system allows for the incorporation of technology for automatic vehicle location to improve response time and assure safety of agency employees.

The automated yard debris burning notification system was modified so that all non-smoke management type vegetative debris burning notifications could be directed to that system as of July 1, 2001. This change redirects approximately 30,000 calls per year from our dispatch centers to the automated system. The reduction in call volume allows dispatchers to more efficiently handle smoke management notifications, radio communications, and wildfire calls. The automated system can handle 24 calls simultaneously, eliminating a caller's time on hold. Another benefit of this change was an overall reduction in the average cost per ten thousand calls. (Graph 7.3-7)

#### **Forest Management**

In general, statewide programs, such as Environmental Management and Forest Inventory and Analysis, are directly supervised by a Columbia staff forester with specific training in that program area.

The SCFC is a major partner in the National Aerial Photography Program (NAPP). Cooperating with the Department of Natural Resources, a state contract was issued to produce prints from the 2006-2007 flight for use by the agency's Insect & Disease Section for aerial surveys. Digital Orthophoto Quarter Quads (DOQQs) produced from this photography has been distributed to field personnel. DOQQs are utilized in desktop mapping and geographical information systems to develop recommendations and maps in the delivery of forest management services to forest landowners.

### **State Forests**

Since state forests are required to operate on receipts and receive no state appropriated funds, a key performance requirement of our state forests is accurate budget planning. The implementation of a harvest scheduling model will assist in more accurate prediction of annual revenues.

### **Seedling Production**

Key success criteria are included in Nursery and Tree Improvement facility manager's EPMS rating criteria. Success criteria include measures of seed & seedling quality, as well as protection of the productive capability of the nursery soil. The SCFC is a member of the Auburn University Cooperative whose staff provides technical oversight. Internally, agency staff reviews seedling production periodically.

### **Forestry Education**

Individual evaluation by participants is a key component of all SCFC educational programs, including professional development programs such as Project Learning Tree and the SC Teachers Tour as well as material and lesson evaluation for the Wood Magic program. Program changes are constantly being considered and made based on these participant evaluations.

Student evaluations are achieved through pre- and post-tests which are given to students in the Wood Magic Forest Fair to evaluate program effectiveness. The program has consistently shown significant increases in scores between the two tests. Fourth grade teachers are sent pre-visit materials as well as post-visit materials and lessons to enhance the content of the Wood Magic program.

In general, there is an overwhelming demand for SCFC forestry education programs that exceeds the capacity to deliver these programs. (Graphs 7.1-9a & 7.1-10)

## **6.5 *How do you systematically evaluate and improve your key product and service related work processes?***

### **Forest Management**

Customer surveys are sent out following services work or delivery of management and stewardship plans. (Graphs 7.2-2 & 7.2-3) Responses are returned to the Senior Consultant in the Division of Administration where they are logged and analyzed. Where applicable, copies of individual surveys are forwarded to regional foresters and the Forest Management Chief for follow-up with the landowners. Particular attention is given to any negative responses. Contacts are then made with landowners to review responses and correct any problems with service delivery.

## **6.6 *What are your key support processes, and how do you evaluate, improve and update these processes to achieve better performance?***

### **Information Technology**

Most aspects of our business involve technology and information management. We have established a presence on the Internet as a means to disseminate information. In FY 08 we began offering sales of

state forest recreational permits through the **SC.gov** Internet portal. We are still exploring options for the sale of Nursery and Tree Improvement seedlings on-line.

The Information Systems group is responsible directly and indirectly for the maintenance and support of the agency's wide area network, 1 Windows NT Server, 8 Windows 2003 Servers, and over 200 computer users and their software applications. A goal was established to reduce the agency's replacement cycle for computers from 5-7 years to 3-5 years for mission critical users. Efforts continue on the implementation of the Information Security Policy established by the South Carolina Enterprise Architecture Oversight Committee to ensure the agency's computer data is maintained in a secure, reliable, and sustainable environment.

The agency's wide area network was moved to Multiprotocol Label Switching (MPLS) circuits to conform to the State CIO's new statewide network. Although a more costly connection for the agency, MPLS provides redundancy at the core level needed for the agency's mission critical communications, dispatch and data systems. This will also allow the agency to consider Voice over IP telephony to the regional offices under a new state contract that could provide considerable savings and needed functionality.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology and spatial data is being used to improve and implement new processes in decision making. Using a National Fire Plan grant, a Fire Risk Assessment model is being created to help identify high fire risk areas of the state on a daily basis. A Smoke Model developed by the USDA Forest Service is being tested to improve prediction capabilities to mitigate the impact smoke from prescribed burns and wildfires may have on major highways. The goal is to reduce or eliminate highway collisions and fatalities due to smoke. Historical fire occurrence data is being spatially analyzed to aid managers in making resource allocation decisions and reducing response times to wildfires.

### **Training Programs**

Wildland fire suppression and incident management are the core of SCFC training programs. All agency personnel are provided basic incident management training in the National Incident Management System (NIMS) IS-700 class. All firefighter and emergency response personnel are trained in fire behavior, fire suppression tactics, and receive additional incident management training. Foresters, technicians, and other technical staff are trained in emerging issues and technology for forest and natural resource management. Foresters and technicians in the Forest Health, Best Management Practices and Forest Inventory Analysis programs receive specialized training in their respective areas. Supervisors and human resource/administrative staff participate in Supervisory Practices and Hiring Practices training. Currently one employee is enrolled in the Certified Public Manager Program. During FY 09, the SCFC had two employees graduate from the Certified Public Manager Program.

In FY 09, 71 training sessions were held for 965 agency personnel. Additionally, the SCFC held Fire Management training sessions for 142 non-SCFC personnel, mostly from local fire departments. Three Certified Prescribed Fire Manager courses were taught for 75 non-SCFC land managers. Registered Foresters and Society of American Foresters Certified Foresters take training to meet annual and three year continuing education requirements, respectively.

### **Division of Administration**

The Administrative Division provides essential support functions for the agency and its employees. The division pays agency expenses and tracks expenditures by type as well as source of funds. It also provides accounts receivable services to include billings to forest landowners and the collection of revenue from landowners, timber and pine straw buyers and seedling purchasers. Another function of the Administrative Division includes applying for and monitoring federal grants.

The division provides procurement services in accordance with the State Procurement Code to insure agency supplies and assets are procured timely and in accordance with state laws and regulations. It

accounts for and monitors on an annual basis the fixed assets of the agency to insure the agency's property is accurate.

Also provided are classification, compensation and employee benefit services to agency employees. The division insures employees receive the benefits to which they are entitled and that affirmative action guidelines are adhered to.

The division also provides budget policy and direction for the agency and to internal budget directors to insure agency stays within allocated budgets. Other support functions include agency internal and external reporting, strategic planning, records management and monitoring legislative activity and making needed legislative changes. In an effort to achieve better performance, staff continually monitor existing processes and procedures and update and improve them where applicable.

**6.7 *How does your organization determine the resources needed to meet current and projected budget and financial obligations?***

The agency monitors activities and costs in order to ensure resources are available to meet current demands. Based on these activities and costs, the agency is able to see the needs that are not being met due to lack of financial resources and addresses these issues through the annual state appropriation budget request and in applications for federal grant funds. Due to the inability to receive full funding of requests, the agency has to make concessions and prioritize activities each fiscal year to direct resources and protect the lives and property of landowners of SC. Deferred maintenance, aerial detection contracts, delayed or cancelled personnel replacements and replacement of firefighting equipment are just a few examples of items that may be cut back or delayed to allow the agency to meet its obligations with the financial resources available.

**CATEGORY 7 – RESULTS**

**7.1 *What are your performance levels and trends for your key measures of mission accomplishment/product and service performance that are important to your customers? How do your results compare to those of comparable organizations?***

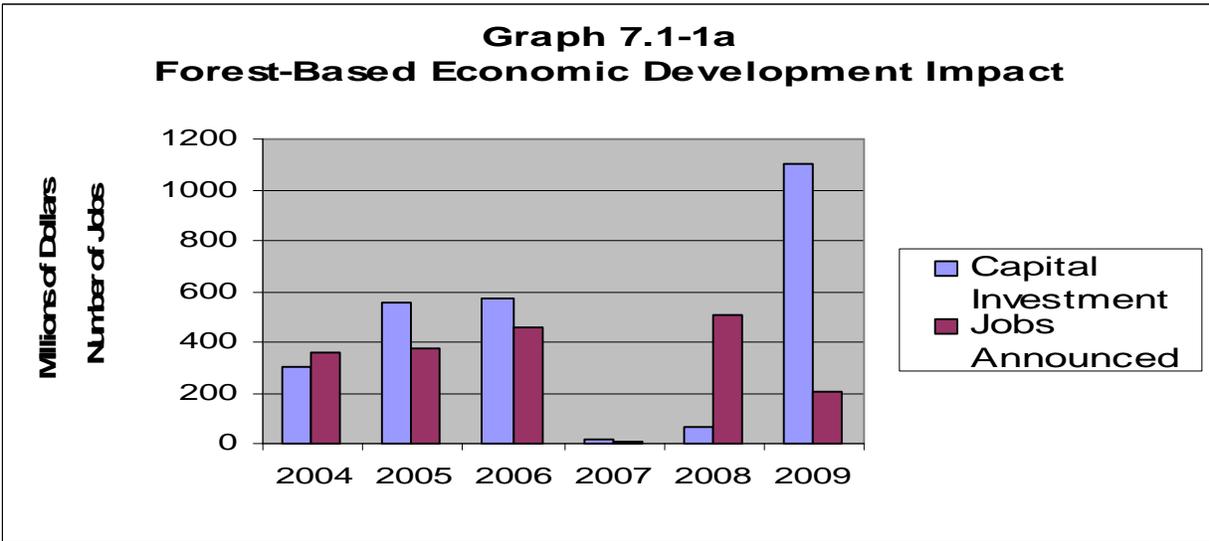
**Enhance the Resource**

The national recession that began in December 2007, and continued through June 2009, is the longest recession on record since the Great Depression. The housing crisis that contributed in leading the country into recession appears to have bottomed out by the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, 2009. However, over FY 09, housing starts were down 36.6% in the US South and 52% nationally. Other signs of recovery include the sharp decline in new unemployment insurance claims in the state's forestry sector. Although the recession has been severe, South Carolina's forest industry appears to have weathered the storm.

Despite the recession, interest in new renewable energy projects remained strong in FY 09. Federal legislative bills that encouraged renewable energy development through mandatory renewable electricity standards were largely responsible for the continued interest in woody biomass projects. To promote growth in renewable energy, the SC Forestry Commission updated official estimates of biomass availability in South Carolina. The new biomass data was presented to members of the SC Biomass Council in March 2009. A total of 16.1 million tons of biomass from multiple sources is available for renewable energy projects in the state.

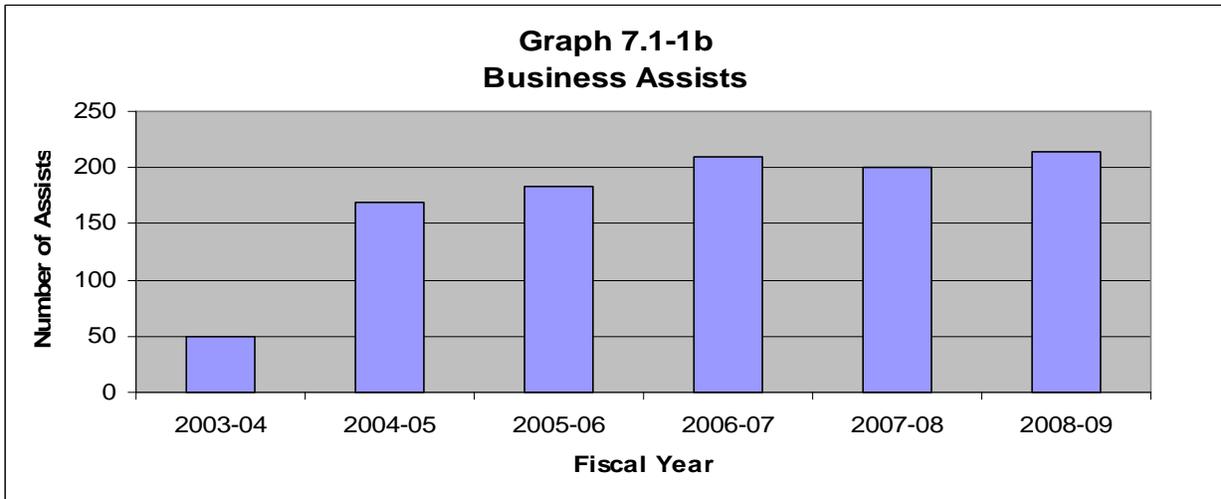
During FY 2008-2009, five forest industry announcements were made that will involve \$1.1 billion in new capital investment and 207 new jobs in South Carolina. In June 2009, the Department of Energy awarded a \$795 million contract to Ameresco, an independent energy service provider, to construct

three new biomass energy plants at Savannah River Site. In October 2008, Rollcast Energy announced plans to construct a \$170 million 50 megawatt (MW) biomass power plant in Newberry County. Sonoco announced plans to invest \$135 million in a 50 MW biomass power plant at its Hartsville plant. Creation of Palmetto Renewable Energy, a pellet plant, in Allendale County and Denmark Lumber Company in Bamberg County round out a record year in forest products investment in South Carolina.



↑ Better

During the 2009 fiscal year, the SCFC Resource Development Division actively participated in 16 economic development projects. Twelve of the 16 projects involved utilization of biomass in the manufacture of pellets (4 projects), biofuels (3 projects), electric power generation (3 projects), and steam generation (2 projects). The SCFC represented the agency and forestry community through 25 statewide and regional economic development organizations. Finally, 214 individual business assists were made to address single-issue requests.

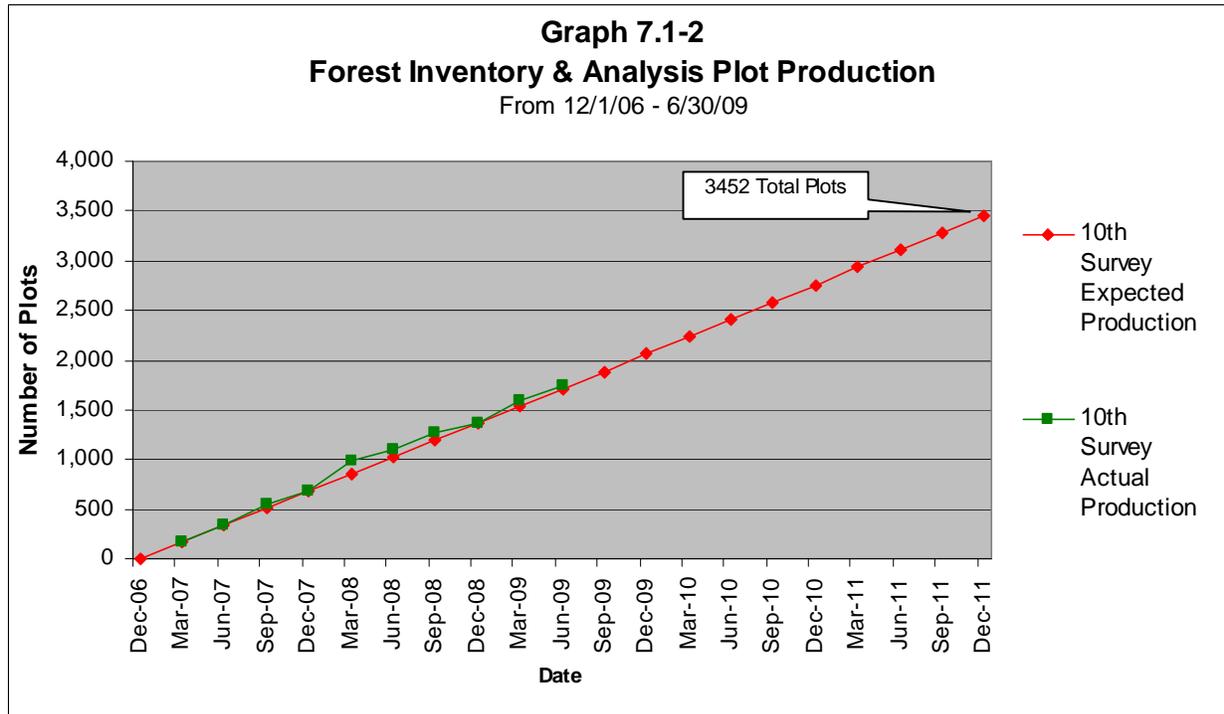


↑ Better

In fiscal year 2009, the SCFC’s Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) program completed 541 FIA plots. The US Forest Service – Southern Research Station completed 97 plots, consisting of 68 nonforest plots identified in the office and not sent to SCFC field crews, 26 plots that were classified as census water (bodies of water 4.5 acres in size or linear water features ≥ 200 feet in width), and 3 forested plots that were completed by US Forest Service personnel. The FIA program completed data collection on one Panel (20% of the entire sample plot locations) and has completed 54% of the third Panel of data collection. The FIA program completed 4 product utilization studies on active logging operation in the Piedmont region of the state to develop factors for logging residues, logging damage, and utilization of the unmerchantable portion of harvested trees.

The South Carolina Forestry Commission FIA program is 50% complete with the 10<sup>th</sup> inventory of the state through Fiscal Year 2009 under the National FIA plot design. Of the 13 southern states, South Carolina was the first state to complete the 8<sup>th</sup> inventory (2002) and the 9<sup>th</sup> inventory (2006). Subsequently, South Carolina is the first state in the Southern Region to initiate the 10<sup>th</sup> inventory.

The FIA program is currently fully staffed with three two-person crews located in strategic locations across the state. If funding and staffing remain constant, expected completion of the 10<sup>th</sup> inventory is December, 2011. Data for the 9<sup>th</sup> inventory is available online and a published report, by the US Forest Service – Southern Research Station, is expected by the fall of 2009.



**Protect the Resource**

**Table 7.1-3**  
**SUMMARY AND COMPARISON OF DISPATCH TIMES**  
**FOR FISCAL YEAR 2005 through 2009**  
**Average Minutes**

	FY 05	FY 06	FY 07	FY 08	FY 09
Dispatching <sup>1</sup>	6.33	4.18	3.56	3.53	3.22
Contact Establish <sup>2</sup>	3.83	4.47	4.21	3.95	6.93
Rolling <sup>3</sup>	4.22	4.11	4.97	5.40	5.58
Enroute <sup>4</sup>	7.10	8.44	9.11	9.04	12.63
Travel <sup>5</sup>	22.11	20.09	22.88	22.62	21.66
Response <sup>6</sup>	35.19	32.45	35.54	35.23	33.96

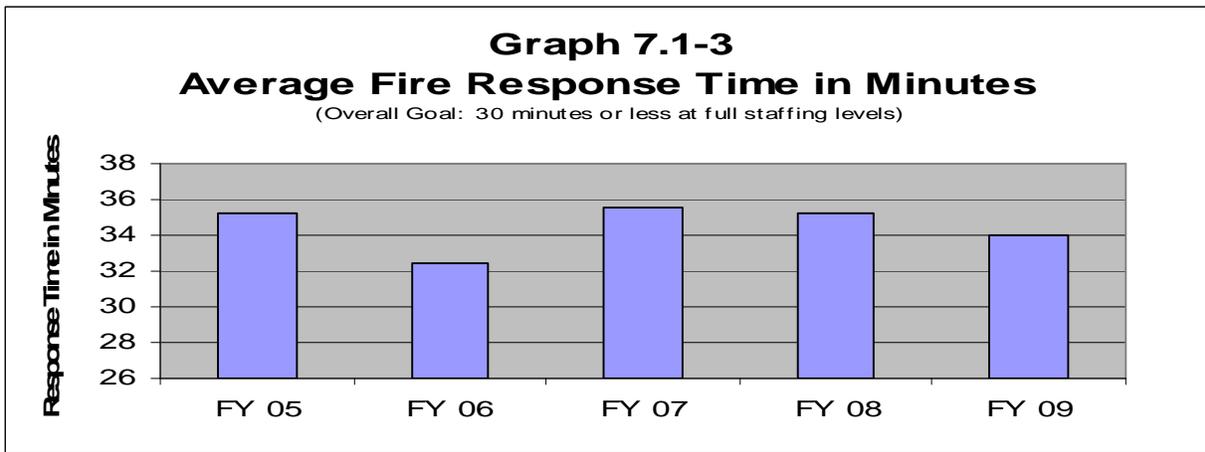
<sup>1</sup> Time between initial report of wildfire and first attempt to contact initial attack warden.  
<sup>2</sup> Time between first attempt to contact warden and when contact was established.  
<sup>3</sup> Time between contact established with warden and his enroute time.  
<sup>4</sup> Time between first attempt to contact warden and his enroute time.  
<sup>5</sup> Time between going enroute and arriving at wildfire.  
<sup>6</sup> Time between initial report of wildfire and arrival of initial attack warden.

The chart above shows various benchmarks in the process of responding to a wildfire. With the implementation of the new CADS in FY06, the average time from receiving the wildfire call and

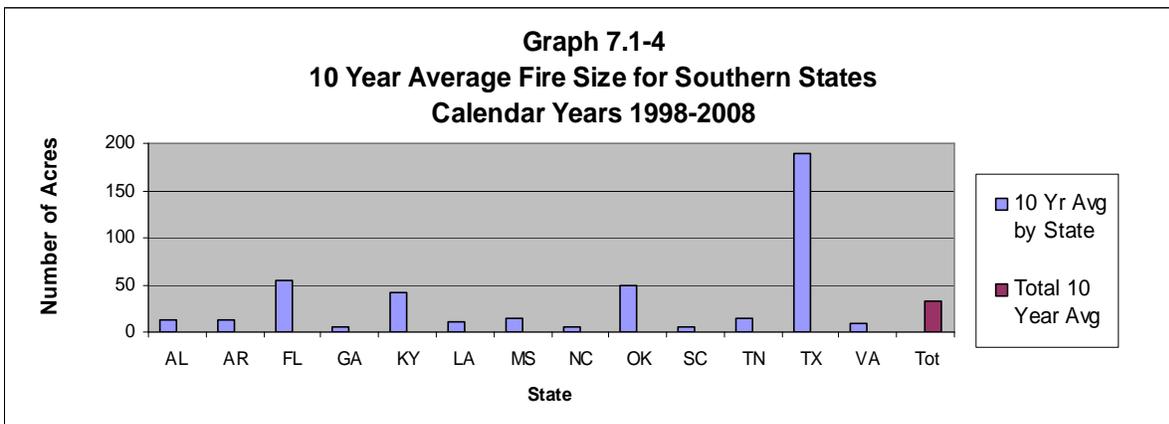
assigning a firefighter to it was reduced by 2.15 minutes. This was further reduced by another 37-57 seconds on average the following three years.

Response time to wildland fires is dependent upon many factors, some of which are beyond our control, such as traffic congestion and budget related staffing levels. We refer to fire response time as the time from when we receive the first report of a wildfire until the time our fire warden arrives on the scene.

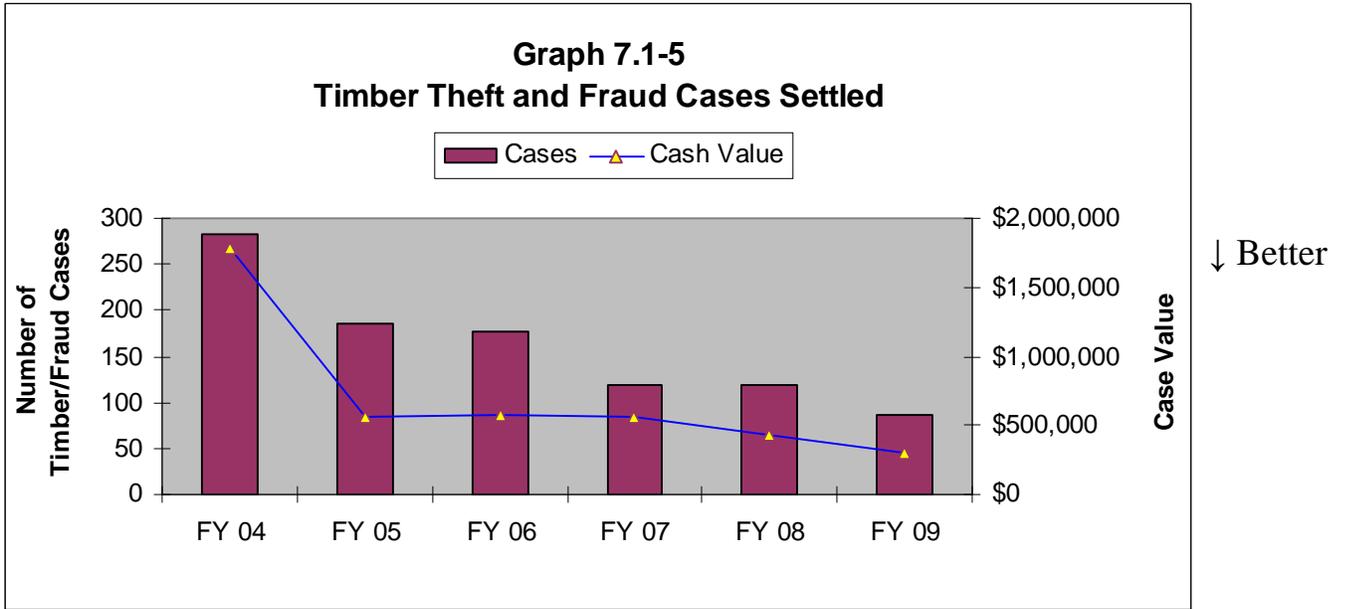
Internally we measure the different segments of response time and strive to improve each segment with a goal of reducing overall response time. Graph 7.1-3 illustrates that our average response time for FY 09 was 33.96 minutes. This was a 1 minute and 16 seconds decrease in the statewide average response time in FY 09 compared to FY 08. In surveying our southern states we found SCFC is the benchmark in tracking response times as no other states track response times in the way that we do.



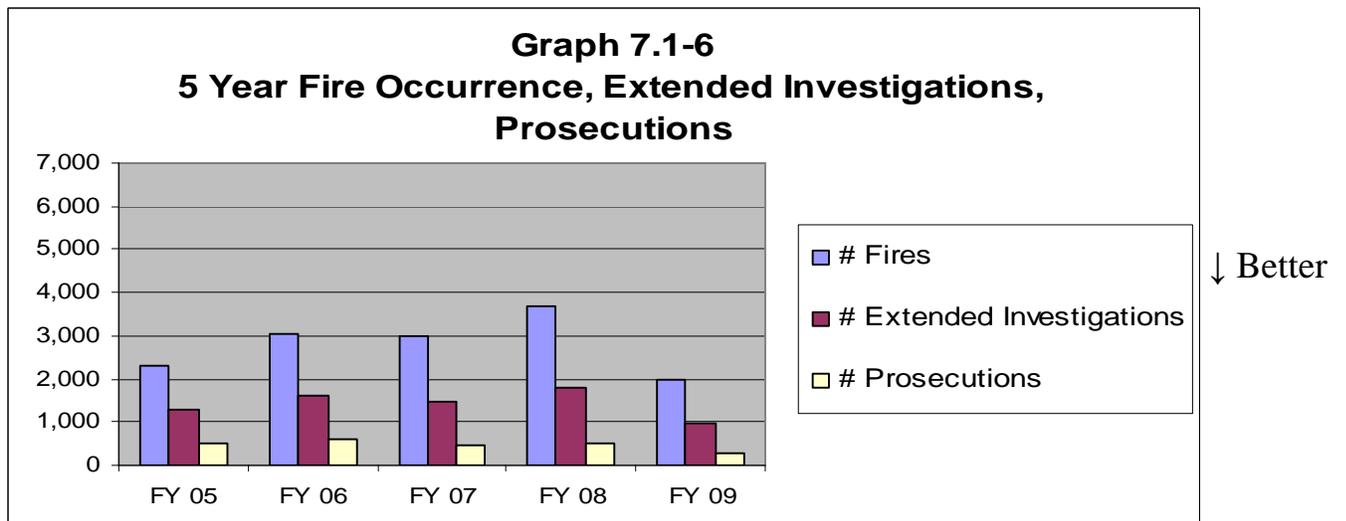
The SCFC measures and compares the average fire size on state and private lands with twelve other southern states. The 10-year average fire size is 32.97 acres per fire for the thirteen southern states. South Carolina has the second lowest 10-year average fire size with 5.90 acres per fire as shown in Graph 7.1-4.



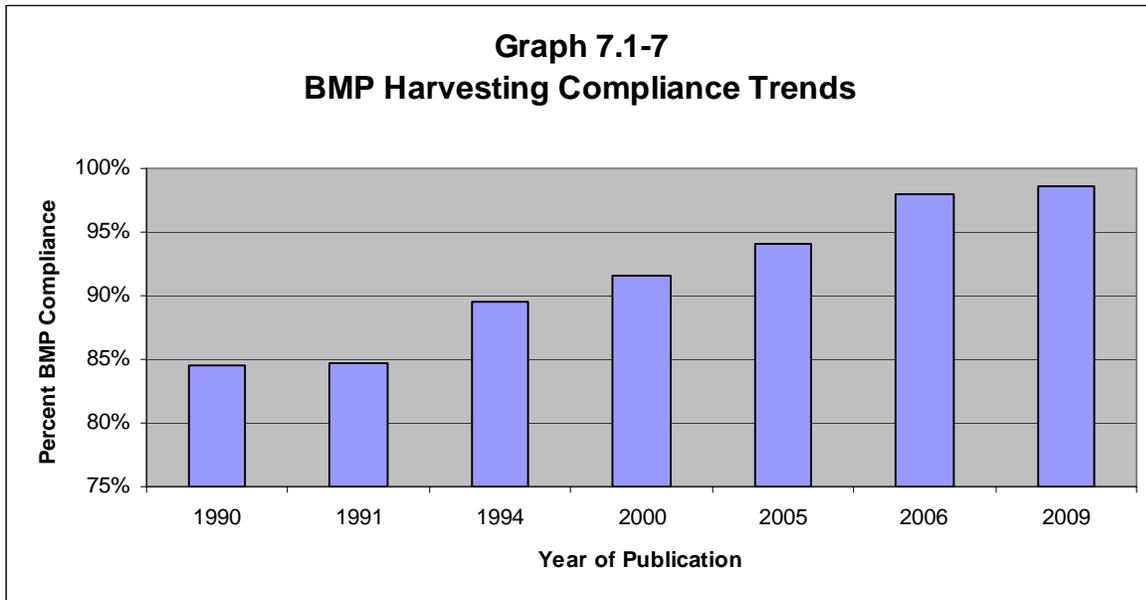
The Law Enforcement Program strives to reduce woods arson and forest product theft and fraud. The program reinforces fire prevention efforts through the enforcement of state fire laws. During FY 09, the agency had 39 commissioned officers, including 4 full-time investigators. The number of timber theft/fraud cases decreased this year, due to sustained, aggressive enforcement of timber transaction laws. The value of each case has drastically reduced by 31% or \$133,821. (Graph 7.1-5)



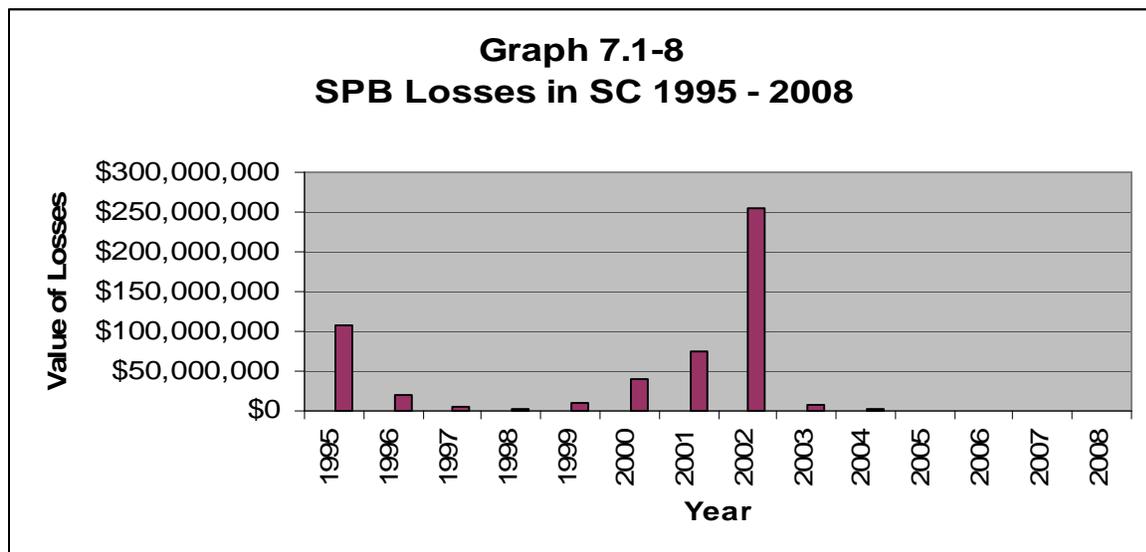
While fire occurrence was down this year, extended investigation of wildfires, especially arson related, was emphasized during the year. (Graph 7.1-6) Woods arson was the likely cause for 35 wildfires. Five individuals, responsible for 30 wildfires, were prosecuted for woods arson. Arson is historically hard to prove and this figure represents an impressive 85% arrest rate. The SCFC’s Law Enforcement Program serves as a benchmark for our neighboring states, which currently do not actively investigate timber theft cases.



Graph 7.1-7 shows compliance with harvesting Best Management Practices from previous surveys. Compliance for BMPs related to timber harvesting rose to 98.6% for 2009, demonstrating continual improvement since monitoring began in 1990. A review by outside experts resulted in 91.3% agreement on a selection of difficult and borderline sites, verifying the accuracy of SCFC field evaluations. Compliance for harvesting BMPs was 84.5% in 1990, 84.7% in 1991, 89.5% in 1994, 91.5% in 2000, 94.0% in 2005, and 98% in 2006. BMP compliance in South Carolina compares favorably with other southeastern states such as North Carolina (82%), Georgia (99.4%), Florida (98.6%), and Alabama (98.1%).



The Southern Pine Beetle (SPB), endemic to SC, builds to epidemic levels on a 5 to 10 year cycle. The preliminary indicators point to the possibility of an increase in SPB activity in the next 1-3 years. Since 1995, SC has suffered the two worst outbreaks on record, with losses exceeding a half-billion dollars. (Graph 7.1-8) SCFC developed a Southern Pine Beetle Prevention Program to reduce losses on privately owned woodlands. During calendar year 2008, 135 landowners received assistance for SPB prevention or restoration practices on over 5,998 acres.

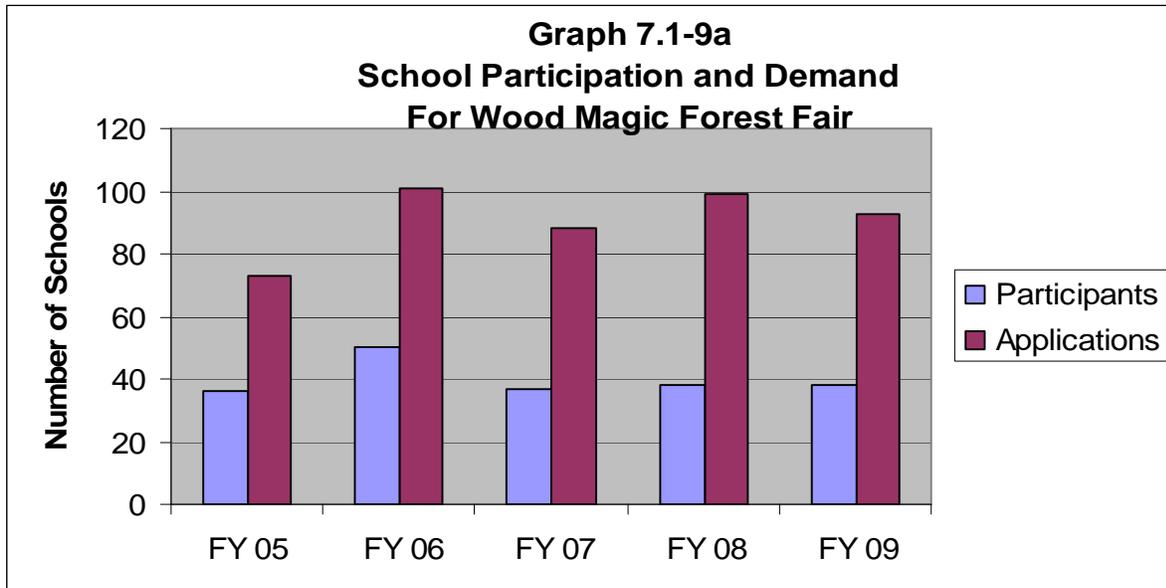


**Raise Awareness about the Resource**

The SCFC strives to reach South Carolina’s school children through “train the trainer” programs for teachers such as Project Learning Tree (PLT) and the annual SC Teachers Tour. Each of these programs has a multiplier effect. By training educators, we are continuously reaching thousands of students in return. In FY 2009, the SCFC hosted 23 workshops involving 464 participants who in turn, influenced approximately 86,000 students.

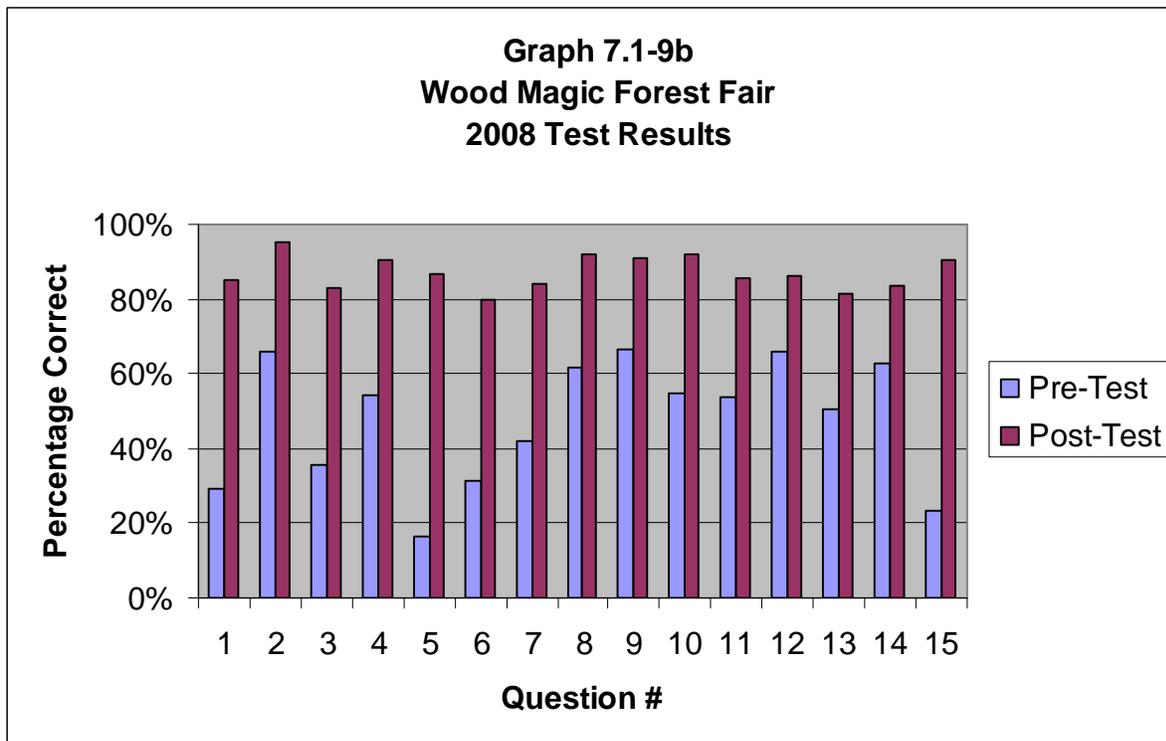
The Wood Magic Forest Fair, designed for fourth graders, also equips teachers to explore such topics as sustainable forestry and recycling. All SCFC education programs meet the state’s requirements for teacher certification and classroom instruction.

In recent years, interest in and applications for both the Teachers Tour and the Forest Fair have exceeded the number of programs we were able to offer. The primary limiting factor is the growing scarcity of qualified instructors due to SCFC and cooperator staff reductions and budget restraints (Graphs 7.1-9a and 7.1-10). Based on the results of our recent survey of the SGSF, South Carolina was the only state offering the Wood Magic Forest Fair.

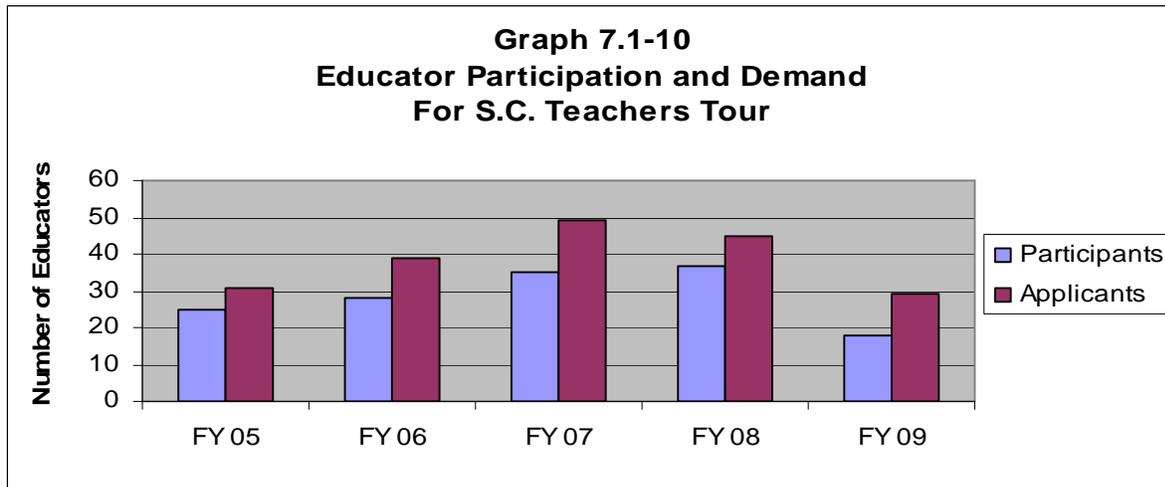


Applications = Participants

On average, pre-course test results were 47.6% and post-course test results were 87.1%. Student understanding improved by 39.5%. Students showed improvement in knowledge about forestry in 100% of the categories.



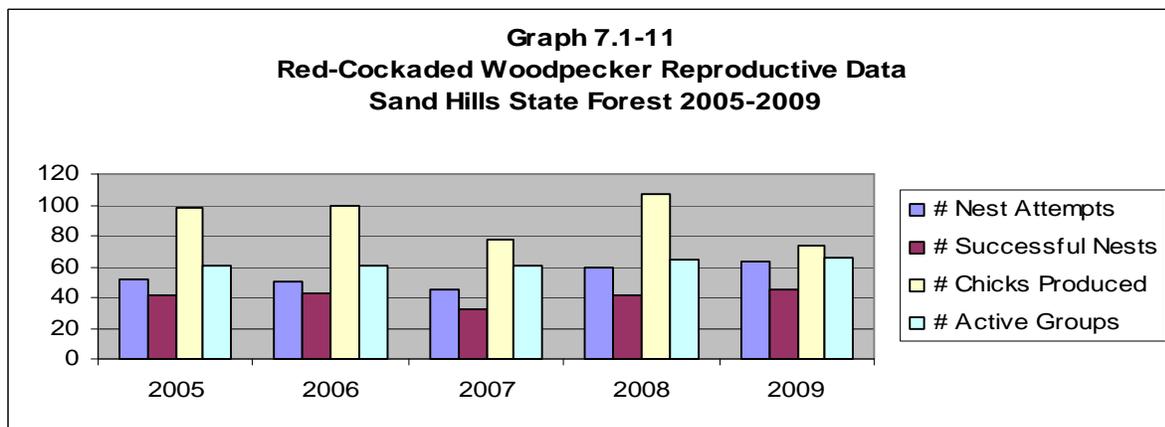
Post > Pre



Applicants  
=  
Participants

Sand Hills State Forest is one component of a recovery population in Chesterfield County for the federally endangered Red Cockaded Woodpecker. In cooperation with SC DNR biologists, habitat for this species on the state forest is managed to improve conditions for nesting and foraging. Management activities include installation of artificial cavities, control of mid-story vegetation and establishment of appropriate tree species and stand density to provide recruitment and foraging habitat. A long range recovery goal of 127 red-cockaded woodpecker clusters has been set for Sand Hills State Forest.

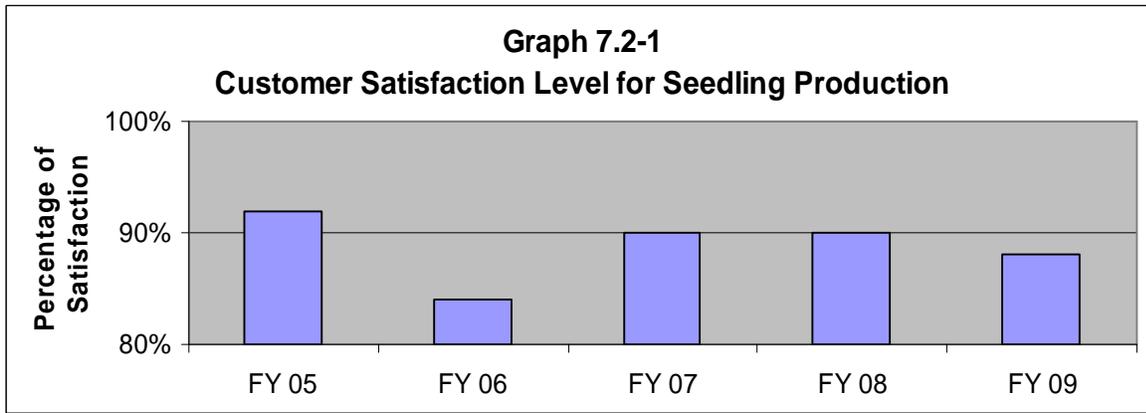
Graph 7.1-11 shows species reproductive trends from 2005-2009. The number of active woodpecker groups on Sand Hills State Forest has increased from 61 groups in 2005 to 66 groups in 2009. The number of offspring produced by these groups decreased from 98 to 74 during the same period.



↑ Better

**7.2 What are your performance levels and trends for your key measures on customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction? How do your results compare to those of comparable organizations?**

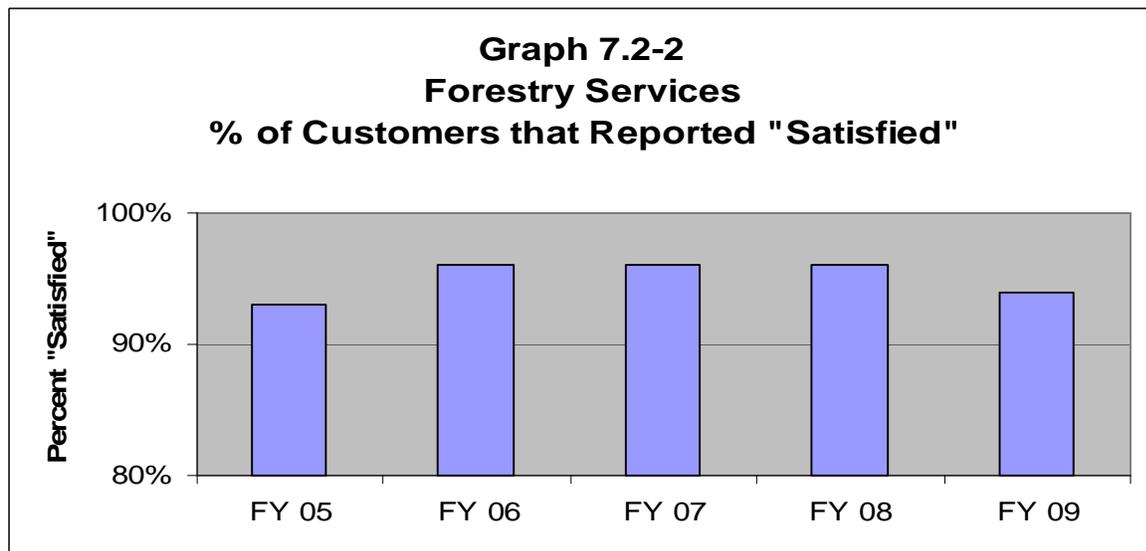
Each year the SCFC surveys a 10% sample of seedling customers to determine general satisfaction with our seedlings and to target areas for improvement. Since beginning the survey, customer satisfaction has averaged 92% overall. The 2009 survey indicated that 88% of our customers were satisfied with our seedling quality and service. Of the customer comments on returned survey forms, over half were complimentary of the nursery program. Of the 10 comments that suggested areas for improvement, the primary issue was the small size of some bare-root longleaf seedlings. All comments are being evaluated and addressed as possible.



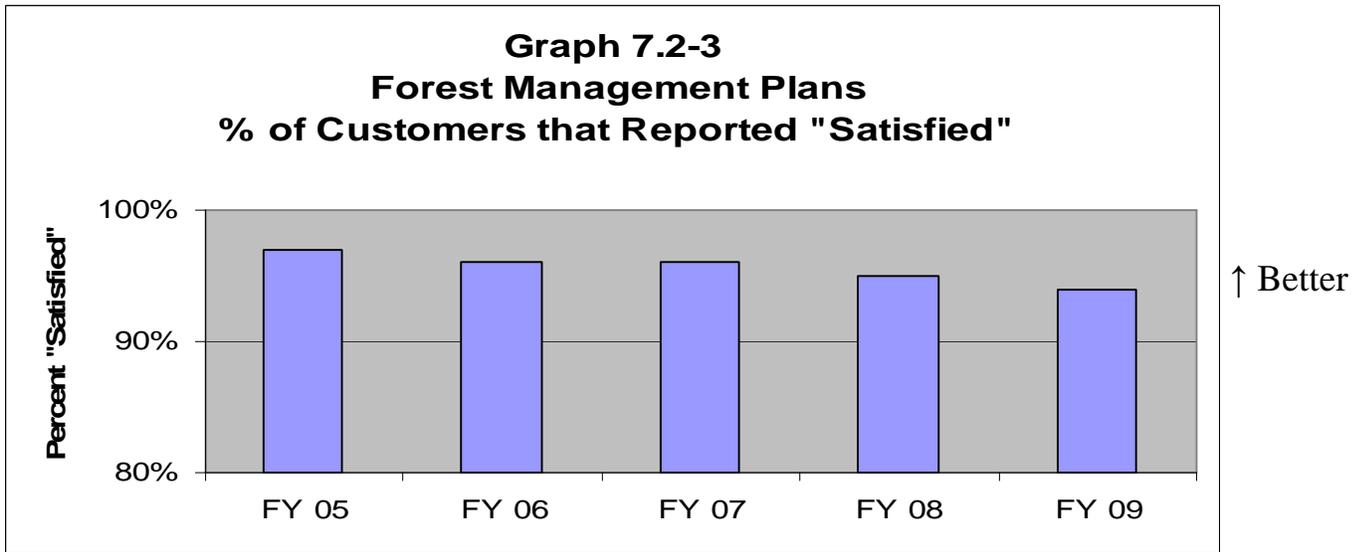
↑ Better

In 1999 we began measuring customer satisfaction levels with our forestry services and our technical forest management assistance. Graphs 7.2-2 and 7.2-3 illustrate our overall satisfaction levels for the last 5 fiscal years. Graphs 7.2-2 and 7.2-3 reflect a decrease in satisfaction levels in recent years which may have been impacted by a reduction in staffing levels and an increase in workload.

During FY 08, we began measuring customer satisfaction levels with our stewardship management assistance. FY 08 responses indicate that 98% of customers served were satisfied; however in FY 09 we saw a minimal decrease in satisfaction with responses revealing 97% of customers served were satisfied. At this time we do not have any comparable data in the customer satisfaction area to report; however, we are attempting to coordinate with the Southern Group of State Foresters and the National Association of State Foresters to obtain comparable data.

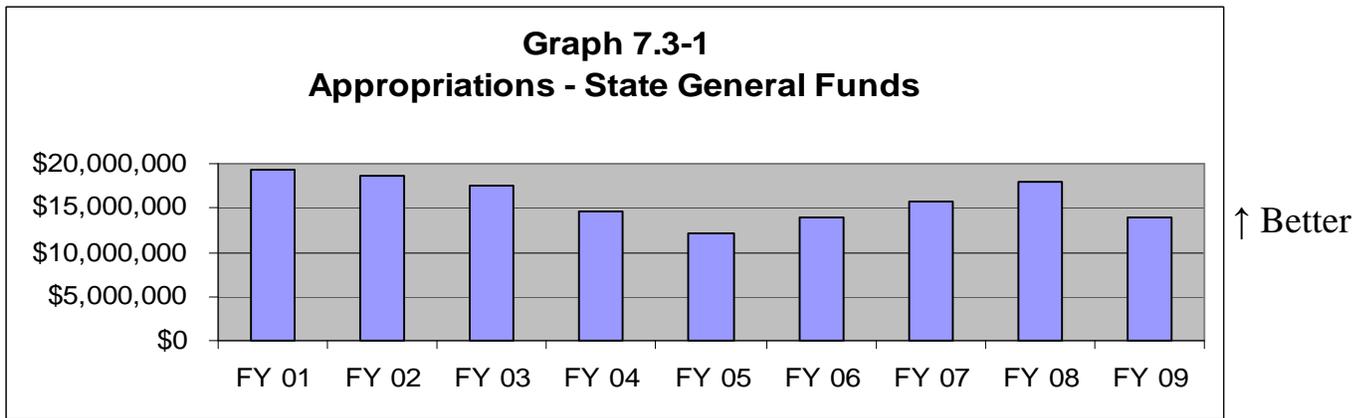


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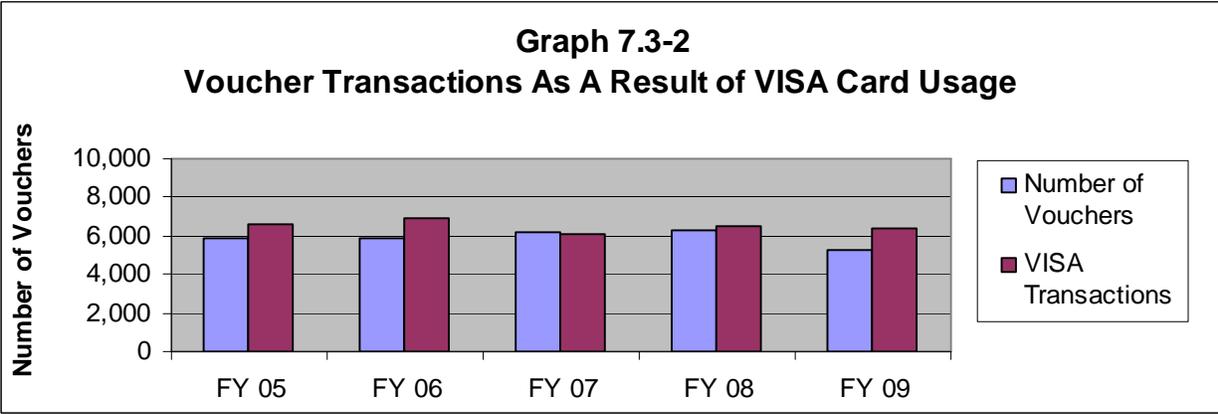
**7.3 What are your performance levels for your key measures on financial performance, including measures of cost containment, as appropriate?**

The SCFC’s recurring State Appropriated funds, when adjusted for inflation, have been reduced 48% since FY 01 (Graph 7.3-1). With the majority of state appropriated funds being used for salaries and benefits, the agency has experienced a corresponding reduction in its workforce.



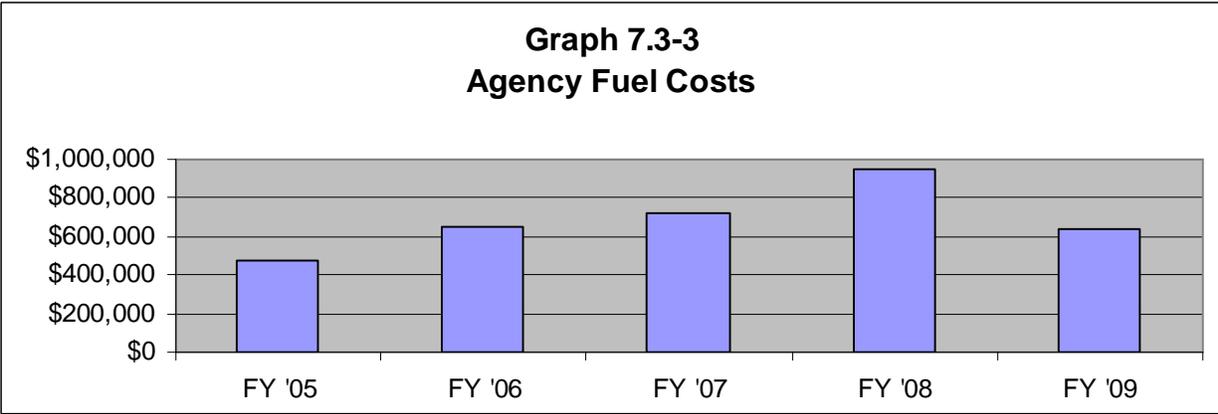
**Processing Time of Transactions** - Based on the tracking of transactions through the system, SCFC processes a vendor’s invoice or an employee’s travel request in an average of 1 day. This is under the agency’s goal of 3 days from the date received to have a voucher processed and submitted to the Comptroller General’s office for payment.

Increased utilization of the state procurement VISA card has aided the SCFC in reducing the number of voucher transactions processed, ultimately reducing the need for 1 FTE. (Graph 7.3-2)

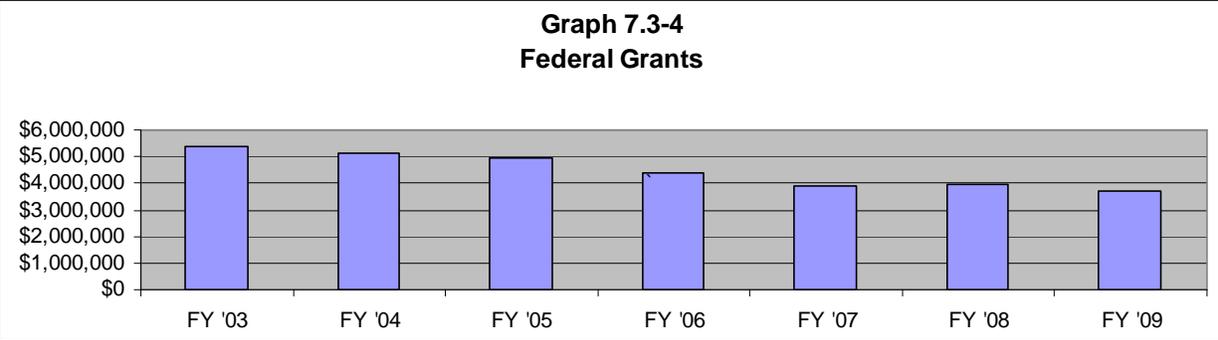


Approximately 40% of regional operating budgets represent fuel costs. With fuel costs having increased over 100% in the past few years (Graph 7.3-3) regional operating budgets continue to be strained. Since FY 2008, Internal Audit reviews and analyzes transactions in an effort to identify opportunities for cost-savings. Opportunities have been identified and action steps taken. In FY 09, the Commission received a savings of \$2,281 by expediently processing payments to the fuel vendor as well as refunds and credits by reviewing, identifying, and disputing erroneous charges.

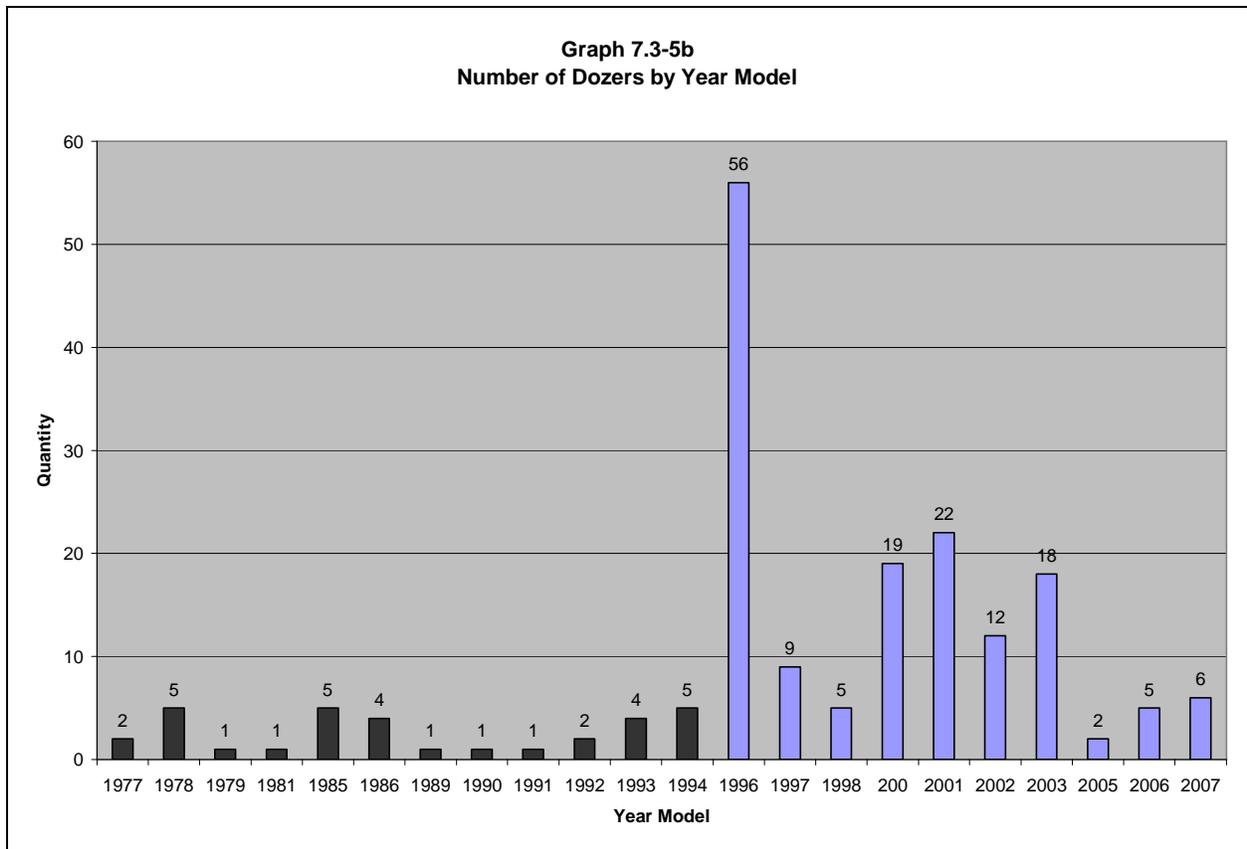
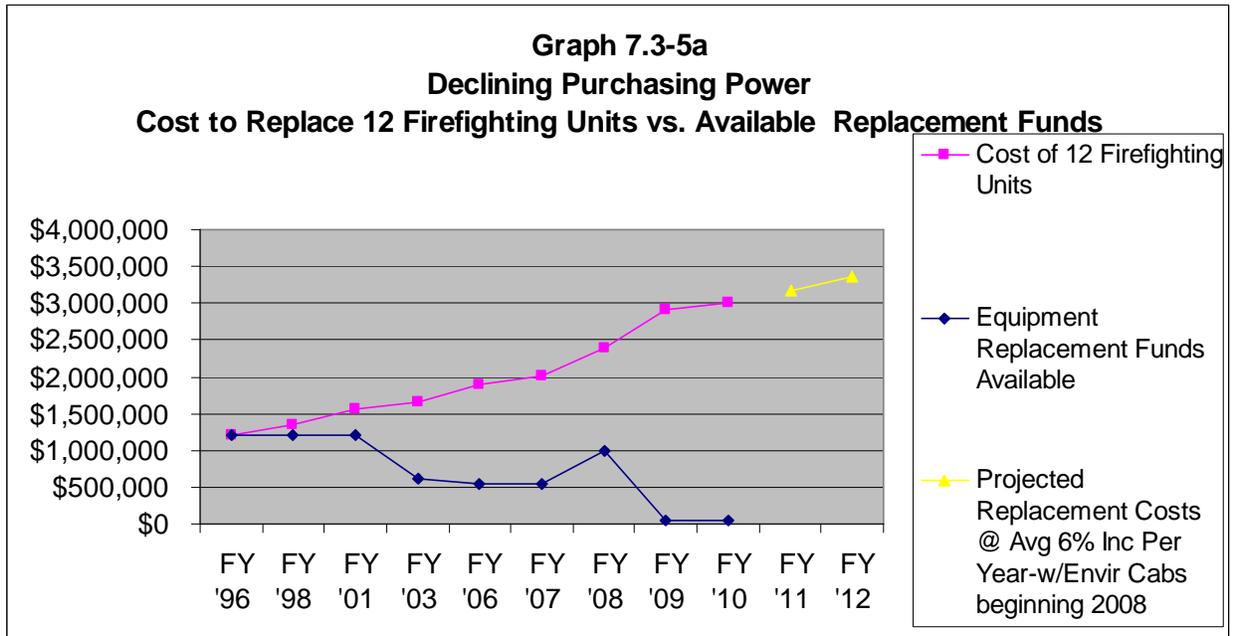
Comparable data for fuel costs for FY 09 was obtained from several southern states: Georgia, Kentucky, and Mississippi. Of those responding, South Carolina has the second lowest costs.



Operating budgets for protection services now are funded primarily with short-term federal grants and revenue earned from forestry services. Federal grants have been reduced significantly over the past several years (Graph 7.3-4).



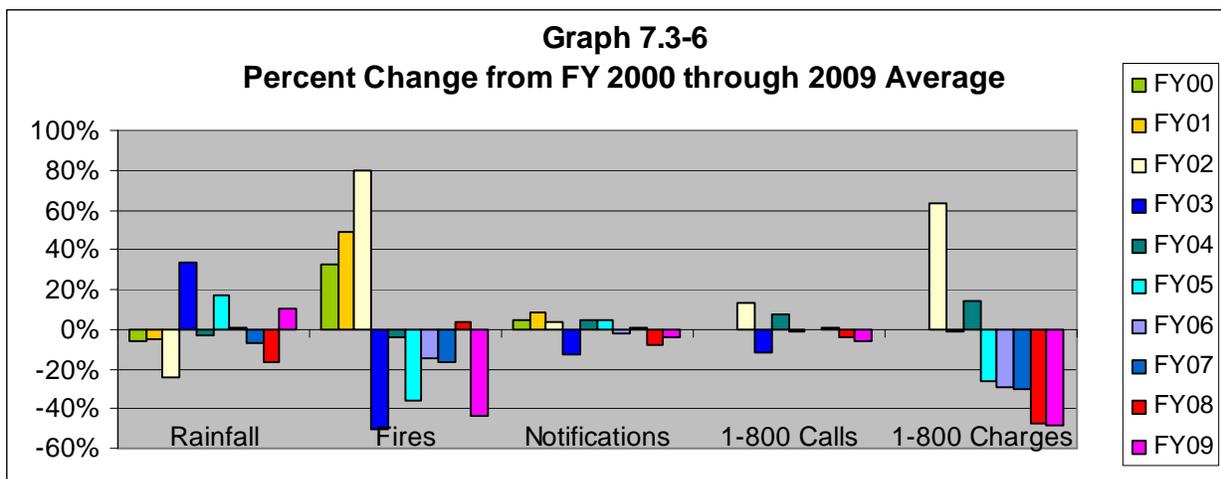
In 1996 the Legislature appropriated funding for a 15 year replacement cycle for firefighting equipment. While the cost of a firefighting unit has increased, the agency's purchasing power for a unit has declined significantly over the past decade. The shortfall for maintaining a 15 year replacement cycle has increased to approximately \$2 million (Graph 7.3-5a). Graph 7.3-5b is a visualization of the age of our dozers and the quantity further illustrating how we have fallen behind in replacing our equipment due to the increasing costs and budgetary limitations. Year models shown in black indicate the 32 dozers that are beyond our targeted 15 year replacement cycle.



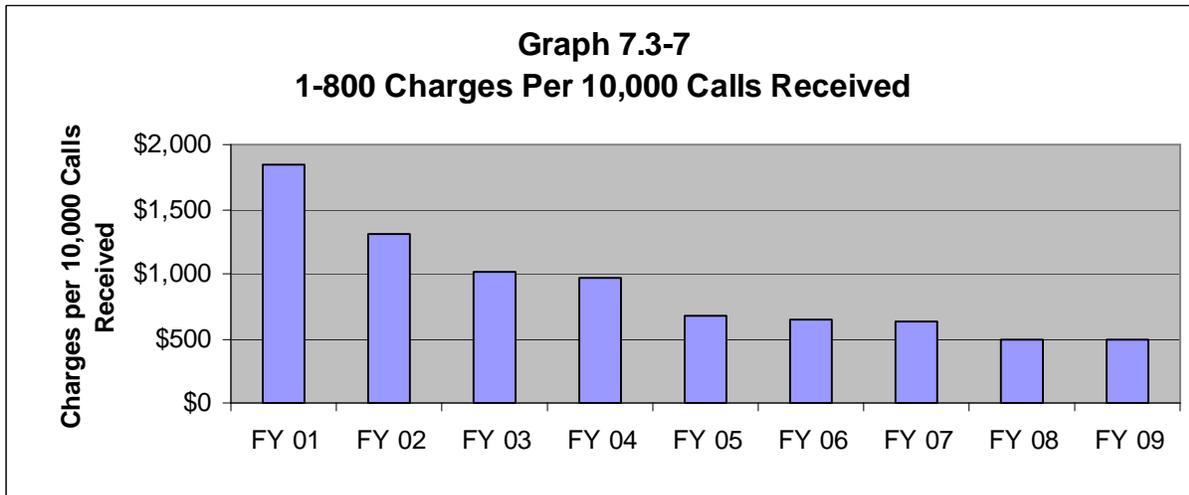
In FY 02, the SCFC began routing all burning notifications, except those for forestry, wildlife and agricultural purposes, to an automated notification system. This greatly improved the efficiency of the SCFC in handling these calls, dispatchers handling other calls, and substantial savings in 1-800 charges. Dispatch mangers receive a list each month of 1-800 calls that were 8 minutes or longer to identify opportunities for further cost reduction.

Graph 7.3-6 shows the percent change from the average in the amount of rainfall, number of fires, number of burning notifications, number of 1-800 calls, and charges for those 1-800 calls. A reduction in rainfall normally produces an increase in fires. An increase in notification normally increased 1-800 calls.

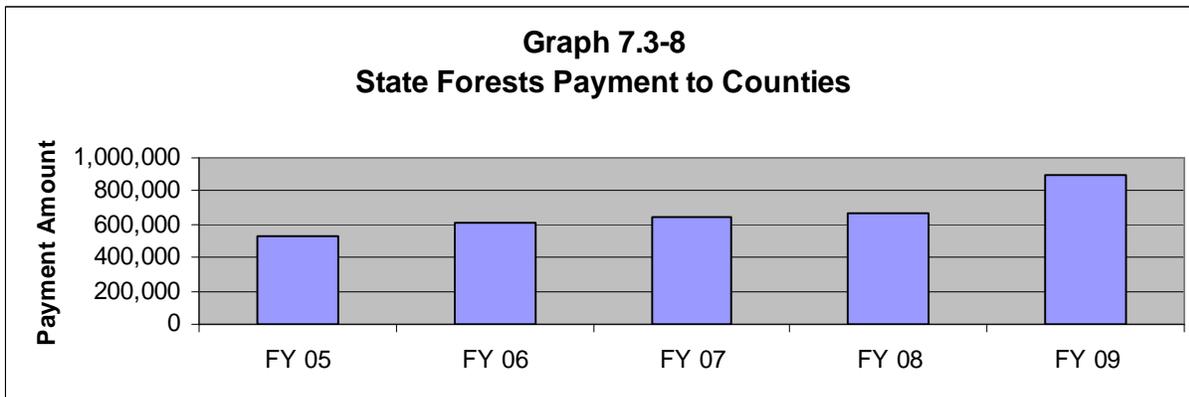
The SCFC was able to achieve a 75% reduction in annual 1-800 charges since implementing changes in FY 02. This reduction can be attributed to routing more outdoor burn notification to an automated system, a new computer aided dispatch system for handling smoke management notifications, and new state contract rates for 1-800 calls.



When the SCFC migrated from local fire towers to regional dispatch centers, toll free numbers were established to encourage the public to comply with state laws requiring them to notify the SCFC when burning outdoors. The SCFC handles over 400,000 burning notification calls per year. Graph 7.3-7 shows the trend of improved efficiency and effectiveness in handling large volumes of incoming 1-800 calls with the cost per 10,000 calls received. In FY 02, the SCFC began routing all burning notifications, except those for forestry, wildlife, and agriculture purposes, to an automated notification system. This monitoring call length and new computer aided dispatch software have improved a dispatcher’s efficiency and effectiveness in handling calls as well as decreasing costs each fiscal year.



The SCFC is the only state agency that shares revenue produced from state owned lands with the counties where the properties are located. Southern states surveyed and those responding further reveal that the SCFC is a leader in the sharing of revenue, as no other state gives back a percentage as large as we do. Twenty-five percent of all revenue that the agency receives from use of the land or products sold, such as timber or pine straw, is returned to the county to support local education systems. Based on receipts received during FY 09, almost \$900,000 was distributed to eleven counties. (Graph 7.3-8)



**7.4 What are your performance levels and trends for your key measures of workforce engagement, workforce satisfaction, the development of your workforce, including leaders, workforce retention, workforce climate including workplace health, safety, and security?**

**Workforce Engagement**

- The agency director solicits input and recommendations from employees in Tree Country SC, the agency’s weekly news bulletin.
- Exit interview responses favorably indicate employees offer suggestions, relate problems, seek advice or request information from management. The employees also indicate management is responsive.
- Employees are agency representatives on state and regional committees and at local government meetings.

**Workforce Satisfaction**

- Responses received during employee meetings, exit interview analysis, SWOT analysis indicate employee relationships and working with the public are strong factors. Advancement opportunities and rate of pay are areas employees view as areas of improvement.

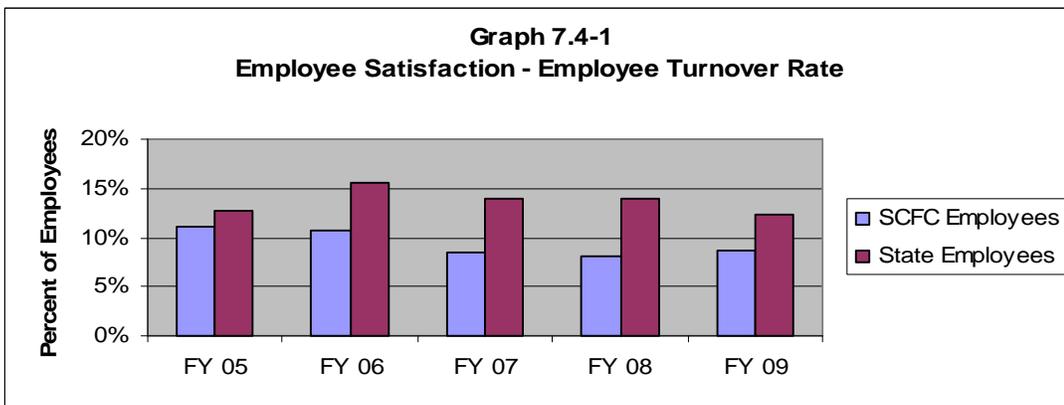
**Workforce Development**

- Established training guides for 64% of positions

- Established career paths for Mechanics, Dispatchers, Foresters
- 12 Certified Public Manager Program graduates
- Executive Institute Program graduates
- Workforce planning analysis assists with agency preparation of a 30% retirement eligible workforce
- 39 employees trained on adopted national standards and procedures for an Incident Management Team, which provides assistance in emergency situations
- Agency Director Organization
- Continuation Education Programs and Courses
- 71 training sessions for employees during FY09

**Workforce Retention**

- The agency continues to retain employees at a higher rate than total state government. The agency averaged 370 employees throughout the fiscal year, which is 90% of the authorized position. The agency’s turnover rate for FY09 is 3.69% lower than the total state government rate.

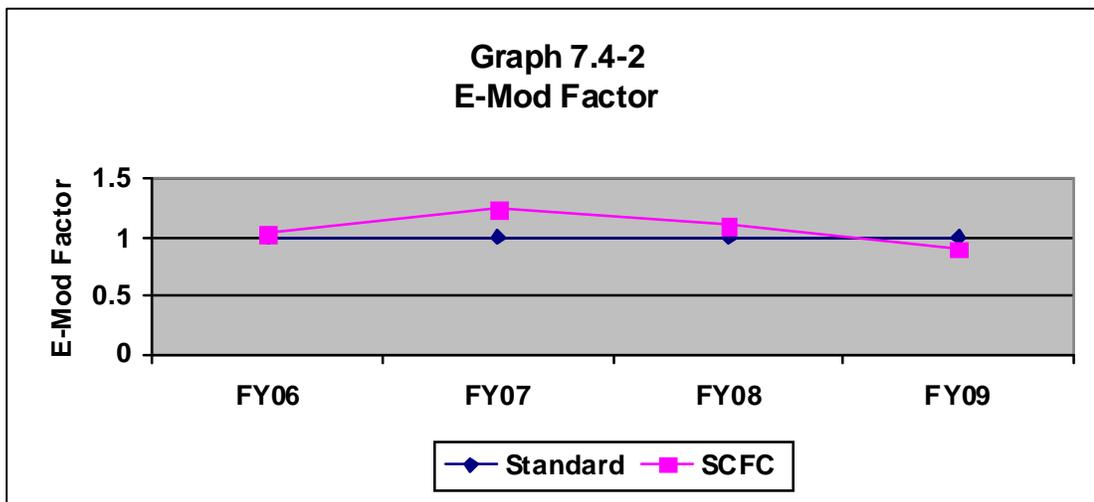


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**Workforce Climate**

- **Workers Compensation --Experience Modification Factor (E-Mod)**

The Experience Modification Factor, a merit-rating plan approved by S. C. State Accident Fund, computes the experience rating based on classification, payroll and loss experience. A reduction in the frequency and severity of on-the-job accidents reflects a reduction in premium. An E-Mod of 1.00 represents the average losses for any given industry.



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- **Safety and Health**

During the upcoming fiscal year, the agency is emphasizing safety awareness by placing safety as a regular discussion item on the agendas for all meetings.

Employees participate in Prevention Partners Health Screenings and other Health Fairs.

The turnover for the agency is consistently lower than the turnover for all state employees. The agency's turnover for FY 09 is 8.63%. (Graph 7.4-1)

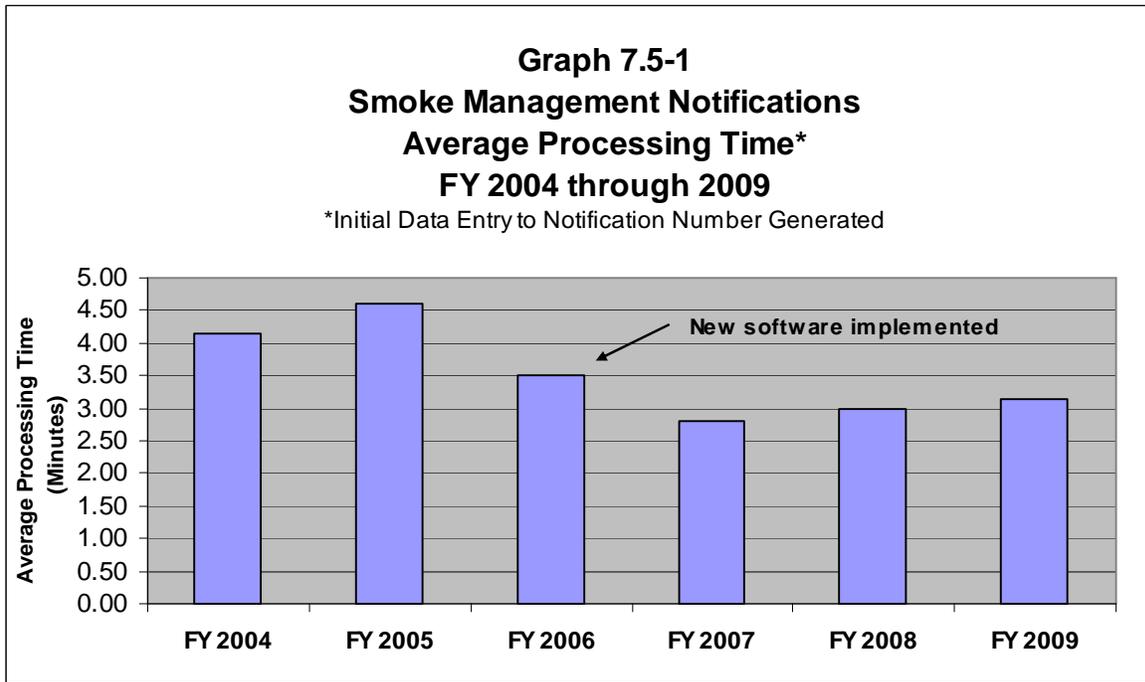
**7.5 *What are your performance levels and trends for your key measures of organizational effectiveness/operational efficiency, and work system performance?***

On July 1, 2005, the SCFC implemented a new computer aided dispatch system based on commercial, "off-the-shelf" E911 software. This allowed the SCFC to utilize technology and functions developed for 911 systems and to control costs over custom developed software. A process unique to the SCFC is determining compliance with SCDHEC Smoke Management Guidelines when taking burn notifications for forestry, wildlife or agriculture purposes. A module was added to the E911 dispatching software to automate the process of determining compliance with these Smoke Management Guidelines with the intent to reduce processing time and increase the accuracy in applying these regulations with each notification.

Graph 7.5-1 displays the Average Processing Time (in minutes) for Smoke Management Notifications for FY 04 through FY 09. Processing Time is the length of time between the first inputs to the notification data entry form to when a burn notification number is generated.

The FY 06 data shows a decrease in processing time with the implementation of the new system. Processing times were longer the first year but significantly improved the following years. By the end of the first year with the new software, processing times decreased by 60 seconds on average compared to FY 05. Continued improvement in processing time was seen in FY07 and leveled out in FY 08 and FY 09 to an average of 3 minutes.

The majority of Smoke Management Notifications are received during a 3-4 hour period in the mornings from December through April and in June. Due to limited staffing, callers have to wait for the next available dispatcher. SCFC is looking into new call processing options now available under State's Voice over IP contract to help reduce or eliminate caller hold time. This should generate additional savings in 1-800 call costs to the agency.



**7.6 What are your performance levels and trends for the key measures of regulatory/legal compliance and community support?**

The SCFC is subject to financial and compliance audits, cooperative Forest Management Reviews by USDA Forest Service, Federal Aviation Administration inspections and regulations, SFM inspections, OSHA regulations, and SCDHEC Smoke Management Guidelines and Outdoor Burning Regulations. Federal funds require compliance with Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Any opportunities identified for improvement are addressed and acted upon accordingly and as feasible.

**GLOSSARY**

BMP	Best Management Practices
CADS	Computer Aided Dispatch System
COOP	Continuity of Operations Plan
CWPP	Community Wildfire Protection Plans
DOQQ	Digital Orthophoto Quarter Quads
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EPMS	Employee Performance Management System
FIA	Forest Inventory and Analysis
FRIS	Forest Resource Information System
FSA	Farm Services Agency
GAAP	Generally Accepted Accounting Principles
GIS	Geographic Information System
GPS	Global Positioning System
ICS	Incident Command System
IMPLAN	Impact Analysis for Planning
IMT	Incident Management Team
IT	Information Technology
MPLS	Multiprotocol Label Switching
MW	Megawatt
NAPP	National Aerial Photograph Program
NASF	National Association of State Foresters
NIMS	National Incident Management System
N&TI	Nursery and Tree Improvement
NPS	National Park Service
NRCS	National Resource Conservation Service
NWTF	National Wild Turkey Federation
OHR	Office of Human Resources
OSHA	Occupational Safety Health Association
PCF	Private Consulting Forester
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
RMS	Records Management System
SCDHEC	South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control
SCDNR	South Carolina Department of Natural Resources
SCEMD	South Carolina Emergency Management Division
SCFA	South Carolina Forestry Association
SCFC	South Carolina Forestry Commission
SCPRT	South Carolina Parks, Recreation and Tourism
SCWF	South Carolina Wildlife Federation
SDE	State Department of Education
SFFI	Sustaining Family Forest Initiative
SFM	State Fleet Management
SGSF	Southern Group of State Foresters
SLED	State Law Enforcement Division
SPB	Southern Pine Beetle
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
TPO	Timber Product Output
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USFS	United States Forest Service
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
WUI	Wildland Urban Interface