

Accountability Report Transmittal Form

Agency Name: South Carolina Forestry Commission

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South Carolina Forestry Commission
 Annual Accountability Report
 Fiscal Year 2005 – 2006

SECTION I – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. *Agency Mission and Values:*

The mission of the South Carolina Forestry Commission (SCFC) is to protect, promote, enhance, and nurture the forestlands 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 values:

- Customer Service and Satisfaction
- Professionalism and Pride in Quality Work
- Honesty, Integrity and Treating Employees with Respect and Trust
- Employee Accountability
- Teamwork
- Open Communications

2. *Major achievements from past year:*

- **Strategic Plan Update** – The second update of the SCFC strategic plan began with a detailed review of the existing plan by agency Commissioners and employees. A series of educational/input sessions were conducted across the state with a cross-section of stakeholder focus groups. A draft plan was presented to the Commissioners for comment in April 2006, with the final plan being approved in June. Leadership meetings to communicate strategic objectives, action plans, and performance items for inclusion in employees' performance planning stages have been initiated.
- **Forest Resource Development** – Forest industry expansion reached a new high with announcements of \$570 million in capital investment creating 455 jobs during FY 06. International Paper Company and Kimberley-Clark both announced upgrades or expansions of \$200 million at their facilities in Georgetown and Aiken, respectively. Techwood, a Dutch manufacturer, announced plans to invest \$150 million in a new operation in Greenwood that will manufacture wood-plastic composite products. South Carolina's abundant forest resource is attracting international attention with a total of 14 forest-product related economic development projects during the year. This industry expansion prompted a SCFC-sponsored wood supply study in cooperation with N.C. State University. Study results show a 22% downturn in softwood pulpwood inventory by 2020. Conversely, a continued increase in softwood sawtimber inventory is projected through 2021. Concern over the pulpwood supply has prompted an agency-sponsored landowner outreach program to encourage private tree planting.
- **Wildfire Prevention Teams** - In SC 46% of wildfires result from outdoor debris burn escapes. Last winter four Wildfire Prevention Teams were deployed in designated areas to inform the public of safe debris burning practices and to emphasize steps that should be taken to protect life and property from wildfire – SC averages 94 homes and structures destroyed by wildland fire each year. The teams distributed over 200,000 pieces of print material, conducted workshops for homeowners, business leaders, local government and fire service representatives, and interviews with various media. Comparison of fire occurrence data in

the targeted areas for Dec. – Feb. with the same time period last year showed a 24% decline in wildland fires caused by debris burn escapes.

- **Computer Aided Dispatch System Update** – The update of the agency’s computer aided dispatch system went live in July, 2005. The new system replaced the original 1996 custom application and incorporates standard 911 dispatch functions that have improved efficiency in dispatch and notification operations. Average response time to wildfires decreased by 2.75 minutes in FY 06, with the bulk of the reduction (2.15 min.) attributed to the new system.
- **Sand Hills State Forest/H. Cooper Black Field Trial Area** – Management of the state forest system continues to be for sustainable benefits under long-range goals encompassing environmental protection, educational outreach, local and state economic development, and forest-based recreation. During the year the agency worked on two major items related to the state forest: In response to a proviso in the 2006 budget, the SCFC worked with the Chesterfield Delegation to form a local committee to “study the feasibility of reopening roads within Sand Hills State Forest...” The committee issued recommendations to the state forester, which he accepted and implemented. Additionally, with support of the Chesterfield Delegation, the SCFC began a series of meetings with other agencies and users of the field trial area to determine how to improve the facility, increase usage, and provide additional economic impact for the surrounding communities and county. From these efforts, funding was secured for PRT to assume management of the facility and a proviso passed requiring PRT, SCFC and DNR to develop a memorandum of understanding for joint operations. The agreement has been drafted and will be presented to House and Senate Committees prior to November 1, 2006.
- **Southern Pine Beetle Prevention Program** – The southern pine beetle, endemic to SC, builds to epidemic levels on a 5 to 10 year cycle. Since 1995, SC has suffered the two worst outbreaks on record, with losses exceeding a half-billion dollars. Over the past year, SCFC developed a southern pine beetle prevention program designed to reduce losses on privately owned forest lands, with a focus on implementation of practices to keep pine stands healthy. More than 120 landowners have signed up to implement practices on over 6300 acres.
- **Succession Planning/Professional Development** – TERI departures in six key positions created opportunities for realignment of job functions and selection of replacements prior to the retirements. This enabled a smoother transition, with replacements working directly with the retiring employees for several months. Similar strategies will continue, as well as increased efforts in professional development and the cross utilization of personnel among various programs.
- **Employee Recognition** – Intentional efforts were made to improve employee recognition this past year. Each employee was presented with an SCFC key chain during Employee Recognition Week, and the state forester hosted four luncheons for approximately sixty employees.

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. Continue the increased emphasis on the use of prescribed burning, as a means for reducing hazardous fuels, with the SC Prescribed Fire Council.
- Develop two overhead Incident Management Teams (IMTs).

- 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.
- 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 basic 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.
- Improve and expand the Timber Products Output survey and resulting database to more accurately model future market conditions.
- Provide technical assistance to landowners, communities, and state agencies.

4. *Opportunities and barriers that may affect the agency's success in fulfilling its mission and achieving its strategic goals.*

Opportunities:

- Communities, especially those within the wildland-urban interface, need assistance with fire prevention and community wildfire protection plans.
- Increasing interest in the need for green space and the health and productivity of that space amplify the need to better educate people about the environmental, social, and economic benefits of a well-managed, healthy forest, and the role that prescribed fire plays.
- New and under-served forest landowners need technical forestry assistance.
- All of the above activities underscore the need to continuously collect and provide data to assess SC's forest resource and its condition.
- The State's increasing forest land holdings, if managed under SCFC state lands program, can demonstrate sustainable forestry that includes wildlife, water, recreation, and jobs.
- Increasing demands on the forest resource to provide clean water has increased opportunities to work with agencies, organizations, and industries in the promotion of and training in forestry best management practices.
- Vulnerable forest landowners (elderly, minority, and female) are frequent victims of timber fraud and timber theft, creating the need for highly specialized forest law enforcement.
- Homeland security issues and the utilization of multiple agencies in emergency or disaster situations create opportunities for the SCFC to share its expertise and train agencies in the Incident Command System, and to provide IMTs for emergency responses.
- Increasing need for alternative energy sources provides an opportunity for South Carolina to become a leader in promoting energy from forest biomass.

Barriers:

- Public demands for forestry services, including fire prevention and suppression, have increased as SCFC staffing and budgets have declined.

- Past budget reductions, with increasing equipment costs have made it necessary to lengthen the replacement schedule for firefighting equipment. Rising operating costs, especially fuel prices, are increasing the cost of detecting and suppressing wildland fires. All of these decrease the agency's ability to keep pace with technological advances in equipment needed for mission critical functions.
- Loss of experienced personnel through retirements, with more stringent employment requirements and mandated training for firefighters and dispatchers, coupled with very low starting salaries, make it difficult to hire and retain qualified personnel.
- Many essential FTEs are partly or entirely funded by short-term federal grants.
- The loss of cooperators (forest industry) firefighter capacity, due to the sale of forest industry lands and subsequent reductions in personnel and equipment, places greater demands on the agency's limited firefighting resources.
- County forestry boards' role in management of local personnel hampers the agency's ability to realign much of the workforce to meet current needs. This role, specified by law, needs to be changed.
- 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 homes, 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 forest lands healthy and productive. This is having an especially adverse impact on the use of prescribed fire in the state.

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. The report also is tied directly to the agency's strategic plan and serves as an annual progress report on the implementation/status of many goals and action items in the strategic plan.

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, "It shall take 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."

SCFC personnel construct firebreaks on privately owned forestlands to suppress fires and reduce the potential for destructive wild fire. To further minimize the effect of wildfire and smoke hazards, SCFC foresters prepare prescribed burning plans for property owners and assist with conducting burns to reduce hazardous fuels, improve wildlife habitat, and prepare sites for reforestation.

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 actions to reduce the wildfire hazard. A community that takes actions to reduce the risk of wildfire becomes eligible to receive national recognition as a "Firewise Community USA". This past fiscal year, Keowee Key in Pickens County became a recognized "Firewise Community USA". Planning of homeowner and community leader education workshops is on-going throughout South Carolina. Five workshops were held last year with total attendance of over 340. Additional Firewise presentations were made at various conferences, including the annual meeting of the SC Prescribed Fire Council. Cooperative burning demonstrations were held with Clemson Extension Service. Presentations were made to Centex homes to encourage firewise developments. SCFC personnel manned Firewise exhibits at the SC Horticulture Expo and the SC Firemen's Convention. Coordinators 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 periodically surveys the state for forest insect and disease infestations. The headquarters office houses an entomologist and pathologist working from a fully equipped diagnostic lab. This provides agency foresters and landowners access to up-to-date information and diagnosis of specific problems and recommendations for control. The SCFC has also instituted a Southern Pine Beetle Prevention Program to provide advice to landowners in minimizing future SPB damage and a cost-share program to aid landowners in areas impacted by the beetle. This program utilizes federal grant funding and requires no additional state funds.

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 06, the agency had 34 commissioned officers, including 4 full-time investigators.

Extended investigation of wildfires was emphasized during the year, resulting in a 16% increase in fire-related prosecutions. (Graph 7.1-6) Sustained, aggressive enforcement of timber transaction laws resulted in a 13% reduction in the number of reported cases of timber theft/fraud. (Graph 7.1-5) The SCFC's Law Enforcement Program serves as a benchmark for our neighboring states, which currently do not actively investigate timber theft cases.

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. BMP

Foresters, located in each of the three operating regions of South Carolina, offer courtesy BMP exams to landowners, foresters, and timber buyers. The BMP Forester makes site specific BMP recommendations to follow while conducting forestry activities. During FY 06, the BMP Foresters completed 388 courtesy exams and provided 2,654 contact hours of training for landowners, loggers and forestry professionals to increase awareness and implementation of BMPs. This program has undergone extensive personnel turnover. The manager and all four BMP Foresters were newly assigned in 2006.

Manage the Resource

SCFC foresters, working throughout the state, 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, "It shall give such advice, assistance and cooperation as may be practical to private owners of land ..."

SCFC foresters write woodland management plans tailored to the specific needs of each property. A plan includes descriptions of each forest stand, recommended practices to meet the objectives of the landowner, and a property map. The plan also includes suggestions on how to accomplish recommended work.

Prescribed burning services and timber marking services are offered for a fee.

There are several financial assistance options available to help landowners complete forestry improvement projects. SCFC foresters determine whether or not a landowner qualifies for assistance and then help with the application process and implementation of forestry practices.

To assist the state's woodland owners with reforestation, the Commission sells bare root and containerized seedlings. Native pine and hardwood species are available. The SCFC nursery program operates on the receipts from seedling and seed sales.

The SCFC manages Sand Hills, Manchester, Harbison, Poe Creek and Wee Tee State Forests on a self-supporting basis for sustainable, multiple-use forestry and public education purposes.

All employees of the SCFC are committed to forest conservation education. Civic and social groups, scouts, science teachers and environmental organizations request programs on forestry and related environmental subjects.

As our urban areas expand, the importance of growing and maintaining healthy trees in city spaces will increase. Foresters work with urban residents, city planners, developers, contractors and local government to improve the quality of our urban environments.

Raise Awareness about the Resource

The SCFC is responsible for educating the public in the economic and environmental benefits of a well-managed forest resource. According to the South Carolina Code of Laws "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."

The Commission's Forestry Education Program has been severely reduced during the past four years due to budget cuts. However, SCFC employees, especially those who work on the state forests and in the Education & Information Technology Division, continue to support the agency's popular Wood Magic Forest Fair and Teachers Tour programs. (Graph 7.1-9 and 7.1-10) E&IT staff produce technical and informational materials (including the SCFC website) to explain forestry programs and educate various publics about the benefits of forestry.

2. ***Key Customers and their key requirements/expectations:***

Owners and users of forestland

Requirements/expectations: protect their woodlands; help manage forests by providing professional assistance; enhance the forest resources to help insure that state's forest industry remains financially healthy.

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 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 forest lands; provide management assistance to private forest owners to help insure 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 needs that will be place on our forest resources.

State forests visitors and user groups

Requirements/expectations: protect the state owned forest lands, 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 Stakeholders (other than customers):***

- Employees
- Commissioners
- County Forestry Boards
- Local governments: county and city councils
- State Legislative members
- State of South Carolina

4. ***Key suppliers and partners:***

Suppliers: Heavy equipment manufacturers and dealers, federal excess property inventory system, vehicle repair garages and parts suppliers, communication equipment dealers and repair businesses, forestry equipment suppliers, office supply vendors, printing businesses and media outlets, and aerial detection contractors.

Partners: State and Federal Agencies such as DHEC, SCEMD, DNR-State Climatology Office, US Forest Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Corps of Engineers, Department of Defense, National Weather Service, and US Environmental Protection Agency.

5. ***Operation locations:***

Personnel are assigned positions throughout the state through a series of zone, unit, regional, and headquarter offices. The largest single group of employees, forest fire wardens, reports 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 near Wedgefield, Sand Hills State Forest near Patrick, Harbison State Forest near Columbia, Poe Creek State Forest near Pickens, and Wee Tee State Forest in Williamsburg County.

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

The SCFC has a total of 359 employees. Two of these 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. ***Key strategic challenges:***

- **Protect the Resource** – To ensure their future health, South Carolina’s forests must be protected from harm due to natural and human-caused factors.
- **Raise Awareness about the Resource** – The SCFC must raise awareness among decision-makers and the public in general concerning the environmental, social, and economic benefits of sound forest management.

- **Manage the Resource** – Forest landowners, communities, and the public expect the SCFC to deliver financial and technical assistance while addressing social and environmental concerns.
- **Enhance the Resource** – 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.
- **Prepare to Meet Future Demands** – To meet future demands and provide quality customer service, the SCFC must have a well-trained, qualified staff that enjoys a safe and rewarding work environment.

9. *Performance improvement systems(s):*

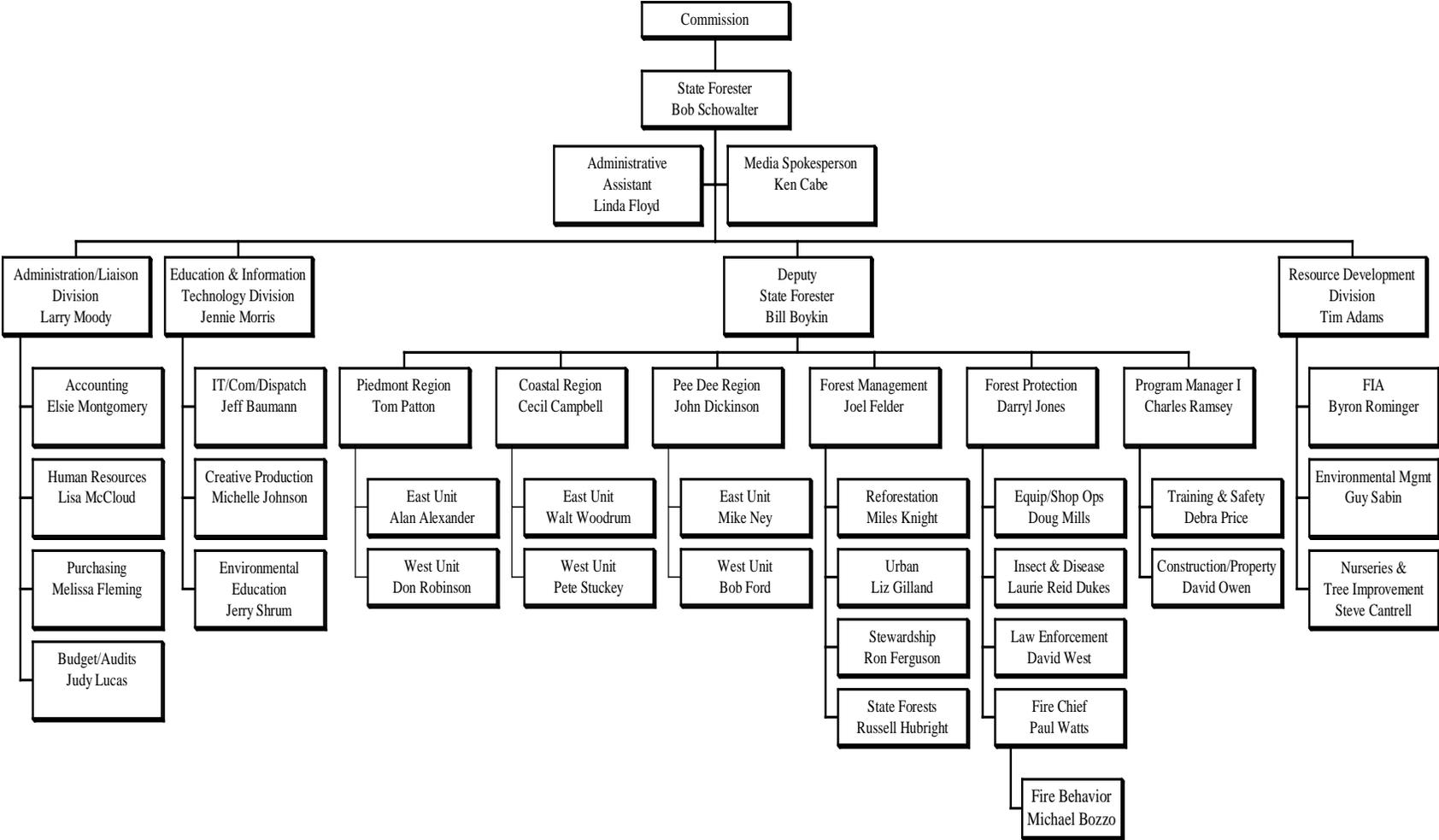
The accountability report is utilized by the SCFC to monitor established performance measures, to update or establish benchmarks, and to document continuous improvement efforts. The report also is tied directly to the agency's strategic plan and serves as an annual progress report on the implementation/status of many goals and action items in the plan. Specific goals and action items are incorporated into employees' performance planning stages.

Performance expectations are determined through one or more of the following: review of past organizational performance, review of other organizations' performances, input from employees primarily responsible for carrying out/monitoring the program, and feedback from customers.

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.

10 Organizational Structure Chart:

South Carolina Forestry Commission Organizational Chart



11. Expenditure/Appropriations Chart

Accountability Report Appropriations/Expenditures Chart

Base Budget Expenditures and Appropriations

Major Budget Categories	FY 04-05 Actual Expenditures		FY 05-06 Actual Expenditures		FY 06-07 Appropriations Act	
	Total Funds	General Funds	Total Funds	General Funds	Total Funds	General Funds
Personal Service	\$10,888,433	\$7,832,740	\$11,778,079	\$8,420,129	\$11,833,010	\$9,052,705
Other Operating	\$6,732,138	\$1,339,432	\$6,627,503	\$2,409,143	\$6,932,612	\$2,774,232
Special Items	\$794,872	\$200,000	\$809,417	\$200,000	\$1,000,000	\$200,000
Permanent Improvements	\$190,732		\$235,484	\$235,484	\$0	\$0
Case Services						
Distributions to Subdivisions	\$1,234,008	\$0	\$1,186,653		\$1,475,500	\$0
Fringe Benefits	\$3,858,578	\$2,889,047	\$4,052,648	\$3,013,875	\$4,258,389	\$3,281,120
Non-recurring	\$0	\$0	\$150,000	\$150,000		
Total	\$23,698,761	\$12,261,219	\$24,839,784	\$14,428,631	\$25,499,511	\$15,308,057

Other Expenditures

Sources of Funds	FY 04-05 Actual Expenditures	FY 05-06 Actual Expenditures
Supplemental Bills	\$0	\$0
Capital Reserve Funds	\$0	\$0
Bonds	\$0	\$0

4. Major Program Areas Chart:

Major Program Areas

Program Number and Title	Major Program Area Purpose (Brief)	FY 04-05 Budget Expenditures	FY 05-06 Budget Expenditures	Key Cross Reference for Financial Results*
II Forest Landowners Assistance	Forest Protection 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: 9,792,558 Federal: 3,337,237 Other: 1,442,867 Total: 14,572,662 % of Total Budget: 62%	State: 11,655,753 Federal: 3,894,584 Other: 285,598 Total: 15,835,935 % of Total Budget: 64%	7.3-1, 7.3-2, 7.3-3, 7.3-4, 7.3-5, 7.3-6, 7.3-8, 7.3-9
II Forest Landowners Assistance	Forest Management The SCFC delivers financial and technical assistance to forest landowners, communities and the public while addressing social and environmental concerns.	State: 1,059,058 Federal: 1,373,901 Other: 811,688 Total: 3,244,647 % of Total Budget: 14%	State: 1,168,034 Federal: 1,066,116 Other: 843,507 Total: 3,077,657 % of Total Budget: 12%	7.3-1, 7.3-2, 7.3-3, 7.3-4, 7.3-5, 7.3-6, 7.3-8, 7.3-9
III State Forests	State Forests 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: 4,839 Other: 2,609,064 Total: 2,613,903 % of Total Budget: 11%	State: 150,000 Federal: 1,361 Other: 2,672,357 Total: 2,823,718 % of Total Budget: 11%	7.3-1 7.3-2 7.3-9

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

Remainder of Expenditures	State: 14,409,602	State: 1,454,844
Resource Development	Federal: 814,222	Federal: 597,902
Best Management Practices	Other: 1,043,725	Other: 1,049,730
Nurseries and Tree Improvement	Total: 3,267,549	Total: 3,102,476
Forest Information & Outreach Administration	% of Total Budget: 14%	% of Total Budget: 12%

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

SECTION III – ELEMENTS OF MALCOLM BALDRIGE AWARD CRITERIA

CATEGORY I - LEADERSHIP

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

1.1a Short and long term direction and organizational priorities?

Senior leaders (agency director, his staff, and division directors), along with the agency Commissioners, employees, stakeholders, and customers, reviewed and provided input for the development of an updated strategic plan during the past year. The strategic plan will serve 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 achieved by linking the strategic and action plans to employee performance evaluation planning stages. Communication also is accomplished through the agency's weekly news bulletins and various meetings with employees, customers, and stakeholders.

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?

Agency leadership adopted organizational values as identified by employees at an agency-wide planning conference and strives to communicate these values during regular interaction with employees.

1.1d Empowerment and innovation?

Agency leadership has worked to strengthen and broaden efforts toward empowerment and innovation by improving employees' ability to assess agency performance/opportunities through broader participation in the Certified Public Manager Program. Program staff are encouraged to identify opportunities and barriers relevant to accomplishing agency or program goals and recommend appropriate actions within policy and budget.

1.1e Organizational and employee learning?

Organizational and employee learning is primarily set, deployed, and communicated through program managers and an established training council which consists of a cross section of employees. Leadership actively supports the efforts of the training council in identifying, evaluating, prioritizing, and implementing internal training. A stronger emphasis is being placed on utilization of employees from multiple programs for all-risk Incident Management Team training and assignments. The agency continued its commitment to employee participation in the Certified Public Manager program. Transfer of knowledge continues to be a critical issue with

TERI and other retirements. Succession planning strategies developed last year were utilized in filling six key positions that were vacated due to retirements.

1.1f *Ethical behavior?*

Agency leadership sets, deploys, and communicates ethical expectations through the agency's values, individual discussions, policies and procedures, and employee participation in professional organizations. Employees violating ethical principles are dealt with through appropriate individual means.

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

This past year leaders sought input from a cross section of customers and stakeholders in the revision of the agency's strategic plan. The strategic plan, action plans, and the agency's mission statement emphasize customer focus.

Customer feedback and input on forestry services and issues such as seedlings sales, services work, technical forest management assistance, and notification of wildfires are solicited through surveys, meetings, 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 products, 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 (GAPP), insures fiscal responsibility and eliminates opportunity for fraud. Monthly reviews of budget status in relation to appropriations and adherence to the State Procurement Codes 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 State Auditor's Office and the USDA Forest Service conduct audits and reviews regularly to insure compliance with State and Federal laws, rules and regulations.

1.5 *What key performance measures are regularly reviewed by your senior leaders?*

- Forest based economic development impact (Graph 7.1-1)
- 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 loses (Graphs 7.1-8)
- Raise the Awareness About the Resource (Graph 7.1-9 & 7.1-10)
- Financial (Graphs 7.3-1 through 7.3-6, 7.3-8, 7.3-9)
- Employee turnover rates/ satisfaction (Graphs 7.4-1)

- Customer satisfaction levels for forest tree seedlings, forestry assistance, and services (Graphs 7.2-1; 7.2-2; 7.2-3)
- Health and Safety (Graph 7.4-2)

1.6 *How do senior leaders use organizational performance review findings and employee feedback to improve their own leadership effectiveness and the effectiveness of management throughout the organization? How do their personal actions reflect a commitment to the organizational values?*

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 this past year initiated additional employee recognition efforts.

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

The agency director conducted a series of meetings with senior leadership to devise and implement strategies for succession planning and to identify opportunities for developing future leaders. 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, accomplishment of strategic objectives, and innovation?*

Input on the 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.

1.9 *How does senior leadership actively support and strengthen the communities in which your organization operates? Include how senior leaders and employees contribute to improving those communities.*

The agency 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 7.3-9). Leadership and the agency also strengthen communities by supporting employee participation in professional and community organizations and associations, and by encouraging employees to monitor issues related to forestry at the local level. 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' involvement includes participation in and support of local fire, law enforcement, and forestry associations; participation in the United Way, Red Cross blood drives, various walk & bike-a-thons, Good Health Appeal, Easter Seals Buck-a-Cup, Palmetto Pride,

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 SCFC's strategic planning process involves collecting input and data from agency Commissioners, employees, customers, cooperators, and the public. Information/data is analyzed and its content verified, like issues consolidated, strategies identified, the plan developed and disseminated, with reviews and updates occurring as the plan is carried out.

As the plan has been reviewed and revised, efforts have been undertaken to more closely align the plan with the EPMS process and the Malcolm Baldrige National Award Criteria.

The Strategic Plan was updated this year. The process took several months. Meetings were held to request input and identify new issues from employees, State Advisory Board of County Forestry Boards, and stakeholders. Three meetings were held, one in each of the three SCFC administrative regions of the state. Cross sections of stakeholders were invited to each of these meetings to provide input on their main issues of concern for the agency.

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

The agency recently conducted a SWOT analysis with the assistance of Nathan Strong with the Office of Human Resources at the Budget and Control Board.

The outcome of this analysis has allowed the SCFC to focus on strengths, evaluate and take actions to minimize weaknesses, address threats, and take advantage of available opportunities. The following items address these issues:

To ensure their future health, South Carolina's forests must be protected from harm due to natural and human-caused factors. The agency will:

- Ensure prompt and effective response to wildfires and other natural disasters.
- Evaluate wildfire protection strategies, priorities and capabilities as urban development into forested areas creates additional hazards.
- Lead in law enforcement services in wildfire and forest product theft and fraud arenas
- Re-evaluate programs to ensure prompt response to insects, other forest pests, and disease outbreaks and concerns.
- Enhance water quality protection by increasing awareness and compliance with South Carolina Best Management Practices for Forestry (BMPs)

In order to enhance the resource, an ample, productive forest land base and an economic climate conducive to forestry-based business are essential if forest landowners of South Carolina are to practice sustainable forest management. The agency will:

- Serve as a catalyst for promotion, development and expansion of the forest resource and forestry-related industry in the state.
- Improve contacts and communication with state and local levels of government concerning forestry-related issues.
- Provide policy makers, the forestry community and the interested public accurate and timely information on the state's forest inventory and health of the forest.
- Provide landowners with optimum quality forest seedlings to meet needs not filled by the private sector.

Forest landowners, communities and the public expect the SCFC to deliver financial and technical assistance, while addressing social and environmental concerns. The agency will:

- Provide improved land management services to landowners of South Carolina.

- Administer reforestation programs and provide technical forest management assistance designed to meet landowners' goals.
- Provide technical, educational and financial assistance in urban and community forestry to local governments and organized groups living and working within established developing and populated areas.
- Use landholdings to demonstrate innovative forest management techniques as well as for in-house training and applied research.

We must raise the awareness among decision-makers and the public in general concerning the environmental and economic benefits of sound forest management. The agency will:

- Develop and promote forestry education programs for all audiences.
- Enhance the image of the SCFC as an initial source for forest management information and assistance in South Carolina.
- Utilize all media to reach targeted audiences with relevant forestry information.
- Increase interaction, cooperation, and communication with other state agencies, local governments, forestry organizations, universities, professional societies, environmental and conservation groups.

To meet future demands and provide quality customer service, the SCFC must have well-trained, qualified staff that enjoy a safe and rewarding work environment. The agency will:

- Strive to 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 operation safety training to reduce the number of accidents.

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

Specific financial, 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 or the regulatory environment:*

The SCFC evaluates staffing, equipment, and technology to ensure adequate response to all wildfires and other disasters within the scope of the SCFC's mission.

2.1d *Human resource 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 reductions 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 management services, and to implement succession planning strategies developed during the year.

2.1e *The opportunities and barriers you described in the Executive Summary.(question 4)*

The opportunities and barriers are addressed throughout the agency strategic plan's strategic objectives, goals, and action statements.

2.1f *Business 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. An agency Continuity of Operations plan is being developed in an effort to ensure continuity of essential functions in the event of a disaster. The agency cooperates with Emergency Management Division, fire departments, and other emergency response organizations. The SCFC seeks out opportunities to train and utilize private and/or non-traditional cooperators. An evaluation of staffing, equipment and technology is carried out to ensure adequate response to all wildfires and other disasters within in the scope of the SCFC’s mission.

Under the direction of the Southern Group of State Foresters, a Disaster Response Handbook is being compiled to provide a standard framework for addressing disasters and response.

2.1g *Your ability to execute the strategic plan.*

Efforts have been undertaken to more closely align the plan with the EPMS process and the Malcolm Baldrige National Award Criteria.

2.2 *What are your key strategic objectives? (Address in Strategic Planning Chart)*

The agency’s five key objectives are as follows:

- **Protect the Resource** – To ensure their future health, South Carolina’s forests must be protected from harm due to natural and human-caused factors.
- **Raise Awareness about the Resource** – The SCFC must raise awareness among decision-makers and the public in general concerning the environmental, social, and economic benefits of sound forest management.
- **Manage the Resource** – Forest landowners, communities, and the public expect the SCFC to deliver financial and technical assistance while addressing social and environmental concerns.
- **Enhance the Resource** – 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.
- **Prepare to Meet Future Demands** – To meet future demands and provide quality customer service, the SCFC must have a well-trained, qualified staff that enjoys a safe and rewarding work environment.

2.3 *What are your key action plans/initiatives? (Address in Strategic Planning Chart)*

To Protect the Resource, the SCFC will:

- Ensure prompt and effective response to wildfires and other natural disasters.
- Evaluate wildfire protection strategies, priorities and capabilities as urban development into forested areas creates additional hazards.
- Lead in law enforcement services in wildfire and forest product theft and fraud arenas.
- Re-evaluate programs to ensure prompt response to insects, other forest pests, and disease outbreaks and concerns.
- Enhance water quality protection by increasing awareness and compliance with South Carolina Best management Practices for Forestry (BMPs).

To Raise the Awareness about the Resource, the SCFC will:

- Develop and promote forestry education programs for all audiences.
- Enhance the image of the SCFC as an initial source for forest management information and assistance in South Carolina.
- Utilize all media to reach targeted audiences with relevant forestry information.
- Increase interaction, cooperation, and communication with other state agencies, local governments, forestry organizations, universities, professional societies, environmental and conservation groups.

To Manage the Resource, the SCFC will:

- Provide improved land management services to landowners of South Carolina.
- Administer reforestation programs and provide technical forest management assistance designed to meet landowners' goals.
- Provide technical, educational and financial assistance in urban and community forestry to local governments and organized groups living and working within established developing and populated areas.
- Use landholdings to demonstrate innovative forest management techniques, as well as for in-house training and applied research

To Enhance the Resource, the SCFC will:

- Serve as a catalyst for promotion, development and expansion of the forest resource and forestry-related industry in the state.
- Improve contacts and communication with state and local levels of government concerning forestry-related issues.
- Provide policy makers, the forestry community and the interested public accurate and timely information on the state's forest inventory and health of the forest.
- Provide landowners with optimum quality forest seedlings to meet needs not filled by the private sector.

To Prepare to Meet Future Demands, the SCFC will:

- Strive to 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 operation safety training to reduce the number of accidents.

2.4 *How do you develop and track action plans that address your key strategic objectives?*

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 in specific employees' EPMS planning stages, with managers and supervisors responsible for tracking progress. The action items are tied to performance measures.

2.5 *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 address below). 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. There is an effort underway to insure that all employees are aware of the progress being made on performance measures on a monthly and quarterly basis.

2.6 *How do you measure progress on your action plans?*

Action items are incorporated into planning stages and daily activities. Measurement is reflected in the employee's performance review and in the measures which have been developed for this accountability report. An example of this is 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."

2.7 *How do your strategic objectives address the strategic challenges you identified in your Organizational Profile?*

Those strategic challenges formed the basis for the SCFC's strategic plan objectives.

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

The web address for the agency's strategic plan is www.state.sc.us/forest/stratplan.htm.

2.9 Strategic Planning Chart:

Strategic Planning

Program Number and Title	Supported Agency Strategic Planning Goal/Objective	Related FY 03-04 Key Agency Action Plan/Initiative(s)	Key Cross References for Performance Measures*
II Forest Landowners Assistance Protection	Section III, Category 2, Question 2.2, #1. Protect the Resource	Section III, Category 2, Question 2.3, Protect the Resource #1 – 3 Section III, Category 2, Question 2.3, Raise the Awareness about the Resource, #4 Section III, Category 2, Questions 2.3, Prepare to Meet Future Demands, #1-3, 5-7	7.1-3, 7.1-4, 7.1-5, 7.1-6 7.1-8 7.3-2, 7.3-4
II Forest Landowners Assistance Forest Mgt.	Section III, Category 2, Question 2.2, #2 - 5	Section III, Category 2, Question 2.3, Enhance the Resource, #2 Section III, Category 2, Question 2.3, Manage the Resource #1 – 4 Section III, Category 2, Question 2.3, Raise Awareness about the Resource, #2, #4 Section III, Category 2, Question 2.3, Prepare to Meet Future Demands #1 – 4	7.2-2, 7.2-3 7.2-2
III State Forests	Section III, Category 2, Question 2.2, #2 – 5	Section III, Category 2, Questions 2.3, Manage the Resource #4	7.3-9, 7.1-11
Other Programs	Section III, Category 2, Question 2.2, #1 – 5	Section III, Category 2, Question 2.3, Enhance the Resource, #1 – 3 Section III, Category 2, Question 2.3, Protect the Resource, #4, 5 Section III, Category 2, Question 2.3, Manage the Resource, #5 Section III, Category 2, Question 2.3, Raise Awareness about the Resource, #1 – 4 Section III, Category 2, Questions 2.3, Prepare to Meet Future Demands, #1 – 7	7.1-1, 7.1-2 7.1-7 7.2-1 7.1-9, 7.1-10 7.3-1 thru 7.3-8 7.4-1, 7.4-2

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

CATEGORY 3 – CUSTOMER FOCUS

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

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
- Monitoring of Legislative Activities

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.

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, Southern Group of State Foresters, National Association of State Foresters, Emergency Management Division, South Carolina Forestry Association, many local landowner associations, professional organizations, and the South Carolina Firemen's Association.

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

Information about customer satisfaction and suggestions for improving services are reviewed by the senior leadership of the SCFC and disseminated to the appropriate program manager or field supervisor to implement improvements to the service or product

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

Customer satisfaction surveys regarding forest 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). 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 build positive relationships with customers and stakeholders? Indicate any key distinctions between different customer groups.*

Complaints are recorded and promptly investigated to determine where problems exist and 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 4th grade classes statewide. The SC Teacher's Tour is offered for graduate credit during the summer. (Graph 7.1-10)

CATEGORY 4 – INFORMATION AND ANALYSIS

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. Output measures were commonly used as a gauge of our activity levels. The agency's performance measurement system is constantly evolving and improving. More recently however, 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, and quality and outcome measures.

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 dedicated a significant amount of time and resources to developing, updating, and utilizing our strategic plan. Recently, we conducted a formal review and revision of the plan. Senior management determines which measures should be developed for internal use, and which measures will be reported annually.

4.2 How do you use data/information analysis to provide effective support for decision making 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 is utilized to encourage the continuation of positive processes and to improve less effective aspects of our operations.

4.3 What are your key measures, how do you review them, and how do you keep them current with business needs and direction?

Customer Satisfaction Surveys are reviewed by several levels of management. Dissatisfied customers are contacted immediately to obtain additional information and to determine if actions can be taken to improve their levels of satisfaction.

Implementation of BMP measures is constantly being monitored with field inspections by the Resource and Development 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 (Graph 7.1-1)
- 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)
- BMP Harvesting Compliance Trends (Graph 7.1-7)
- SPB Losses in SC (Graph 7.1-8)

Raise Awareness about the Resources

- Participation and Demand for Wood Magic and Teachers Tour (Graph 7.1-9 & 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)
- Agency Operating Funds from State General Funds (Graph 7.3-2)
- Voucher Transactions as a Result of Visa Card Usage (Graph 7.3-3)
- Agency Fuel Costs (Graph 7.3-4)
- Federal Grants (Graph 7.3-5)
- Declining Purchasing Power (Graph 7.3-6)
- 1-800 Charges per 10,000 Calls Received (Graph 7.3-8)

Employee Satisfaction, Involvement, and Development

- Employee Turnover Rate (Graph 7.4-1)
- Physical Fitness Program Participation (Graph 7.4-2)

Regulatory/Legal Compliance

- Smoke Management Notifications, Number and Average Call Length (Graph 7.5-1 & 7.5-2))

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

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. SCFC is the only southern forestry agency that tracks dispatch response times through a statewide real time computer aided dispatch system. The Southern Group of State Foresters 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 organizational 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, 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.

We are updating our Computer Assisted Dispatch System to improve data collection and analysis.

We undergo annual audits of financial records and processes. An internal auditor reviews 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. 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.

4.7 *How do you collect, transfer, and maintain organizational and employee knowledge (your knowledge assets)? How do you identify and share best practices?*

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 an annual report and a weekly bulletin, which is distributed to every employee. Critical positions, occupied by personnel with known retirement dates, are targeted for early hiring of replacements to facilitate transfer of knowledge.

CATEGORY 5 – HUMAN RESOURCES FOCUS

5.1 How do you organize and manage work: to enable employees to develop and utilize their full potential, aligned with the organization's objectives, strategies, and action plans; and to promote cooperation, initiative, empowerment, innovation and your desired organizational culture?

The SCFC accomplishes forest protection and management activities through technical units in the region and administrative support areas in the regional and headquarter offices. The directors and managers for most program areas are located in Columbia. Established goals and objectives are communicated with the technical staff at regional offices. The information is then communicated to supervisory staff and line employees. To facilitate the communication, monthly meetings are held with the remote staff as well as regional workers to communicate goals and objectives from headquarters. On a daily basis, firefighters operate as remote workers and communication and instructions for specific activities are received via telephone or dispatch.

Several agency activities are accomplished through the use of teams. For example, incident management teams, fire review teams, accountability report, and interview and selection. The use of teams allows collaboration and cooperation among work units.

Staff assigned to forest management activities have the opportunity to work independently planning and scheduling their work. There are regular meetings to facilitate communication of agency objectives, procedures and general information. The specialized areas in forest management provide the opportunity for foresters to work on forestry best management practices, forest inventory and analysis, forest health, urban and community forestry and forest stewardship.

The agency operates a compensation program under the State Human Resources Regulation guidelines. Employees may be awarded increases for additional skills and knowledge, performance, additional job duties or responsibilities and promotion. Compensation systems tied to the agency mission include increases for certification and bonuses for achieving physical fitness requirements.

The agency has been working on workforce planning strategies for several years in an attempt to transfer knowledge and skills. During the fiscal year, several employees were scheduled to exit employment under the TERI program. The agency made efforts to select replacement personnel for these positions early in order to allow time for the new employee to work with the outgoing TERI employee. Many of these were internal selections, which assisted in creating a work environment with opportunity for growth. In addition, to assist with developing employees to utilize their full potential, the agency has established career paths for forestry positions and has plans to establish career paths for additional job classifications.

5.2 How do you evaluate and improve your organization's human resource related processes?

The human resource related processes for the SCFC are designed to facilitate activities to achieve the agency's mission. Some of the regular human resources processes include recruiting and selection, benefits administration, safety, and compensation and payroll. The human resource processes are developed based on guidelines issued from the State Office of Human Resources, employment laws, other state offices (i.e. Retirement Systems, Employee Insurance, the State Accident Fund, etc.) Recruitment and selection efforts for the agency are handled through partnership with hiring managers and the human resources office, which provides administrative and technical support. There are some processes and tasks which are necessarily driven by regulations and provisos.

An administrative liaison is located in each regional office to facilitate the collection of human resource related paperwork. If the existing structure or process causes problems, the human resources staff will discuss with managers to assess possible modifications. The human resources department tries to work around regional and departmental schedules to communicate and retrieve necessary information.

5.3 *How do you identify and address key developmental and training needs, including job skills training, performance excellence training, diversity training, management/leadership development, new employee orientation and safety training? How do you evaluate the effectiveness of this education and training? How do you encourage on the job use of the new knowledge and skills?*

Program managers are asked to recommend changes to ongoing training programs and to identify new training needed. 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 national wildfire training standards and courses which are frequently updated. The Training Director schedules necessary training and maintains a database for each employee indicating training completed.

Hiring practices training is provided to all supervisors each year to ensure affirmative action policies are followed. All supervisory personnel are required to complete the Supervisory Practices course offered by OHR. Leadership development is encouraged by identifying and inviting key employees to participate in the Certified Public Manager and Associate Public Manager Programs as well as the Executive Institute. This year, the SCFC will also be conducting Professional Development workshops for all supervisors and program managers to improve their skills in working with citizens and local government leaders.

Training guides for new employees are completed to ensure that all agency and safety policies are understood and followed. All equipment operators must complete 'Fire Suppression Equipment Operator Essential Task Orientation' within 30 days of employment. Effectiveness of Wildland Firefighting, Incident Management, First Aid/CPR, Forest Technician and other courses is evaluated by testing.

Familiarity with new technology helps an employee complete his or her work more efficiently. Some technical coursework is mandated in order to meet Federal requirements (such as GIS mapping). The Deputy State Forester makes expectations clear to supervisors about training that is required to develop new skills. Expectations are included on employees' EPMS.

5.4 *How does your employee performance management system, including feedback to and from employees, support high performance and contribute to the achievement of your action plans?*

Employee performance is assessed and evaluated using the Employee Performance Management System (EPMS) designed for S. C. State government agencies. The system is designed to be a continuous 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 stated in measurable terms. Additional objectives may also be established for the employee to complete during the evaluation period. There should be ongoing communication between the employee and the manager concerning performance expectations. This is key in managing poor performance. The employee also is given the opportunity to improve on any performance discrepancies which may exist before the formal

evaluation is completed. The evaluation and appraisal interview are the main components of the yearly review process. The level of the employee's performance is evaluated as below, meets, exceeds or substantially exceeds on the previously established performance goals.

The success criteria for employees are currently established by managers and supervisors. Some criteria are established based on policy or they may be deadline driven. The agency is working on aligning individual employee's performance success criteria to stated strategic objectives.

Employees are recognized for performance accomplishments in the agency's weekly communication bulletin, in e-mail notices, bonuses and increases.

5.5 *How do you motivate your employees to develop and utilize their full potential?*

The agency is very supportive of employees in developing their potential. It is viewed as a win-win situation for the employee and the agency. The agency has employees enrolled in the Certified Public Manager (CPM) Program and the Executive Institute every year. Six employees have completed the CPM program; seven have completed the Executive Institute. These programs are designed for current and future leaders. Both programs allow on the job application of the learning by the participants.

Other efforts to encourage employee development are: the tuition assistance program, participation on incident management teams and fire details out of state, and progression through established career ladders. These efforts allow for professional development and benefit the agency simultaneously.

5.6 *What formal and/or informal assessment methods and measures do you use to determine employee well being, satisfaction, and motivation? How do you use other measures such as employee retention and grievances? How do you determine priorities for improvement?*

The SCFC evaluates and assesses employee well being, satisfaction and motivation through an analysis of data and information from a variety of sources. Some of the sources include turnover rate, workers compensation claims, employee staff meetings and lunches with roundtable discussion and exit interviews. Any employee problem or grievance is taken seriously. The problems or issues are reviewed to determine the root of the issue. Once the cause of the problem is determined, policies and procedures are reviewed to determine any necessary adjustment or modification. The outcome, positive or negative, is explained to the employee. Priorities for improvement are discussed and they are based on the agency achieving its primary goals.

5.7 *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. The training program for many employees includes First Aid/CPR, Driver Improvement, and an annual refresher for fire line employees on the use of a fire shelter.

The SCFC requires wildland firefighters to participate and encourages voluntary participation in the physical fitness program. Incentives to complete the physical fitness test are provided. More information on the Physical Fitness Program is in Section 7.4. The SCFC puts an emphasis on personal safety and has policies and procedures on the use of 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 that OSHA and state regulations are followed. An evacuation plan has been developed for each facility owned by the SCFC.

Facilities that allow public access have audible alarms on the doors, away from the main reception area. Dispatch Centers that do not require public access are kept locked after business hours for security. Exterior door locks have been replaced with keyless entry systems to maintain security with personnel turnover. Dispatch Centers have windows shuttered during major storm events and are equipped with emergency backup power and communications systems. Transportation in four wheel drive vehicles is made available to dispatchers during severe weather events.

The SCFC is currently developing a Continuity of Operations Plan, which will include preparedness for a pandemic and plans for creating employee awareness about pandemics and the COOP plan.

CATEGORY 6 – PROCESS MANAGEMENT

6.1 *What are your key processes that produce, create or add value for your customers and your organization? How do you ensure that these processes are used?*

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 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 7.3-8) and our response times 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, 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 actions to reduce the wildfire hazard. A community that takes actions to reduce the risk of wildfire becomes eligible to receive national recognition as a “Firewise Community USA”. This past fiscal year, Keowee Key in Pickens County became a recognized “Firewise Community USA”. Planning of homeowner and community leader education workshops is on-going throughout South Carolina. Five workshops were held last year with total attendance of over 340. Additional Firewise presentations were made at various conferences, including the annual meeting of the SC Prescribed Fire Council. Cooperative burning demonstrations were held with Clemson Extension Service. Presentations were made to Centex homes to encourage Firewise developments. SCFC personnel manned Firewise exhibits at the SC Horticulture Expo and the SC Firemen’s Convention. Coordinators 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, and to provide training for fighting fires 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.

Wildfire Prevention Teams

Four Wildfire Prevention Teams were deployed in historically high areas of wildfire occurrence. In the Coastal Region a team was headquartered out of the Moncks Corner office and concentrated its efforts around the Francis Marion National Forest. The teams deployed in the Piedmont Region focused efforts in Lexington, Oconee, Greenville and Pickens Counties while the Pee Dee Region team concentrated efforts in Williamsburg, Georgetown and Horry Counties. The mission was to inform the public about 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 the state.

Publications and products were developed and created with the message 'Think Before You Burn' to emphasize compliance with outdoor burning laws. This message was printed on posters, brochures, and table tents and distributed to local businesses, recycling centers, fire departments, and schools throughout the targeted areas. A 'Living with Fire' newspaper insert was distributed to the local newspapers serving these areas to help inform homeowners of the practices they can implement to make their homes Firewise.

Workshops were conducted for community leaders and homeowners in each of the targeted areas to provide them with information concerning wildfires, to demonstrate how to develop Firewise Communities, and to foster working cooperative relationships with local fire departments and community leaders.

On average compared to last year (2005), the number of debris burn fires this year (2006) decreased over the same three month period (December – February) by 24%.

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 7.3-7 & 7.3-8)

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 also cut the time required for each survey by providing the aircraft pilot a constant and continuous flight track throughout the survey.

Forest Management

The SCFC provides forest landowners with assistance in managing their forestland. 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 forest lands. 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. Four two-person crews measure plots to exacting national standards. The USDA Forest Service is required to check a minimum of 5% of our plot work to ensure quality control. (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.

In FY 05, a contract was signed with a vendor to provide technology to implement a forest inventory system and establish a central location for compilation and storage of data. This system has enabled the agency to greatly improve forest-wide planning, program budgeting and other essential functions.

In FY 06, the SCFC continued to progress with the upgrades to the forest inventory system. We have also signed a contract to start the development of a harvest scheduling model.

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 (Graph 7.3-9)

Sand Hills State Forest is one component of a recovery population in Chesterfield County of federally endangered Red Cockaded Woodpecker. A long range recovery goal of 127 red-cockaded woodpecker clusters has been set for Sand Hills Forest.

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 forestland. Some of these agencies, such as the Department of Natural Resources, own thousands of acres of land, while others like ETV own just a few hundred. SCFC foresters develop forest management plans for these properties, provide timber marking and cruising services, and assist in obtaining the best prices for forest products.

Seedling Production

The Nursery and Tree Improvement (N&TI) Section of the SCFC supplies forest landowners with high-quality forest tree seedlings. Approximately 7.3 million seedlings were produced during FY 06. A 10% customer survey is implemented annually as a feedback mechanism to direct future product design. Eighty-four 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
- Dry weather over much of SC, following planting season, reduced seedling survival for many landowners.
- Cutbacks in the N&TI program due to budget restraints have resulted in an increase in the number of recommendations for improved seedling selection and distribution.

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 for South Carolina forest landowners. Genetic development of new plant material will be

completed at the agency's Niederhof Seed Orchard in Jasper County. Cellfor seedling varieties will be grown at Taylor Nursery in Edgefield County.

Forestry Education

One of SCFC's primary missions has always been 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 employees on the state forests and in the Education & Information Technology Division continue to support the agency's popular Wood Magic and Teachers' Tour programs and produce technical and general informational materials on forestry and forest-related subjects. With fewer staff available for direct classroom instruction, 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. (Graph 7.1-9 & 7.1-10)

6.2 *How do you incorporate organizational knowledge, new technology, changing customer and mission-related requirements, 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 are planned to improve 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.

6.3 *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 should reduce the process time (Graphs 7.5-1 & 7.5-2) and increase 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 (Graph 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 7.3-8)

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 cooperator in the 2006 National Aerial Photography Program (NAPP). NAPP is a US Geological Service program for obtaining 1:40,000 scale, color infrared, aerial photography in a "leaf off" state. Between January and April 2006, 75% of the state was acquired and the remaining 25% (consisting of rejected photos or areas that leafed out prior to completion in 2006) will be acquired in 2007. This flight will replace photography of South Carolina taken in 1999. The SCFC is working with the Department of Natural Resources to have a state contract issued to produce prints from the 2006-2007 flight for various program applications. Digital Orthophoto Quarter Quads (DOQQs) will be produced from this photography and distributed to field personnel as it becomes available. DOQQs can be 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.

Another measure is successful recovery of the federally endangered red cockaded woodpecker population in Chesterfield County. A long range recovery goal of 127 red-cockaded woodpecker clusters has been set for Sand Hills Forest.

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.

During FY 06, second generation loblolly cones were collected and sold from our seed orchard and seed were also processed for our own use.

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. Program changes are constantly being considered and made based on these participant evaluations.

Pre- and post-test are given to participants 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. (Graph 7.1-9 & 7.1-10)

6.4 *How do you systematically evaluate and improve your key product and service related processes?*

Forest Management

Customer surveys are sent out following services work or delivery of management plans. (Graph 7.2-2 & 7.2-3) Responses are returned directly to the regional forester and analyzed, with particular attention given to any negative responses. Contacts are made with landowners to review responses and correct any problems with service delivery. Beginning in FY 07, we will analyze customer survey responses to develop initiatives for program improvements in services and management plan development and delivery.

6.5 *What are your key support processes, and how do you 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. Steps are underway to offer sales of state forest recreational permits and Nursery and Tree Improvement seedlings through the *SC.gov* Internet portal.

The Information Systems group is responsible directly and indirectly for the maintenance and support of the agency's wide area network, 10 Windows NT Servers, 8 Windows 2003 Servers, and over 200 computer users and their software applications. A major effort began in FY 04 to replace all computers and servers from Microsoft Windows NT 4.0 operating system and upgrade computers and software to meet the State CIO's South Carolina Enterprise Architecture standards. This effort continued in FY 06 with a large majority of the agency's 5-7 year old, Windows NT 4.0 computers being replaced or upgraded to Windows XP. A goal was established to reduce the agency's replacement cycle for computers from 5-7 years to 3-5 years.

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 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 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 four individuals are enrolled in the Certified Public Manager Program.

In FY 06, 134 training sessions were held for agency personnel. Additionally, the SCFC held 19 Fire Management sessions for 112 non-SCFC personnel, mostly from local fire departments. Three Certified Prescribed Fire Manager courses were taught for 150 individuals, most were not agency employees.

The SC Emergency Management Division conducted a statewide full-scale Hurricane response exercise in June 2006. The SCFC Incident Management Team (IMT) is responsible for managing the Logistical Staging Area (LSA). An objective of the exercise is to run the LSA, the state's distribution point in handling the relief supplies such as water, food (MREs), ice and tarps to be shipped to the counties affected by the disaster. A simulated LSA was conducted in the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) and nine members of the SCFC IMT performed the functions of fulfilling requests from the operations desk and working with the Logistics Cell in improving and clarifying the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for the LSA. Modifications in the forms utilized and clarification in the SOP by the SCFC IMT with the personnel running the Logistics cell were positive outcomes of the exercise.

Accounting, Procurement and Human Resources

Accounting, Procurement and Human Resources are essential support processes to firefighting and other field personnel. The staffs of these departments continually monitor existing processes and procedures. We work with the State Auditor's and Materials Management Offices, as well as the Office of Human Resources on audits to update and improve current processes.

CATEGORY 7 – BUSINESS RESULTS

7.1 What are your performance levels and trends for the key measures of mission accomplishment and organizational effectiveness?

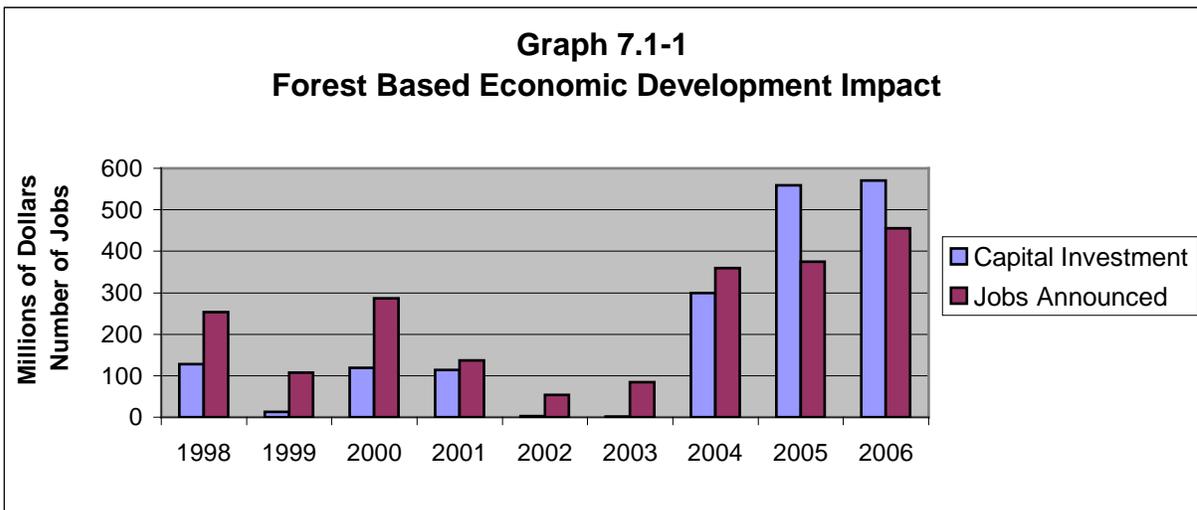
Enhance the Resource

Forest industry development and investment reached a new high during FY 06, with 7 announcements totaling \$570 million of capital investment and 455 new jobs. (Graph 7.1-1) International Paper Company announced a \$200 million modernization of its Georgetown paper mill. The upgrade is part of the company’s plan to focus on manufacturing uncoated paper and packaging products. Kimberley-Clark announced the addition of a paper machine at its Beech Island plant near Aiken. The \$200 million capital investment will result in an additional 150 jobs. Tech-Wood, a Dutch manufacturer, announced plans to invest \$150 million in a new operation in Greenwood that will manufacture wood-plastic composite products. Its decking and siding products are 70% pine fiber and 30% polypropylene. Agency personnel worked on a total of 14 forest-product related economic development projects during the year.

The SCFC initiated a Forest Sustainability Study with Bob Abt of N.C. State University to model the impact of industry expansion on the forest resource. 4.6 million tons of new wood consumption and a dramatic decline in tree planting since 2000 have caused concern that the state’s future pulpwood supply is over-committed. Based on the Southeastern Regional Timber Supply Model (SERTS), South Carolina’s pulpwood supply is projected to peak in 2008 after which it declines 22% by 2020. The projection for sawtimber is much more positive, with inventory growing 25% throughout the study period.

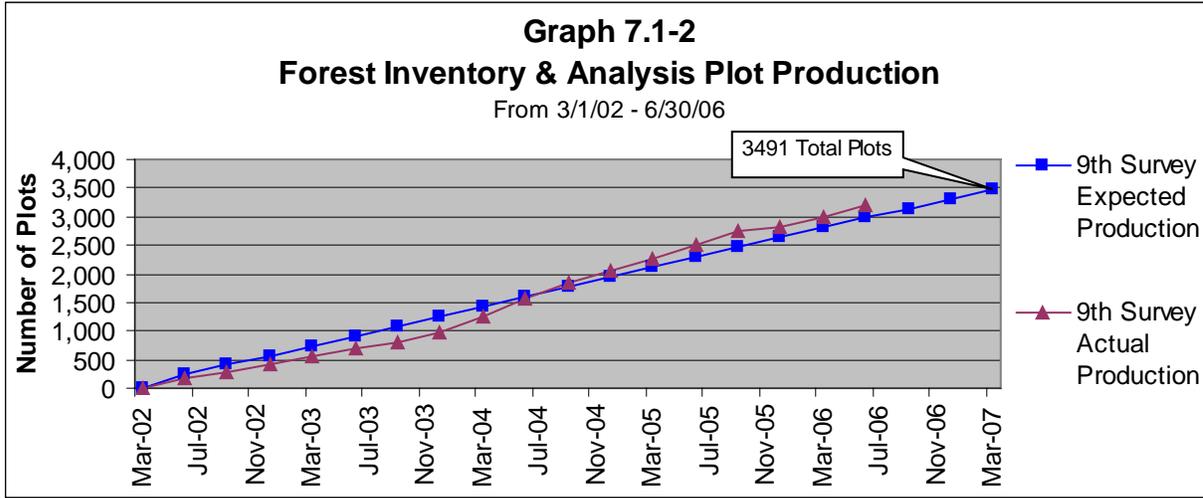
Based on the SERTS projections, the SCFC worked w/ Fisher Communications to develop a landowner outreach campaign to encourage tree planting on private lands. The campaign includes landowner meetings, radio spots, billboards, and direct-mailing. Presentations have been made to both industry and private groups.

During FY 06, the SCFC Resource Development Division represented the agency and forestry community through 10 statewide and regional economic development organizations. The SCFC has taken a lead role in the SC Competitiveness Initiative representing the forestry clusters. Finally, 184 individual business assists were made to address single-issue requests.



In FY 06, the SCFC’s Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) program completed 703 FIA plots. The FIA program is currently 92% completed with the 9th survey of South Carolina, as illustrated in Graph 7.1-2.

The FIA program is currently fully staffed with four two-person crews located across the state. If funding and staffing remain constant, expected completion of the 9th survey is December, 2006. Data for the 9th survey will be available online by Summer, 2007.



Protect the Resource

SUMMARY AND COMPARISON OF DISPATCH TIMES FOR FISCAL YEAR 1999 through 2006

	Average Minutes							
	FY 99	FY 00	FY 01	FY 02	FY 03	FY 04	FY 05	FY 06
Dispatching ¹	6.11	5.68	5.42	6.27	5.12	5.10	6.33	4.18
Contact Establish ²	4.39	4.14	4.00	3.09	4.15	4.18	3.83	4.47
Rolling ³	4.38	4.37	3.97	3.69	4.13	3.83	4.22	4.11
Enroute ⁴	8.32	8.40	7.72	6.06	7.92	7.95	7.10	8.44
Travel ⁵	24.48	23.60	23.03	22.60	22.49	22.39	22.11	20.09
Response ⁶	36.92	35.05	34.40	34.80	35.70	33.57	35.19	32.45

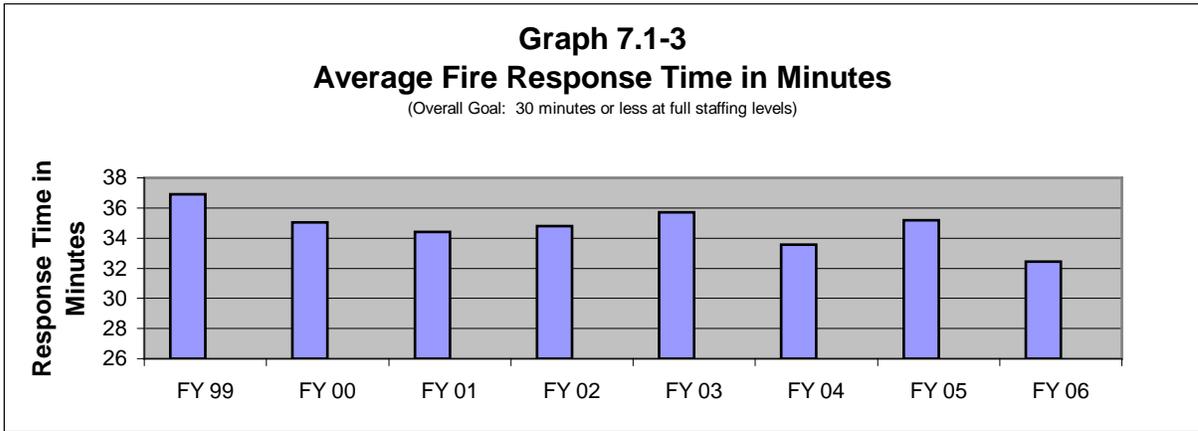
The chart above shows various benchmarks in the process of responding to a wildfire. With the implementation of the new CADS, average time from receiving the wildfire call and assigning a firefighter to it has been reduced by 2.15 minutes. The average travel time to a wildfire has also decreased by 2 minutes.

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.

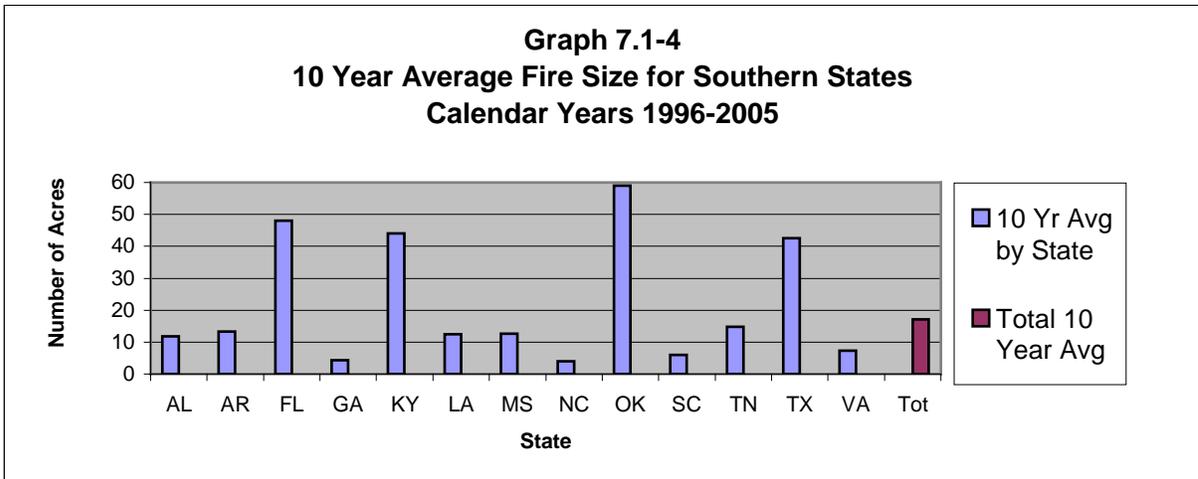
Internally we measure the different segments of response time and strive to improve each segment with a goal of reducing overall response time to 30 minutes or less at full staffing levels. Graph 7.1-3 illustrates that our average response time for FY 06 was 32.45 minutes. This constitutes a 2.75 minute drop in the statewide average response time in FY 06 compared to FY 05. Since we are currently not operating at full staffing levels we have had to realign our

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

workforce in order to respond in a timely manner. As seen by this year's figures we have been successful in maintaining a reasonable response time, but have not yet met our goal of 30 minutes primarily due to past budget cuts and reductions in staffing.

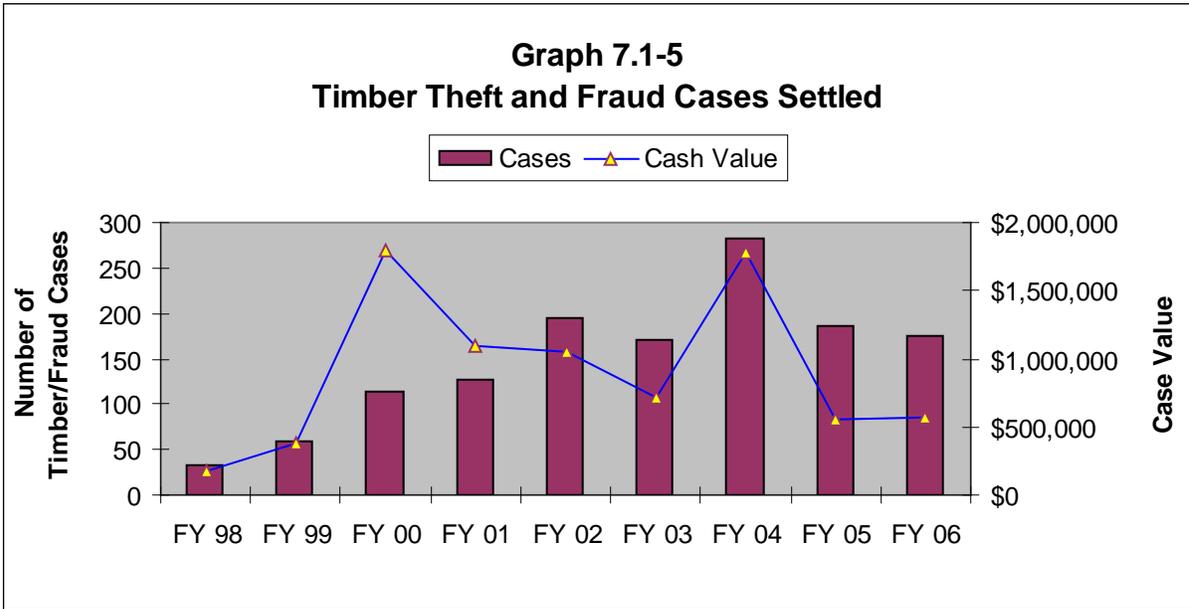


The SCFC measures and compares the average fire size on state and private lands with twelve other southern states. The 10-year average fire size is 17.1 acres per fire for the thirteen southern states. South Carolina has the third lowest 10-year average fire size with 6.1 acres per fire as shown in Graph 7.1-4.



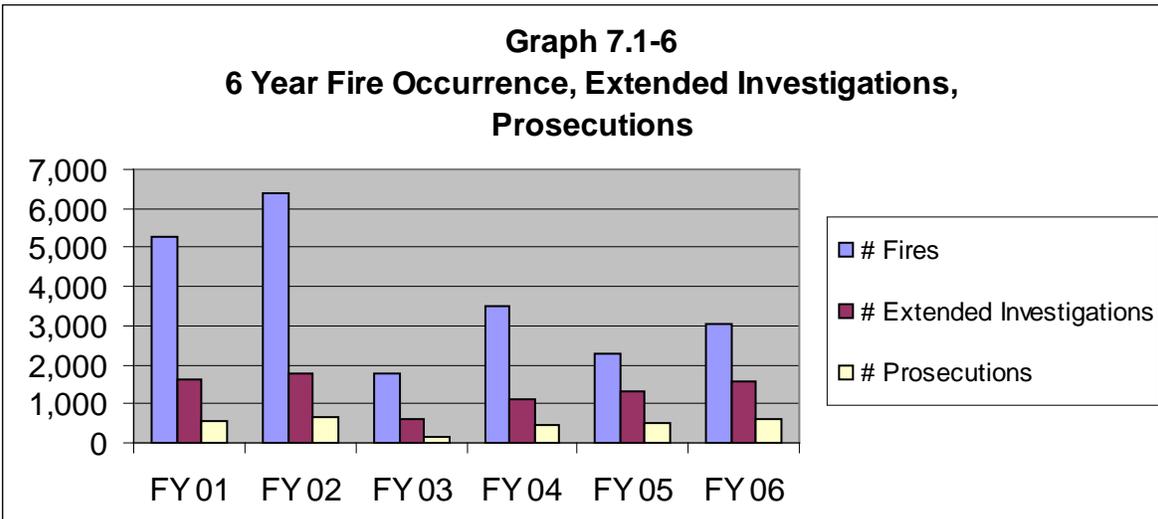
The Law Enforcement Program strives to reduce woods arson and forest product theft and fraud. The program reinforces fire prevention efforts through the enforcement of state fire laws. During FY 06, the agency had 34 commissioned officers, including 4 full-time investigators.

Sustained, aggressive enforcement of timber transaction laws resulted in a 13% reduction in the number of reported cases of timber theft/fraud. (Graph 7.1-5) The SCFC's Law Enforcement Program serves as a benchmark for our neighboring states, which currently do not actively investigate timber theft cases.

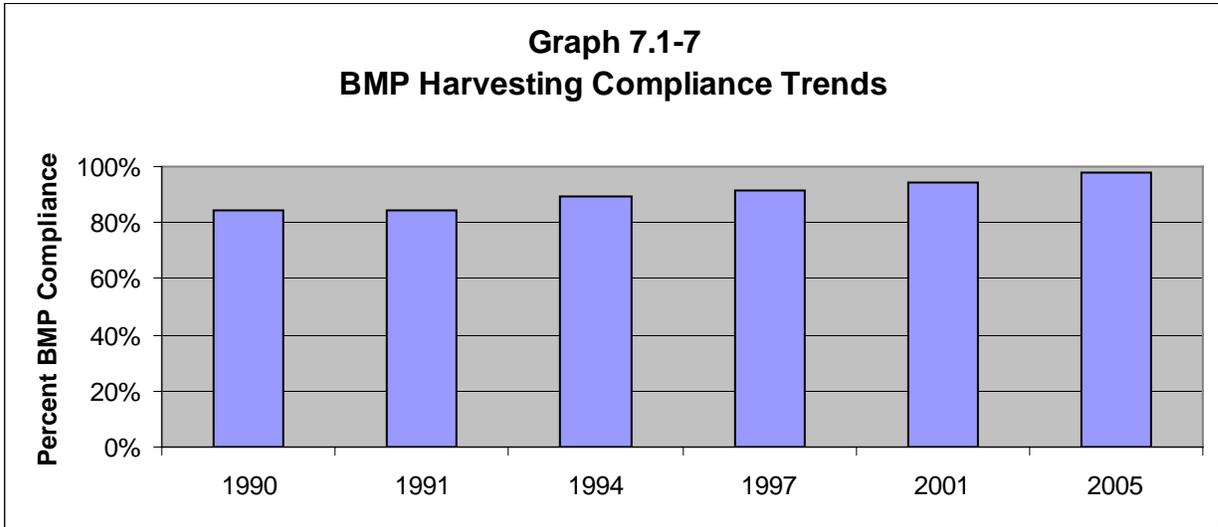


One of the most effective methods of preventing wildland fires is to investigate every fire and prosecute law violators. (Graph 7.1-6) Our forest wardens are the first line of defense, conducting preliminary cause and origin determination on fires they suppress. If there is a violation or need for further investigation, a SCFC officer or investigator is called in to conduct a more extensive investigation and make charges if warranted.

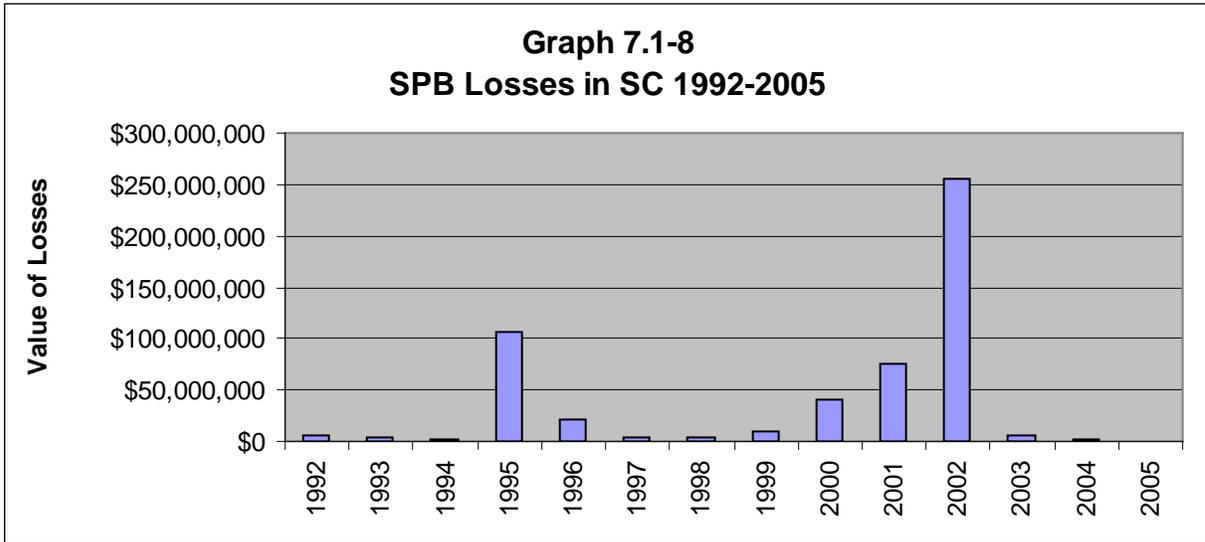
Despite a light fire season, fire investigations and prosecutions increased significantly. Strong emphasis on law enforcement yielded 596 fire law prosecutions; 92 litter and environmental cases, 76 violations of state forest regulations, and two miscellaneous cases. In addition, five adults and two juveniles were charged with a total of 24 counts of woods arson.



Graph 7.1-7 shows compliance with harvesting Best Management Practices from previous surveys. Compliance for harvesting BMPs was 84.5% in 1990, 84.7% in 1991, 89.5% in 1994, 91.5% in 1997, and 94.0% in 2001. Compliance with harvesting BMPs rose to 98.0% in the most recent survey, completed in 2005. Compliance is determined by in-depth evaluation of 200 randomly-selected harvesting operations throughout the state.



The Southern Pine Beetle (SPB), endemic to SC, builds to epidemic levels on a 5 to 10 year cycle. Since 1995, SC has suffered the two worst outbreaks on record, with losses exceeding a half-billion dollars. Losses in 2005 were less than \$550,000. (Graph 7.1-8) Over the past year, SCFC developed a southern pine beetle prevention program designed to reduce losses on privately owned forest lands, with a focus on implementation of practices to keep pine stands healthy. More than 120 landowners have signed up to implement practices on over 6,300 acres.



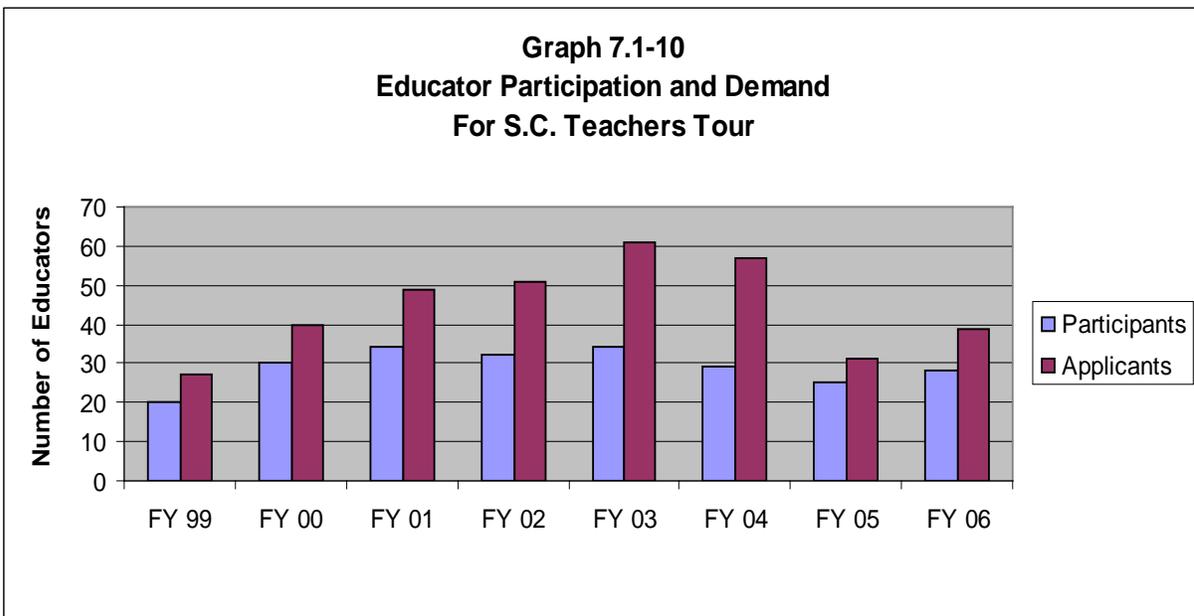
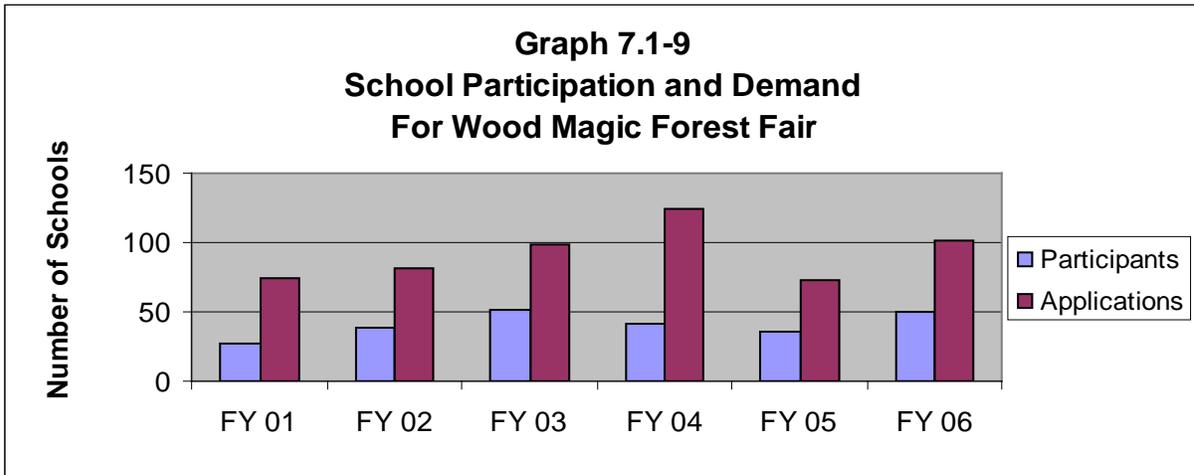
Raise Awareness about the Resource

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 S.C. Teachers Tour. Each of these programs has a multiplier effect. By training educators, we are continuously reaching thousands of students in return.

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.

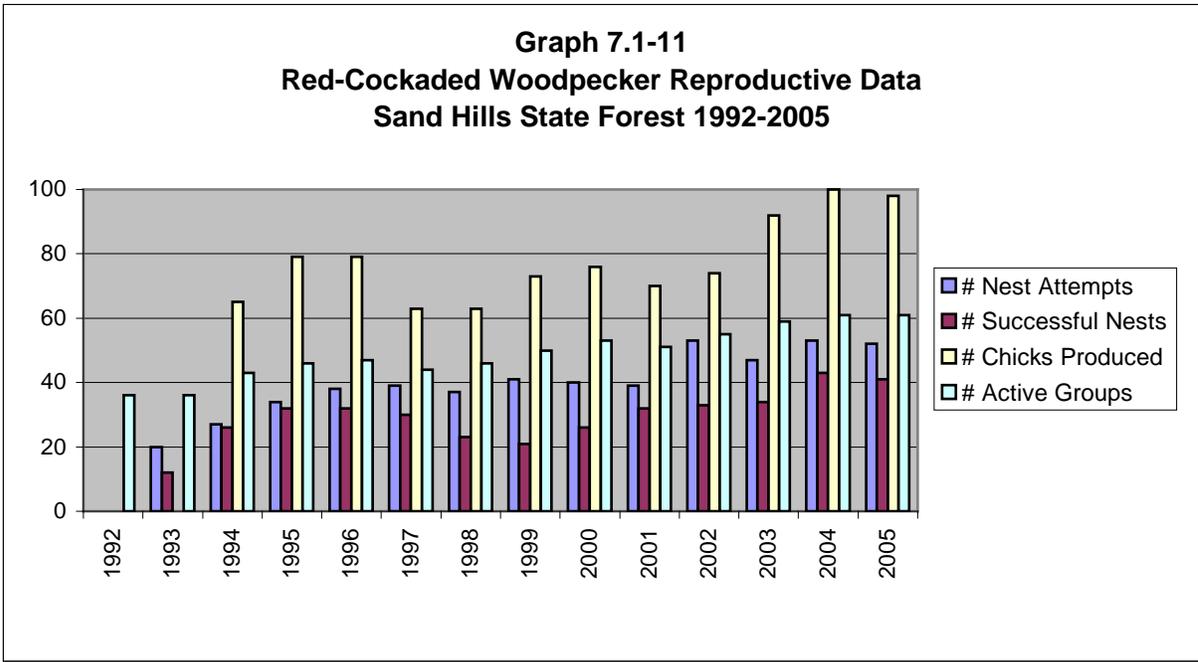
In recent years, interest in and applications for both the Teachers Tour and the Forest Fair have exceeded the number of programs we were able to offer. The primary limiting factor is the

growing scarcity of qualified instructors due to SCFC and cooperator staff reductions and budget restraints. (Graph 7.1-9 and 7.1-10)



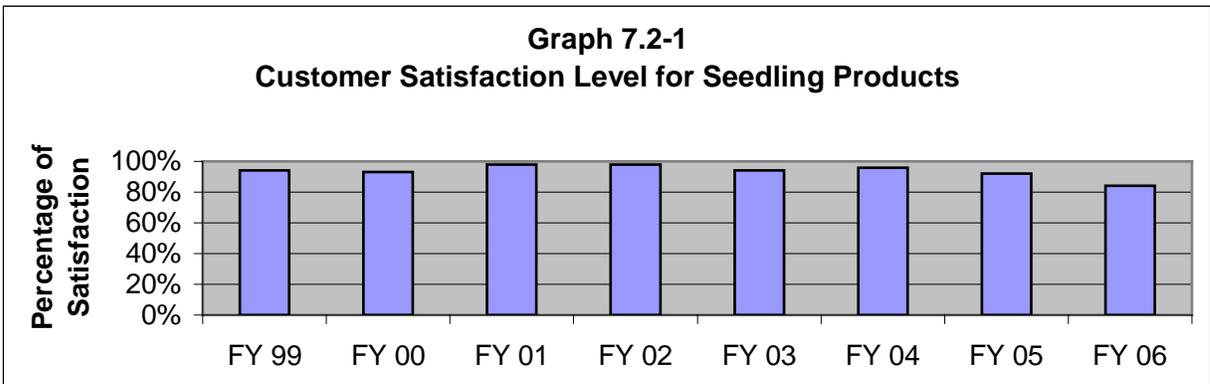
Sand Hills State Forest is one component of a recovery population in Chesterfield County of federally endangered Red Cockaded Woodpecker. In cooperation with SC DNR biologists, habitat for this species on the state forest is managed to improve conditions for nesting and foraging. Management activities 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 Forest.

Graph 7.1-11 shows species reproductive trends from 1992-2005. The number of active woodpecker groups on Sand Hills State Forest has increased from 36 groups in 1992 to 61 groups in 2005. Results from the 2006 nesting season were not available for this report.

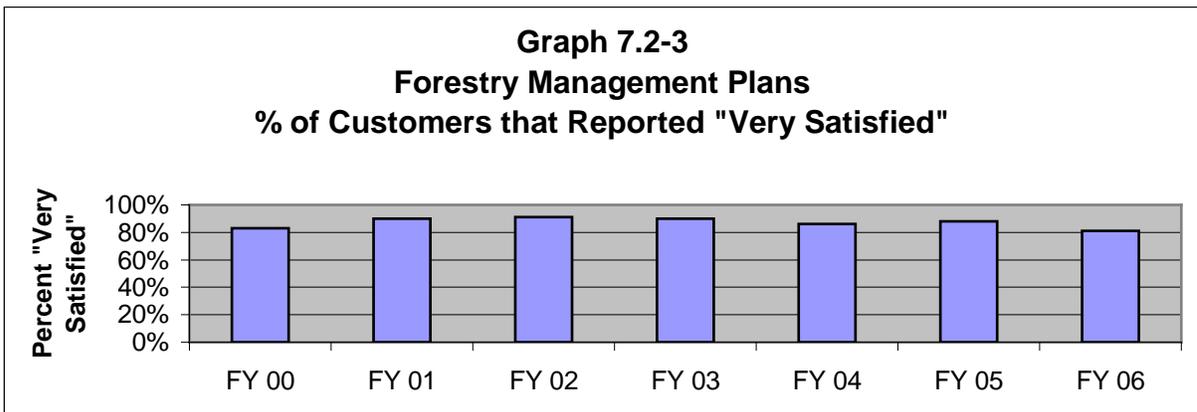
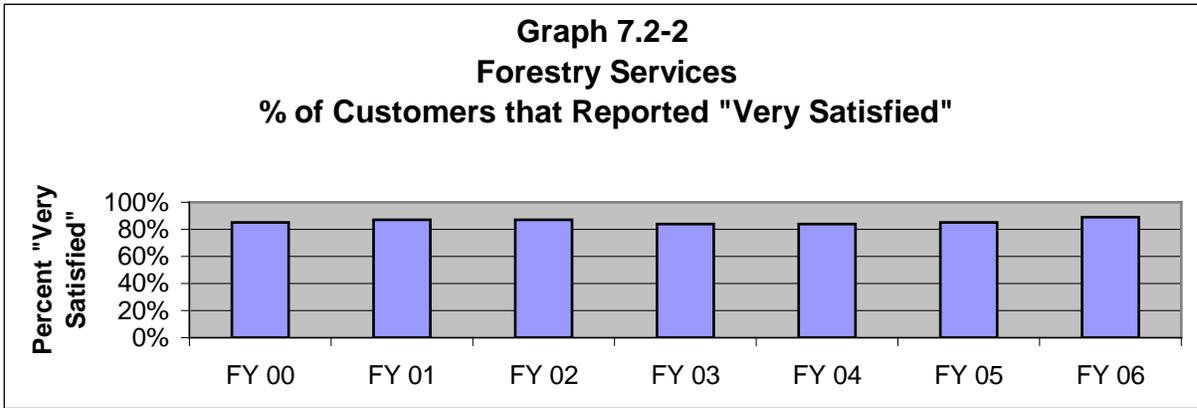


7.2 What are your performance levels and trends for the key measures of customer satisfaction?

In 1998 we began measuring customer satisfaction with our forest tree seedling products. Until this year, the combined satisfaction levels have ranged from 92% to 98% as illustrated in Graph 7.2-1. In FY 06, 84% of our customers stated that they were either very satisfied or satisfied with the overall quality of the products and services provided by the Nursery and Tree Improvement Section of the Commission. We routinely review comments on returned surveys looking for ways to improve our product and delivery systems. 12% of the comments identified poor seedling survival, as a result of drought, as their primary concern.

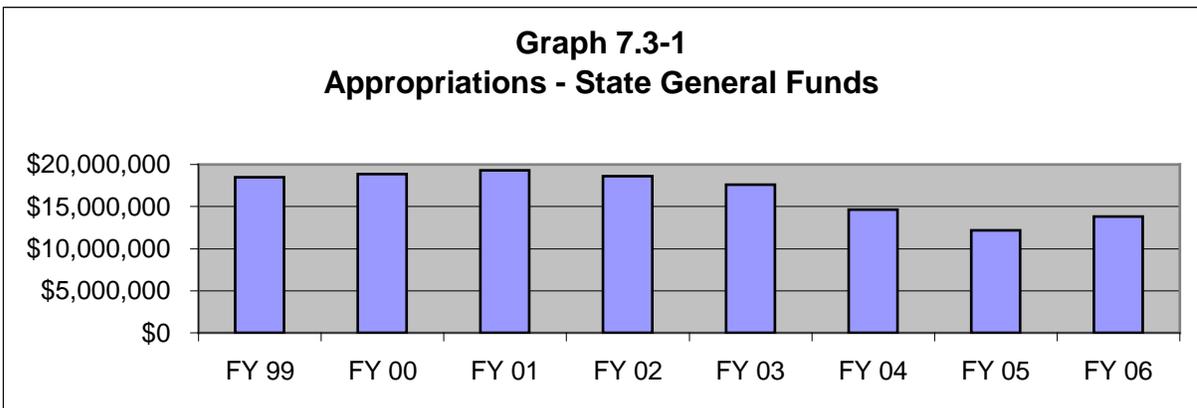


In 1999 we began measuring customer satisfaction levels with our forestry services and our technical forest management assistance. Graphs 7.2-2 and 7.2-3 illustrate overall satisfaction levels. Our immediate goal is to improve our forestry services to the 95% satisfaction level. We feel this is a very reasonable and attainable goal.

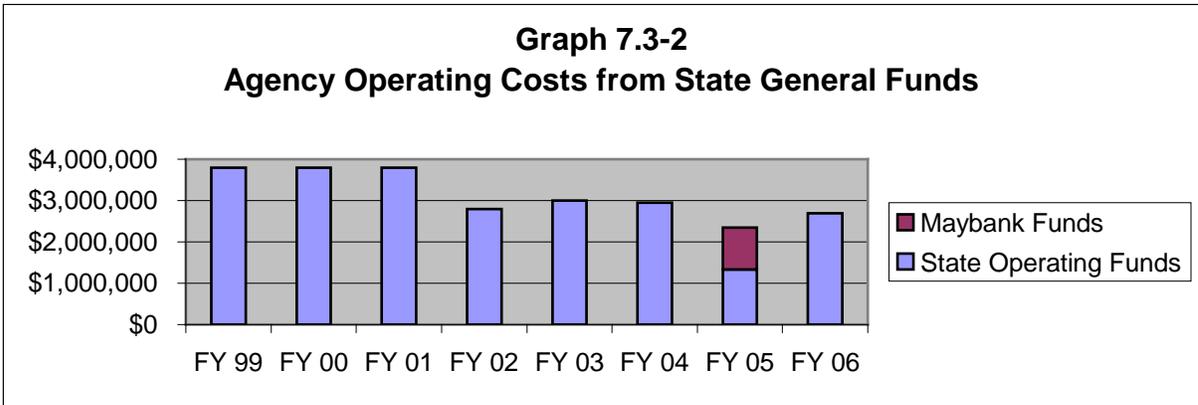


7.3 What are your performance levels for the key measures of financial performance?

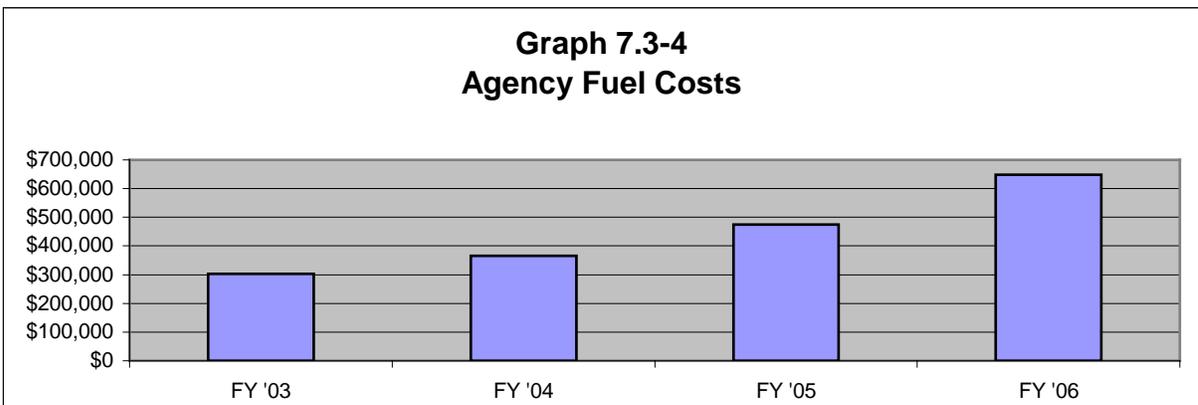
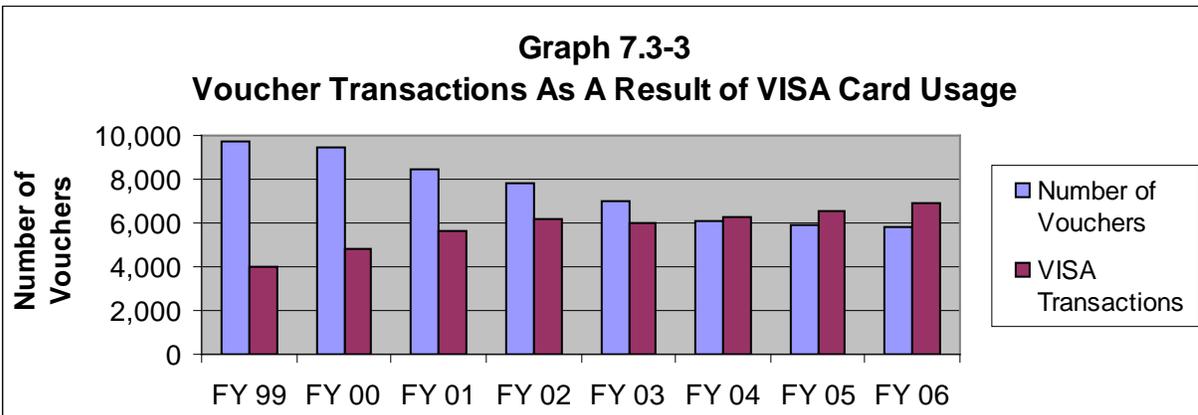
The SCFC’s recurring State Appropriated funds have been cut from \$19,742,565 in FY 02 to \$13,840,924 in FY 06 (Graph 7.3-1). Total base budget and mid year budget cuts total \$8.3 million. With the majority of state appropriated funds being used for salaries and benefits, the agency has had a corresponding reduction in its workforce (Section II, 1 and 3).

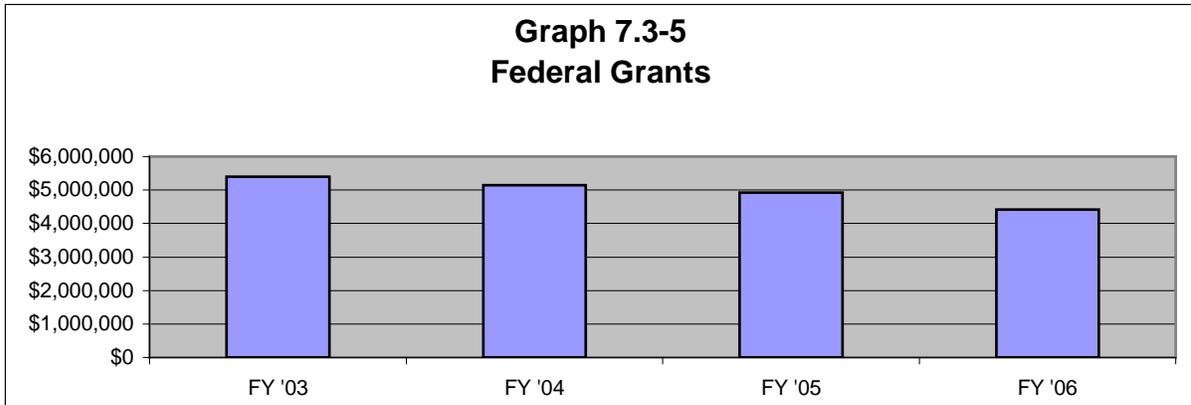


Agency operating funds from state general funds also have been reduced significantly (Graph 7.3-2). Approximately 405 of regional operating budgets represent fuel costs. With fuel costs having increased 113% in the past three years (Graph 7.3-4), regional operating budgets have become very strained. 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 7.3-5)

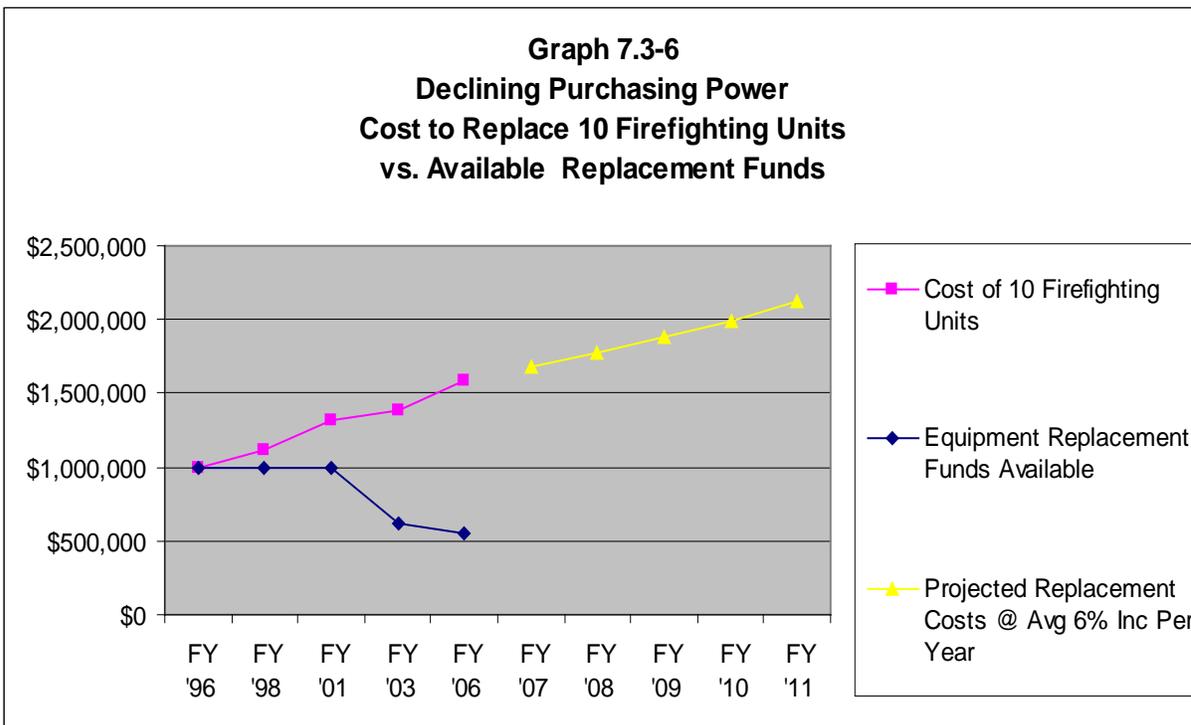


With the increasing use of the State Procurement Card (VISA) for the purchase of supplies, the Agency has been able to reduce its number of voucher transactions by approximately 50% since the card's inception. Because of this reduction, the number of positions needed in Accounts Payable has also been reduced accordingly. (Graph 7.3-3)





In 1996 the Legislature appropriated funding for 15 year replacement cycle for firefighting equipment. With the increasing cost of equipment and past budget cuts, the Agency’s purchasing power for firefighting units has declined significantly over the past ten years. While the cost of a firefighting unit has increased approximately 60%, the funds available for purchasing units have decreased 45%. (Graph 7.3-6)

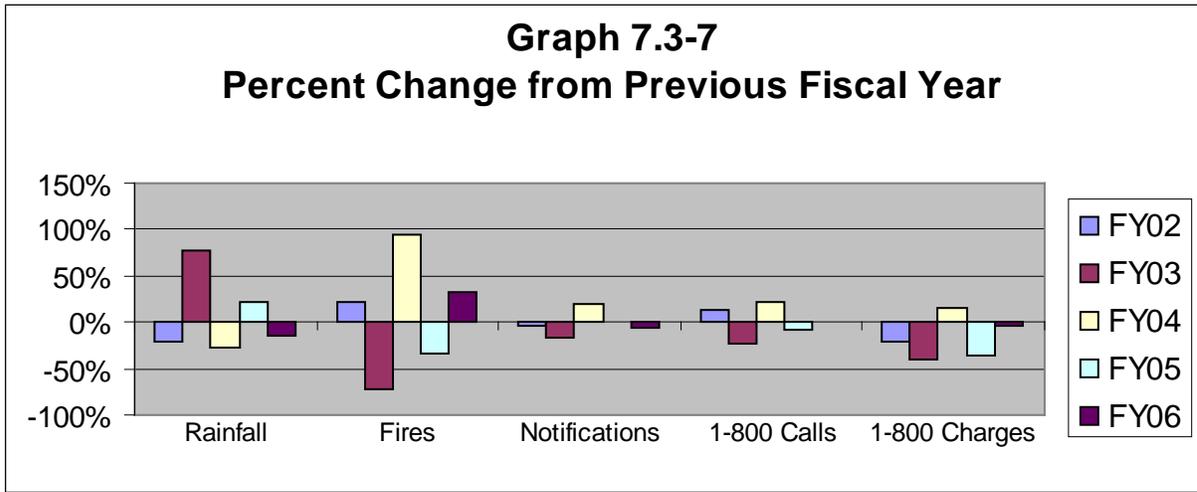


In FY 02, the SCFC began routing all burning notifications, except those for forestry, wildlife and agricultural purposes, to an automated notification system. This greatly improved efficiency in handling these calls, dispatchers’ handling of other calls, and it produced substantial savings in 1-800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

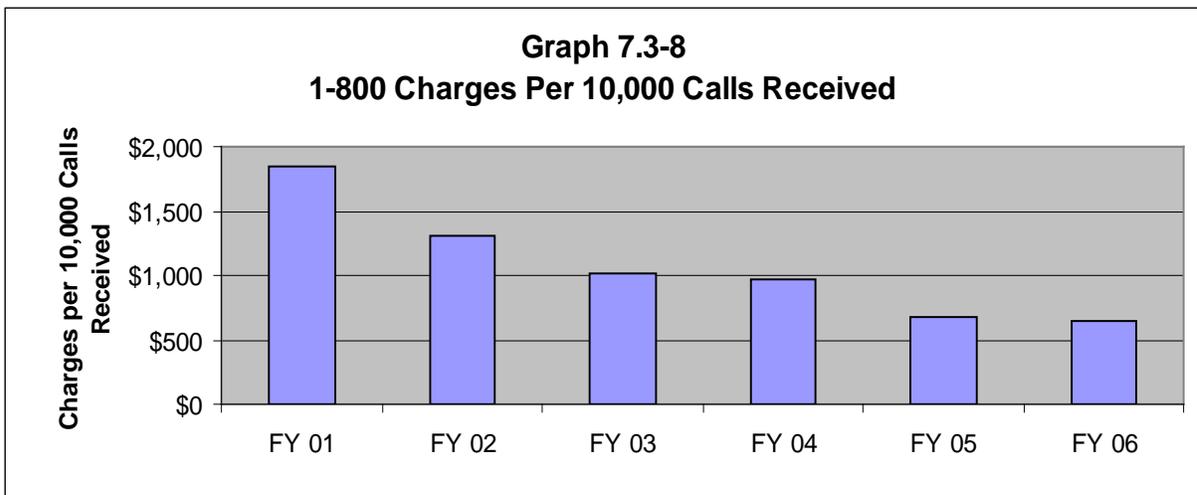
Graph 7.3-7 shows the percent change from the previous fiscal year in the amount of rainfall, number of fires, number of burning notifications, number of 1-800 calls, and charges for those 1-800 calls. A reduction in rainfall normally produces an increase in fires. An increase in notification normally increased 1-800 calls.

The SCFC was able to achieve a 20 to 40% reduction in 1-800 charges *each* year (except in FY 04) since implementing changes in FY 02. In FY 04, rainfall decreased by 28%, fires increased

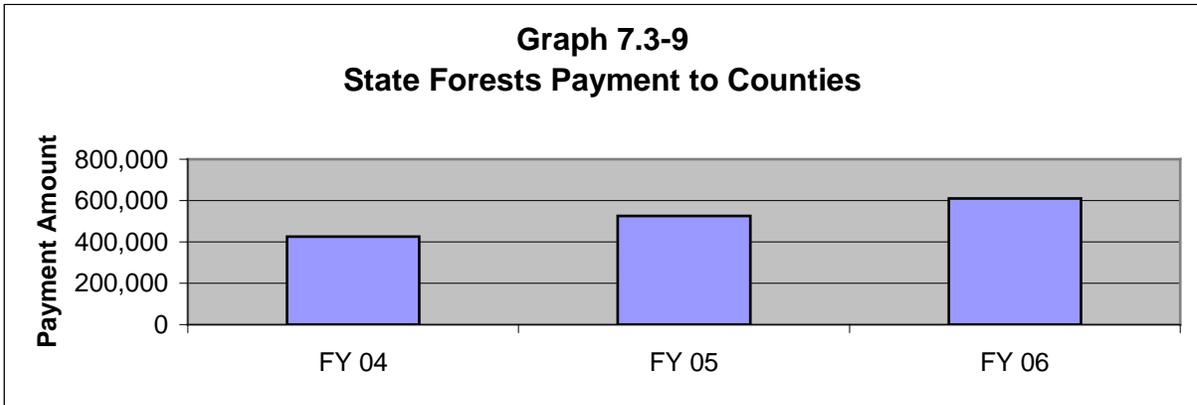
by 94%, notifications by 20%, and 1-800 calls by 22%; but 1-800 charges only increased by 16% compared to the previous year.



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 7.3-8 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 and monitoring call length to improve a dispatcher’s efficiency and effectiveness in handling calls has caused a decrease in cost each fiscal year.

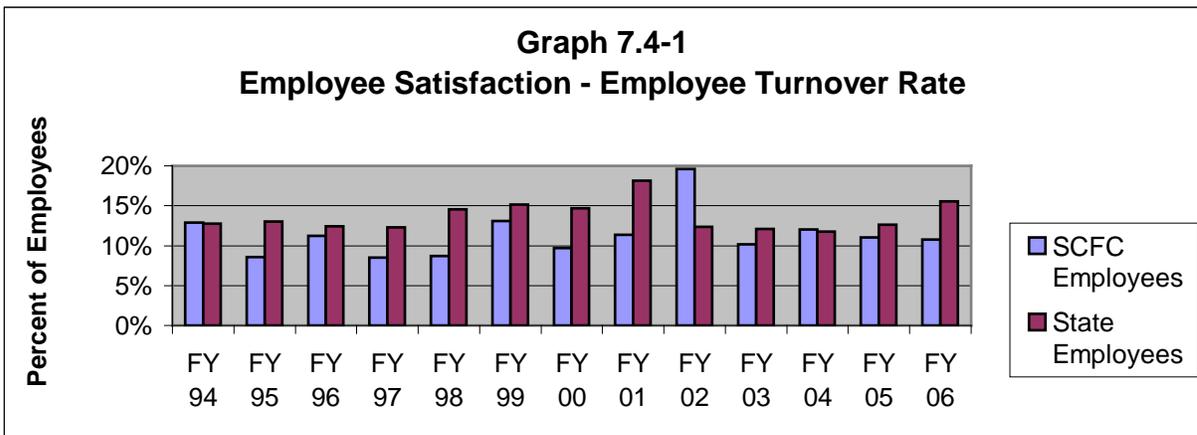


The SCFC is the only state agency that shares revenue produced from state owned lands with the counties where the properties are located. Twenty-five percent of all revenue that the agency receives from use of the land or products sold, such as timber or pine straw, is returned to the county to support local education systems. Based on receipts received during FY 06, over \$600,000 was recently distributed to eleven counties. Chesterfield and Sumter counties received the largest payments of over \$240,000 each (Graph 7.3-9).



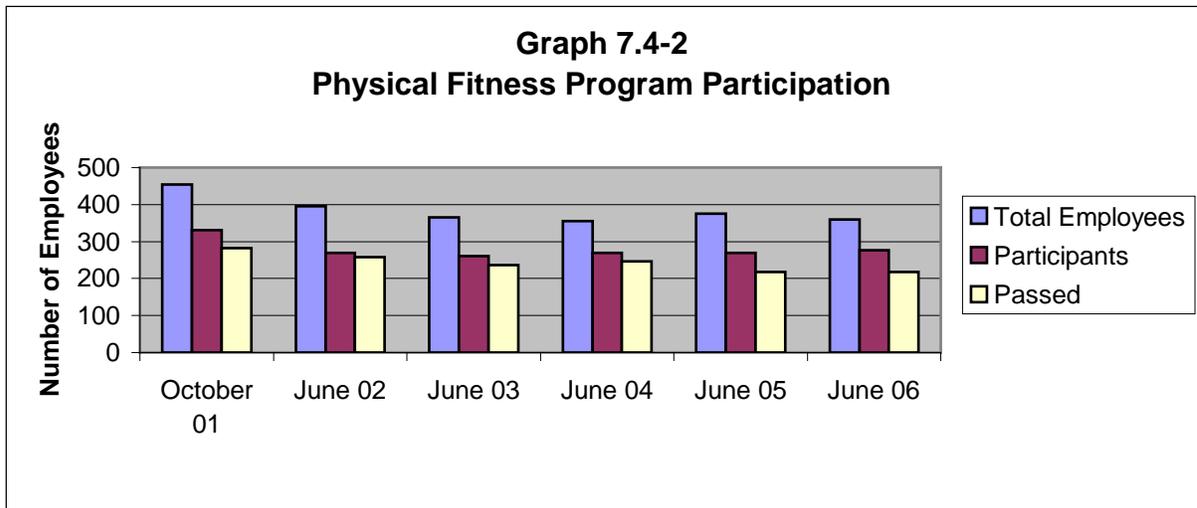
7.4 What are your performance levels and trends for the key measures of Human Resource Results?

The turnover for the agency is consistently lower than the turnover for all state employees. The agency’s turnover for FY 06 is 10.77%. The TERI program participants greatly affected the turnover rate; 59% of the separations were due to retirement. (Graph 7.4-1)



The Southern Group of State Foresters has adopted the moderate level work capacity test (walking 2 miles with a 25-lb. pack in 30 minutes or less) as the standard to measure wildland firefighter physical fitness. Several states have begun implementation of physical fitness programs to reach this goal. The SCFC is involved with this effort.

Participation in the Physical Fitness Program is required for all fireline employees and for those that volunteer to assist with fireline duties. Graph 7.4-2 shows that the total number of employees and number of fireline employees have been significantly reduced due to mandated budget cuts since 2001. The percentage of employees passing the test dropped from 91% to 81% in 2005 when the two mile walk with 25 lb. pack was fully implemented. (Prior to 2005, the walk did not require a pack, or was only one mile with a pack.) The percentage of employees passing remained fairly constant in 2006 with 79% passing the fitness test.



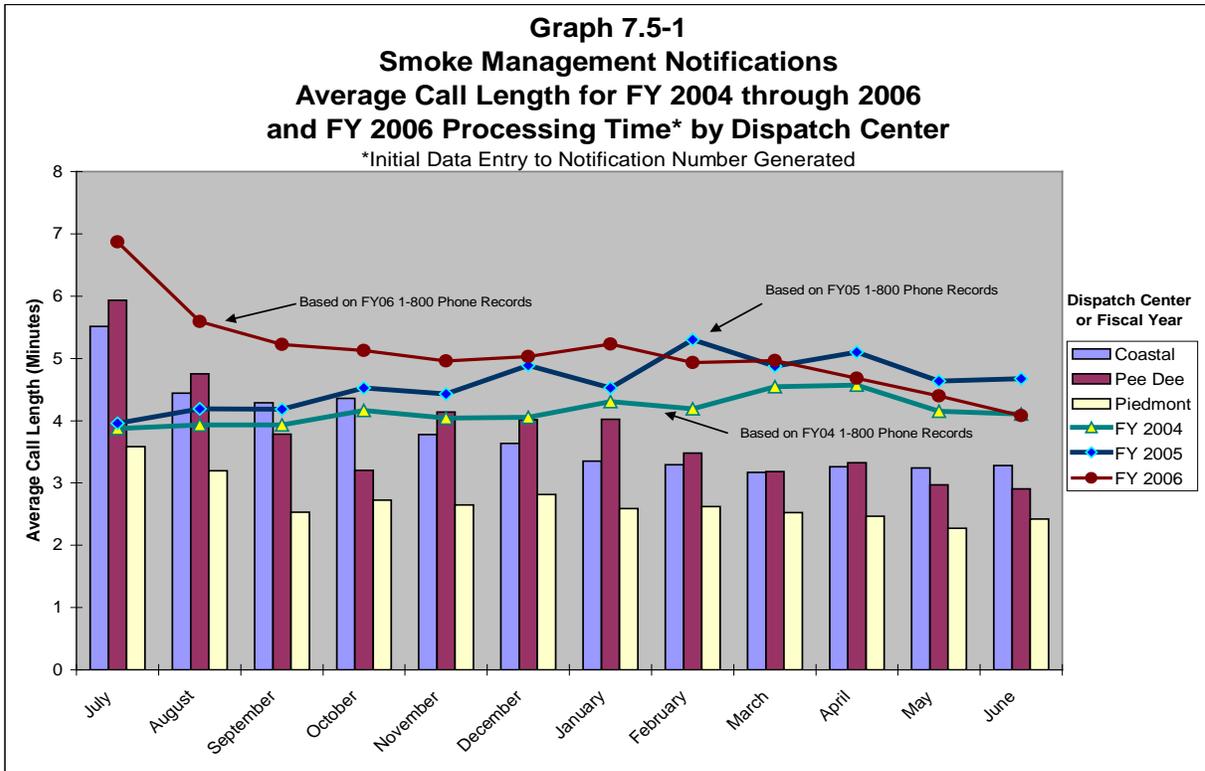
7.5 What are your performance levels and trends for the key measures of regulatory/legal compliance and community support?

The Agency is subject to financial and compliance audits, cooperative Forest Management Reviews by US Forest Service, Federal Aviation Administration inspections and regulations, State Fleet Management inspections, OSHA regulations, and DHEC Smoke Management Guidelines and Outdoor Burning Regulations. We have audits in the areas of accounting, purchasing, insurance, classification, and compensation. They have all been performed without findings of questioned costs or non compliance over the past several years. Federal funds require compliance with Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. The USDA Forest Service monitors compliance on a regular basis.

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 DHEC 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.

Prior to the installation of the new software, the only measure of how long it took to process a Smoke Management notification required matching up the notification to the 1-800 phone records. Due to differences in phone numbers provided by the caller and the actual phone they were using to place the call, just over 50% could be matched up. With the new software, “timestamps” exist when the first entry to the notification data entry form is made and when a burn notification number is generated. This period is referred to as the “Processing Time”.

Graph 7.5-1 displays the Average Call Length (in minutes) for Smoke Management Notifications that could be matched up to 1-800 phone records for FY 04, 05 and 06. This graph also displays the “Processing Time” for FY 06 by dispatch center that is captured by the new software. The FY 06 data shows a typical “learning curve” associated with a new system. Processing Times were longer the first several months, then significantly improved. By the end of the first year with the new software, processing times decreased by 30-45 seconds on average compared to FY 05.



The number of Smoke Management notifications taken by SCFC dispatch centers varies greatly throughout the year. Graph 7.5-2 demonstrates this wide annual variation showing that the majority of notifications are taken between December and April. Even though FY 06 call volume increased drastically between December and April, processing times continued to decrease, which isn't demonstrated by the Average Call Length data for FY 04 and FY 05 in Graph 7.5-1. This is an indication of improved efficiencies provided by the new software.

