



EDITORS FORUM



Summer is just about over (unless you live in the southern hemisphere), and as it ends I once again begin in earnest my preparations for the 2009 'AIRPORT FIRE-RESCUE U.S.A.' 6th International Aircraft Rescue Fire Fighting Conference which will once again be held in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. As our attendees can attest, Myrtle Beach is a great location and is an *affordable* venue for our international delegates to attend. The feedback I received from this years event had a 99.7% satisfaction rating for Myrtle Beach. I hope that you will plan to attend, and also give serious consideration to participate as a conference speaker. Visit our web site for full details.

One thing I learned very early on as a fire officer is that you must plan and prepare for any eventual-ity—especially the worst case scenario. As I drove by many buildings in my response area, I always took mental notes about building occupancy, its construction, surrounding exposures, access, ability to properly position apparatus, water supply etc., and then imagined different fire scenarios. Taking a look around inside buildings often unmasked things that could make a critical difference when determining my firefighting strategy and tactics. This served me very well when an actual fire or emergency occurred. The same holds true at your airport. When is the last time that you looked closely at the areas around the runways, access roads, natural and man-made obstructions to critical areas, especially access to off-runway response areas? Take a *very careful* look around your airport and think about situations that *can occur* and plan for the worst. If you think a particular crash or accident scenario could never happen, then think again. Sometimes the obvious is overlooked, such as the lack of crash gates and access roads as was the case at Madrid. Always be vigilant and prepared., think about the unthinkable, and start thinking out of the box. There are no excuses for minimum effort in the fire fighting profession.



**In memory to my 343
Brother F.D.N.Y.
Firefighters who made the
Supreme Sacrifice on
September 11th, 2001.
"Never Forget"**

The recent SPANAIR MD-82 crash in Madrid reinforces the fact that on-airport accidents are most likely to occur during take-off or landing. This tragic event that took over 150 lives also illustrates the need to look carefully at your off-runway environment. I have learned that the parallel runways where the accident took place were separated by a wide and deep ravine that was full of heavy brush, trees and lacked access roads. In addition, to complicate matters, the airport fire rescue service was hampered by a 4 kilometer fence surrounding both of these runways. These fences lacked "crash gates", and forced responders to have to cut through the fences, slowing access to the crash site. The ensuing fuel-fed heavy vegetation fire, which covered over one square kilometer, also complicated the firefighting and rescue efforts considerably.

I am hoping to publish an in-depth report about the Madrid crash in an upcoming issue of *AFJ*. In the meantime, enjoy this edition of *AFJ*.

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