DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION
OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL
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Date: September 09, 2019   **Attachment 2**

To: Ron J. Coleman
            Statewide Training and Education Advisory Committee
            c/o State Fire Training

From: Brandon Erickson, Certification Examination Coordinator

SUBJECT/AGENDA ACTION ITEM:
Digital Certification Issuance

Recommended Actions:
Approve Digital Certification Issuance

Background Information:
CAL FIRE Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM), State Fire Training (SFT) Program has traditionally only issued paper-based Fire Service Training and Education Program (FSTEP) and California Fire Service Training and Education System (CFSTES) course completion diplomas and Professional Certification certificates. FSTEP course completion diplomas were mailed to and issued by the instructor, while CFSTES course completion diplomas and professional certificates were issued and printed by SFT staff then mailed to each student or applicant. When a diploma or certificate is lost or stolen, a fee would be charged for each replacement. Overall, the printing and mailing process could take up to four weeks before it was received.

Approximately two years ago SFT acquired and began implementing a new online records management system (RMS) that provides SFT with a host of tools and features to enhance and streamline traditional business processes. One of those features allows the system to generate online diplomas and professional certificates. On January 1, 2019 SFT began using the RMS to generate digital CFSTES/FSTEP diplomas and IFSAC/Pro Board FFI certifications through the SFT User Portal. This feature allowed users the opportunity to print and reprint their own course completion diplomas and IFSAC/Pro Board Fire Fighter 1 certifications on demand.

"The Department of Forestry and Fire Protection serves and safeguards the people and protects the property and resources of California."

Analysis/Summary of Issue:
SFT will be expanding the ability to print professional certification certificates through the SFT User Portal, similar to CFSTES/FSTEP diplomas and IFSAC/Pro Board Fire Fighter 1 certifications. SFT began issuing digital diplomas and IFSAC/Pro Board certifications over 9 months ago which has been very successful and a benefit to students and applicants. Providing digital diplomas and certificates has helped control variable costs, reduced the time it takes to receive a certificate, and allowed applicants the ability to reprint their diplomas and certificate(s) at any future date free from any additional fees.

There continues to be several costs associated with maintaining paper-based certificates, such as added and increasing costs of paper, ink, mailing supplies, postage, etc. There is also a fee charged to the applicant for replacing a missing/stolen certificate or reprinting a certificate for an applicant who has legally changed their name. Maintaining paper-based certificates also increases the time it takes to receive a new or replacement certificate as applicants must wait for them to be printed and mailed individually. Certificates that are misspelled must be reprinted and mailed again, accumulating further unnecessary delays for the applicant.

This business change is in alignment with Blueprint 2020, which identified "Improved Business Processes and Training Delivery" as one of the five key strategic goals for State Fire Training going back to 2008. Additionally, this is in alignment with the recent SFT Fee Adjustment report of reducing business expenses.

Expanding the ability to print professional certification certificates through the SFT User Portal is anticipated to become available on January 1, 2020. This will allow all professional certifications that are viewable in the SFT User Portal the ability to be digitally printed with the exception of the Fire Chief Certification. SFT will continue to issue these certificates on paper. SFT will also continue to print CICCS position certificates while SFT works with OES to determine the feasibility and actions needed to implement digital printing of these certificates.

Certification records that are not present in the SFT User Portal are typically older certification records and the result of the record(s) not having been imported from the paper-based archives into the RMS. In this instance, the user can contact SFT to digitalize their record.