

QUEST™

Quarterly

"News for those dedicated to firefighter safety."

Spring 2005

Upcoming Events

FDIC '05 (Fire Department Instructors Conference)

Indianapolis, Indiana
April 11-16, 2005

Texas Fire Officers Conference and Exhibition

Corpus Christi, Texas
April 26-29, 2005

Nebraska State Fire School

Grand Island, Nebraska
May 20-22, 2005

Northwest Fire & Rescue Expo

Portland, Oregon
May 20-21, 2005

FDIC-West

Fire and EMS Training
Los Angeles, California
June 4-8, 2005

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A publication of
QUEST Enterprises, Inc.
(800) 422-3833
408 Russell Street
Walsenburg, CO 81089
(719) 738-2345
(719) 738-2319 fax

Visit us on the web
@ www.questhq.com

IRAQ REBUILDING

WALSENBURG, Colorado – The men and women at Quest Enterprises, Inc. have an important role among the many American civilians helping to rebuild Iraq. Shipments of Quest™ structural fire fighting coats and pants destined for service in Iraq left the Colorado plant throughout the past year. The clothing was issued to professional American firefighters recruited to protect military installations as our troops transition from fighting a war to keeping the peace and rebuilding the country. Vest's Sales and Service, Inc. (see pg. 2) in Virginia was awarded the competitively bid contract to provide personal protective equipment (PPE) for firefighters in the war zone.

What brought about this new breed of "war zone temps?"

Private military contractors (PMCs) have provided support to our troops since World War II. Their role has expanded steadily with the end of the cold war. America's armed forces, down 29% since 1991, rely on "outsourcing" of essential services to free up troops for purely military missions. Kellogg, Brown, and Root, Inc. (KBR), a subsidiary of Halliburton Co., is the largest of several PMCs providing everything from food service to fire protection around the world. KBR's current logistical support to the military in Iraq was an extension of an existing, also competitively bid contract.

A Tremendous Logistical Effort

Within a week of being selected for duty as a war zone "temp", the firefighters could be shipped to the Middle East. They receive a week of intensive training stateside and undergo thorough physical exams to determine their ability to handle the extremely harsh environment. In that amount of time KBR must equip them from head-to-toe—a tremendous logistical effort!! Quest's workforce has developed

and polished the skill of "quick response" production, building garments to exact specifications and sizes in record time. To accommodate the Iraq contract, Quest personnel have worked extensive overtime to ensure other customer shipments would not be delayed. When the first Iraq purchase order arrived, production jumped to 140% over standard to build and ship the gear in a single week!

The protective clothing specified by KBR for Iraq duty is pictured—Millenia™ outer shell, RT7100™ moisture barrier, Caldura® SL thermal liner, and Scotchlite™ 'Triple' Trim.

Fully aware of the hazards and discomfort they will face, firefighters willing to take on this assignment see it as an opportunity to

serve their country. They will earn a healthy paycheck while doing the work they love. The Quest organization is proud to support the re-building effort and the American troops. And we appreciate the fact that a portion of the cost of aiding Iraq provides jobs in an economically disadvantaged community on American soil!

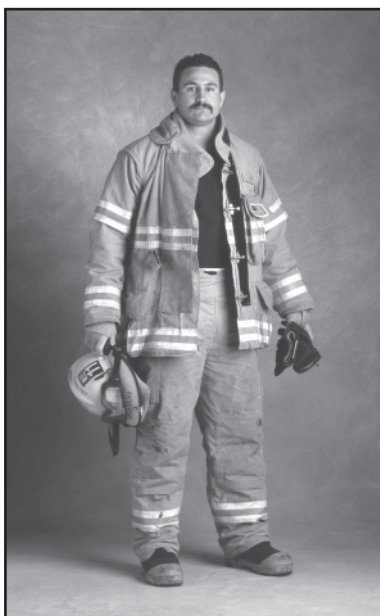


Photo provided by Southern Mills, Inc.

Josh Livermore, Bullhead City (AZ) Fire Department, wearing his gear, similar to the Iraq specification. Josh is a third generation firefighter.

Millenia and Caldura are trademarks of Southern Mills, Inc.; RT7100 is a trademark of W.L. Gore & Associates; 3M and Scotchlite are trademarks of the 3M Company.

Vest's Sales and Service



Mechanic to Entrepreneur

Rodney Vest began his career in 1984 at Grumman Emergency Products as a mechanic. When the service center closed in 1992, he started Vest's Sales and Service, Inc. in Check, Virginia with his \$3,700.00 retirement, vacation, and severance pay. For seven years Rodney single-handedly (figuratively speaking only) built his business of servicing fire apparatus from central Virginia to Tennessee. In 1999 he hired Robert Legg; six months later he added a second mechanic, Ed Webster. With the additional help, Rodney moved into the office and took on more fire equipment lines. Vest's third mechanic, Chad Conner, joined the company in 2000. Glenna, Rodney's mom, handles the books!

Vest meets Quest

Rodney came across Quest™ turnouts at fire departments near Bristol, Virginia. Liking what he saw, he called the 800 number on the label to discuss a distributorship and followed up in person at the 1996 FDIC. Confident that Vest's S & S could nicely represent Quest without intruding upon the nearby dealers, the relationship was solidified at Indy the following year. It has grown steadily since.

Vest Country

Vest's six acre site holds a 6,000 sf service facility for five average pumpers, a pit for pump testing apparatus, and a 1,000 sf office. Customers range from volunteers with 50 calls and budgets of \$1,000.00 per year to paid departments with up to 600 calls and larger budgets (more fund-raising!). The company's largest gear customer is Kellog, Brown, and Root, Inc. (KBRS) the military contractor at a nearby army ammo plant. When Rodney replaced 35 sets of very old turnouts at that facility, one firefighter reported he had been wearing the same gear his grandfather had. They received their new Quest™ gear in four weeks and loved the Millenia™! A routine inspection discovered abrasion to the Caldura™ liner caused by hook fastener. Rodney was immediately summoned! He shipped the gear overnight to the Colorado plant where repairs were expedited and returned before each shift returned from break. Customer service like that earned Vest's an RFP some 18 months later to supply PPE for contract firefighters in Iraq.

All work and no play?

The long list of things Rodney likes to do on the rare occasion he is not working includes: fishing, turkey and deer hunting, gardening, and fixing "a car or two." (currently restoring

a 1972 Nova Super Sport.) His wife of 22 years, Sandra, has worked at the Veterans Medical Center for the last 23 years. Sixteen-year-old son, Andrew, helps the mechanics, works Vest's booth at shows, and holds another after-school job to pay for his car. Chip off the old block?

Rodney's Business Philosophy

FEMA grants have been great. Sales of high end specs like Millenia have gone from 10-20% to 90% of business. The money has spawned several new apparatus and equipment dealers in SW Virginia. Companies who survive will be those focusing on customer service not the "quick buck". Rodney attributes the success of his business to two things:

- 1) Customer service means do what you say you will when you say you will (even if it hurts!)
- 2) Customer loyalty—many thanks to them!

Our thanks to Rodney and crew who make us proud they represent Quest™ so well!!

Vest's Sales and Service, Inc.
1185 Stonewall Road NE
Check, Virginia 24072
866-225-8144
rvest@swwa.net

For information or a distributor near you call
(800) 422-3833

BURNING ISSUES

What To see at FDIC

Called the "Granddaddy of them all", the Fire Department Instructors Conference (FDIC) is the largest fire service training conference and expo in North America. Attendees at the Indianapolis venue can choose from the very popular Hands-On-Training (HOT) workshops and 150 classroom sessions, taught by fire service experts.

At the Convention Center firefighters from across the U.S. and foreign countries will traverse miles of aisles showcasing the latest technology, products and services available to the industry. **First stop.—Quest booth # 4300—same corner as always in the corridor from the exhibit hall to the Dome. Ask Larry, Lowell, or Tom about Quest's new 'Comfort Fit' designs and the Guaranteed Delivery Program.**

ADVANCE™ ULTRA Unveiled

Southern Mills, the leading provider of high performance, protective fabric for structural firefighters' turnout gear, announces the launch of ADVANCE™ ULTRA, an outer shell fabric highly resistant to tearing and thermal exposure. ADVANCE™ ULTRA outperforms competitive outer shell fabrics with better durability and higher heat and flame resistance. Superior fabric engineering (patent pending), using high-tech fibers and advanced finishing technology provides:

- Better strength (tensile and tear) after thermal exposure
- Better abrasion resistance than any competitive fabric
- Exceptional thermal protection
- Exceptional value

ADVANCE™ ULTRA is available exclusively from Southern Mills, a subsidiary of Royal Ten Cate. For more information, please visit www.southernmills.com or call 800.241.8630.

ADVANCE ULTRA
Maximum Protection. Maximum Value.



OMNI-Elite® Introduced

AMATEX/NORFAB is introducing their latest development at FDIC 2005—OMNI-Elite®. This new protective fabric was developed to provide the structural firefighter an outer shell which combines high strength, durability and comfort, with the qualities of high TPP (Thermal Protective Performance) for which Basofil® is known. You will see the traditional plain weave in the FDIC exhibit hall—Booth 1811. An innovative twill weave will soon follow. Both products are currently being tested by UL for certification to NFPA 1971 standard.

OMNI-Elite® (patent pending) is available exclusively from NORFAB, a subsidiary of AMATEX. For more information, visit www.amatex-norfab.com.



U.F.I.C. - An 1870 issue of the Union Fire Insurance Co. of Nashville, the first new underwriter in Tennessee after the Civil War.



Eagle Hose - Design of the Insurance Co. of North America in the period 1790-1880. Very rare mark!

Delivery late? Quest pays freight!

Over a decade ago, fire departments nationwide resoundingly criticized protective clothing suppliers for unacceptable delivery. In 1992, Quest Enterprises responded. Our "First Responder" service, shipping orders in 2-3 weeks for a nominal fee, was ground-breaking! By the late 90's, other suppliers claimed to have "express" delivery. Yet, Quest's program remains the only service applicable to custom specs in any size—rather than stocked garments with fixed materials, options and sizes.

"First Responder" delivery proved so popular, it became the norm at Quest. Production scheduling for anything from a one-set Chief's order in white to a PBI order for a 30-member recruit class honed our skill. In 2003, a second option offered "Special Delivery" of 45-60 days, at a reduced

fee. This proved as popular as the earlier "rush" service and quickly became the most frequently requested delivery.

Quest's philosophy of customer service is that even "one day late is late" and "never promise what you can't deliver". So, a synergy grew between sales and production to enable us to keep our promises. Confident that we can meet our delivery commitment on any contract we accept, Quest Enterprise is proud to introduce Guaranteed Delivery!

If our customer's order is not shipped within the time promised, be it 21-30 or 45-60 days, we will pay the freight! Call Quest or your local supplier for details.

LETTERS / E-MAIL / FAXES

I was interested in your HSA article, as I was planning to check into switching to a high deductible plan option. Can retirees take advantage of it? Is it really tax-free when withdrawn?

Joan and Stuart Parker

Early retirees can take advantage of Health Saving Accounts until age 65—when eligible for Medicare. In fact, participants over age 55 can make catch-up contributions each year until then. Withdrawals for qualified medical expenses are exempt from income tax and penalties. Withdrawals for non-qualified expenses are subject to ordinary taxes and a 10% penalty before age 65; after 65 only taxes. BUT included in eligible medical bills are: dental and optical care, prescribed meds, over-the-counter drugs, and Part B Medicare premiums. In fact, smart savers who can afford out-of-pocket medical bills will let their HSAs grow tax-free. Used to pay qualified postretirement expenses, the funds are tax free—That's better than an IRA!

The Smokey Bear story took me back. When shells hit near Santa Barbara in 1942, I had just been commissioned as a 2nd Lt. After the badly burned cub was found in the 1950 forest fire my family and I followed him for many years. We visited the Smokey Bear museum in New Mexico and rode on a Smokey Bear parade float each year in Canon City, Colorado. The song "Smokey Bear" was sung all over the U.S. Now our grandchildren join in around the campfire. I really enjoy your newsletter!

Don Young, retired District Forester with the Colorado State Forest Service

Historic Fire Marks

Those of you in the older parts of the country may have seen stamped plaques prominently displayed on the front of historic homes. These "Fire Marks" served as the first "proof of coverage" when fire insurance was in its infancy. They appeared in Britain in the late 1600s to clearly identify which businesses and residences were insured. The insurance company named by the Fire Mark employed their own fire brigades to protect their clients against loss by fire. A fire brigade working for a competing insurance company would often pass a burning building and stay on the scene to cheer or jeer the competitor's brigade attempting to extinguish the blaze! Obviously, this pre-dated the practice of mutual aid! Those buildings without a Fire Mark were taking the risk of self-insurance and had to count on their good neighbors to join a bucket brigade.

Fire Marks were used in the United States although volunteer fire departments were more prevalent. The volunteer groups would receive a reward or bounty of perhaps



Hands - The oldest fire mark in the U.S., issued in 1972 by the Philadelphia Contributorship of the insurance of house from Loss.



Tree - This mark symbolizes the company's willingness to insure buildings located near trees, not a common practice of the day.

\$50 for squelching a fire. Such a sum in the early 1800s was enough to fuel fights between competing volunteer fire groups to decide which would have first crack at the blaze. Consequently, members were often recruited based on their ability to fight with their fists as well as their skill at fighting fires.

Taken with permission from the Sacramento (CA) Metropolitan Fire District website:
www.smfd.ca.gov

FYI: 2005 Firefighters Grants

Another year of the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) program is underway. Applications were accepted through April 8, 2005 for the thirty-ninth round of awards.

Applications for the AFG Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant program will be accepted beginning May 31, 2005. Administered by the Department of Homeland Security, SAFER grants provide funding for the hiring of fire personnel and incentives for volunteer recruitment and retention. In 2005, the program allows non-fire emergency response organizations to apply also. Deadline for these applications will be June 28, 2005.

The third program, Fire Prevention and Firefighter Safety (FPS) will begin in September, 2005. For program guidance, applications, and assistance contact the Office for Domestic Preparedness help desk at 1-866-274-0960 or go to www.firegrants@dhs.gov.

Captain Goodman



"Williams certainly has become very 'Security conscious' since he got back from Iraq"

We want your input:

- Reaching the right person?
- What's your opinion?
- Suggestions for content?
- Advice for Capt. Goodman?

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To receive your hard copy call 800-422-3833 or E-mail us at Info@questhq.com or fax to 719-738-2319

CEO as ISO Management Representative

Propaganda put out by ISO 9001 proponents says that “being ISO 9001 Quality Certified” makes your company more profitable. This is both true and false. If top management perceives ISO 9001 as a “cost” that needs to be controlled, profitability will not result. It is tempting to delegate the entire process to someone whose job it is to “get it done, but at the least cost”. If top management views ISO 9001 as a “profit” center and directs it him/her self, ISO 9001 will indeed help a company be more profitable.

The CEO or president is already “spread pretty thin”, particularly in the protective clothing business with the constant evolution of new materials, the emergence of off-shore competition, escalating costs of raw materials and employment. How can that top manager take on even more responsibility and also be the “quality manager”, a full time job in many companies? Well, I believe a truly successful ISO 9001 quality system can only be accomplished if that top manager is the ISO 9001 Management Representative. This will assure that the entire company develops and maintains a “quality attitude”.

Routine and clerical ISO requirements can be delegated. The CEO retains the responsibility and authority to immediately spot trends, determine when corrective action is needed, and assign the resources to the problem. That guarantees customer complaints will get prompt response. Only the CEO can objectively settle differences between sales vs. production on quality issues. When oversight is delegated, you may find you’re stuck with a regimented system wasting a lot of valuable time.

At the conclusion of a six session introductory ISO 9001 class I personally give to new employees, each receives a framed certificate for the break room wall and recognition in our local newspaper. **To emphasize the importance of your company’s quality system, the message must come from the top.**

Excerpts from an article by G.B. Fitzgerald, Chairman of Quest Enterprises, Inc., published in The Orion Register.

ISO 9001
Quality
Certified

Quest’s Champion for Quality

Liz Alberici
Production Manager



Liz’s career with Quest began in 1990. After 3 years, she knew every operation in the plant; she accepted the top production job the same year Quest attained ISO 9001 registration. To Liz goes the credit for the company’s effective Quality Management System.

“Protective Clothing for Firefighting”

Quest Quarterly, Spring 2005

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