

STATE WEIGHS IN ON LOCAL FIRE HOSE HASSLE

The Arizona State Fire Marshall's office isn't taking sides in the fire hose dispute between the Kingman Unified School District (KUSD) and the Hualapai Valley Fire District (HVFD) but an inspection seems to weigh heavily in favor of the KUSD.

Former School Board President Mike Cobb and members of a local professional firefighters union have accused HVFD Chief Wayne Eder of extorting a fire hose purchase from the KUSD. Eder has denied the allegation and said his inspection of the Kingman High School north campus last year yielded a finding that additional fire hose would be required to extend from a fire hydrant located too far away from modular buildings.

The KUSD spent some \$3,800 to purchase the 5" fire hose that Chief Eder said would be necessary for the campus to pass inspection. Cobb and the KUSD later cried foul, demanding reimbursement and an apology and sanction of Eder.

The Arizona State Fire Marshall's Office, last September, took back inspection authority it had extended to the HVFD under a "gentlemen's agreement." The state assumed responsibility for annual inspections of certain property, including school districts.

Deputy Fire Marshall Greg Byers conducted a routine campus-wide inspection January 22 and answered KUSD Facilities Manager Gary Blanton's question through a February 13 letter.

"The office recently inspected your facility, during Deputy Greg Byers inspection you wanted to know if the State Fire Code required additional Hydrant's and additional 5" fire hose," stated the letter sent from Assistant Arizona State Fire Marshall John Wrobel. "The existing hydrants are within the required distance from the modular buildings and the code does not require any supply hose."

Neither the KUSD nor the HVFD had received the letter at press time for this edition of The STANDARD. Responses from their elected and/or appointed officials will be solicited for publication in the next edition.