LISTENING TO LUMINARY
INTERVIEW COLUMN, FEATURING
MR. JIM PAULEY
President & CEO of
National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)

I: Introductory segment about NFPA for the benefit of readers

NFPA is a global self-funded non-profit organization, established in 1896 and located in Quincy, Massachusetts, USA. It also has international representation, covering the Asia/Pacific region, Europe and Latin America, countries in the Middle East and North Africa so as to advance the use and adoption of NFPA codes and standards throughout their territories.

The entity is devoted to eliminating death, injury, property, and economic loss due to fire, electrical and related hazards.

The association delivers information and knowledge through more than 300 consensus codes and standards, research work, training, education, outreach and advocacy. Besides, the organization also partners with others who share an interest in furthering the NFPA mission which is to help save lives and reduce loss with information, knowledge as well as passion.

Catalogue: The NFPA online catalogue provides a direct way for customers to purchase the codes/standards, companion products and public education materials.

Website: www.nfpa.org, offers a wide range of building, electrical, fire and life safety content and resources including blogs, podcasts, videos, white papers, fact sheets, research, NFPA Journal and more.

Codes and Standards: NFPA is widely known as a ‘codes and standards organization’ – that’s the backbone of what they do. They work to provide society with the information and knowledge which are essential to do a job well and better in today’s ever-changing environment. The 300 plus codes and standards are designed to minimize the risks and effects of fire by establishing criteria for building process, design, service and installation around the world. The more than 250 technical committees, comprised of approximately 9,000 volunteers review public inputs and vote on the revisions as part of a consensus process. Very importantly, all NFPA codes and standards are accredited by the American National Standards Institution (ANSI) and accepted worldwide.

II: Profile of the interviewee

i) General: Name: Mr. Jim Pauley, President & CEO, NFPA as well as the Serving Chairman on the Board of NFPA Research Foundation. Native of Greenup County, Kentucky, USA


iii) Professional: Worked in Lexington, Kentucky, with Schneider Electric, a $31 billion multinational electrical distribution and energy management firm based in France. At Schneider, Jim served as senior vice president for external affairs and government relations since 2011, after six previous positions with the company ranging between vice president to applications engineer.

iii) Immediate past tenure at Schneider Electric: Pauley’s arrival at NFPA was preceded by a 29-year career with Schneider Electric, where he served most recently as senior vice president for external affairs and government relations as a member of the company’s U.S. executive management team. His professional career journey began in 1985 as applications engineer with Square D, an electrical equipment manufacturer. Schneider acquired Square D in 1991, a move that provided him with a larger, more international perspective on the industry, one put to good use in his own career.

At Schneider, Jim also worked in product development and marketing as well as global standards strategy formulation before becoming director of codes and standards. He was also the vice president of industry standards and government relations for a decade before assuming the senior vice president job in 2011.

iv) NFPA specific: After nearly 30 years in the electrical industry, Jim takes on a new role at NFPA’s seventh president. He started the new journey on July 1, 2014 and 25 days later celebrated his 50th birthday. “This appears to be an interesting age when I would decide to go and

“I encourage FSAI members to check out that awareness initiative as well as the online training, live virtual training, and classroom programs that NFPA has for those who work with electrical components”
do something else,” Pauley quotes. “That ‘something else’ was succeeding the incumbent Mr. Jim Shannon to become the seventh president of NFPA following a unanimous vote by NFPA’s Board of Directors.

Accordingly, Pauley assumed the new duties after a month-long transition period with Shannon and the association’s executive staff. In fact, he had a sudden upbringing from native Kentucky—where he was raised in Graysville County, in the northeast part of the state. There he received a degree in electrical engineering from the University of Kentucky—to New England (USA). His decision to switch jobs after a 3 decades’ long spell over there to move on to the top NFPA job was a little disconcerting to many of his friends, for obvious reasons. “People would call me up and say two things,” Pauley says. “They’d offer their congratulations, then immediately ask me, ‘You’re not going to become a Patriots fan, are you?’ or, ‘You’re not going to become a Celtics fan, are you?’ And I would just think, ‘Holy cow. This is a lot more complicated than I thought.’”

Pauley’s mid-life transition isn’t a complete surprise, considering his long affiliation with NFPA. He’s been involved with National Electrical Code committees and code-making panels since 1993, and served on the Standards Council beginning 2000, chairing the body since 2008. “I love the NFPA mission and the people I’ve worked with in this organization,” he says. “After 29 years in the same place, you don’t necessarily go hunting for a lot of different opportunities. But if there was one thing that was going to draw me away from Schneider Electric it would be the opportunity I’ve been given with NFPA.”

Q: Respected sir, heartly and warm welcome to FSAI Journal. You have been very kind to appear in one of our highly popular and prestigious columns titled “Listening to Luminary”. We could infer from the illustrious profile that you bring in a rich and long professional expertise which would prove complementary while adapting the coveted position of the President of NFPA. In this context, let us begin the conversation by seeking some relevant information about your transition from the commercial business management sector to a non-profit organization. Based on the back-up strength gained all through your previous careers, what all could be the major attributes which are likely to help promote the ‘NFPA global vision’ of eliminating death, injury, property, and economic loss due to fire, electrical, and related hazards?

R: Prior to coming to NFPA nearly 7 years ago, I concluded a 30-year career in the commercial field. My father was an electrician, as was I, and then I tried electrical contracting before going to college to obtain an electrical engineering degree. Once I achieved that, I began working for Square D Company, which ultimately became Schneider Electric.

I was actively involved in the NFPA standards development process for many years - providing input and comments, participating on committees and assuming leadership roles along the way. Standards support market standardization and business innovation; promoting health, safety and the environment; and saving time and money for government at all levels. All these seemed like a fantastic way to learn more about life safety and enrich my career. My standards involvement offered me exposure to all facets of the building, fire, electrical, and life safety industries, and helped me greatly in my external affairs and government relations role at Schneider and certainly as I lead NFPA today. I have tremendous respect for the value that NFPA brings to the public, government, and professionals across the globe. So, having the opportunity to lead this organization now is an honour.

NFPA operates with sound business practices to ensure that we have the means to fulfill our mission to help save lives and reduce loss by sharing our subject matter expertise and by proactively addressing new hazards. The NFPA standards development process is an example of one of the most successful and longest running public private partnerships, and as such it is critical that we operate in a way that allows us to continue this important work.

Q: What types of research and review are being undertaken to ensure that each standard becomes more reader as well as user friendly? This is in relation to a large cross section of people across the globe who use NFPA standards. How are two end users with different educational/ professional backgrounds, they include Engineering, Technology, Science, Quality Control, research work, Marketing, Material handling, Administration, Fire safety, Occupational health and Environmental protection. As a global leader and respected advocate for life safety, and for acknowledging the importance of standards in the modern world. Developing and updating codes and standards is one of the greatest ways that we can protect people and property. Our standards development process is the best because it harnesses recent thinking, incorporates updated research as well as applies learnings from the latest tragedies to inform guidance on persistent issues and new challenges. For example, the increased use of electric vehicles, larger and distributed energy storage systems, and taller buildings all present potential life safety risks. The entire world is dealing with increases in wildfire loss, an issue that needs to be tackled with the use of codes and standards in the built environment. Our standards also increasingly play a role in better protecting first responders during their all-hazards role.

It is important to note that NFPA information and knowledge is not limited to our codes and standards. NFPA is also well known for the training, public education materials and what’s-its-on-the-news insights that we generate. We don’t simply react to tragedies, we get out in front of issues and as evidenced over the last year during a global pandemic, we embrace our leadership role and provide much-needed, timely perspective through a myriad of NFPA channels and resources.

When I was speaking about NFPA’s mission, I was referring to the importance of public private partnerships, and as evidenced over the last year during a global pandemic, we embrace our leadership role and provide much-needed, timely perspective through a myriad of NFPA channels and resources. What we have seen in recent years though is that people don’t simply want to read a full code book; they want specific information much faster via phones, tablets, desk top computers, and laptops and with an easy-to-use interface. Stakeholders want to understand problems and identify solutions so we developed NFPA’s linK, our new digital content platform. LINK launched in the fall and is designed to deliver seamless code information on demand. By the end of this year, the full set of NFPA codes and standards will be in LINK, and when new editions are released, subscriptions will be automatically updated, and updated material will carry over. Enhanced content is also being added on a regular basis to provide the context that stakeholders are seeking.

NFPA LINK is transforming the way codes and standards information is being delivered to industry professionals across the globe to access guidance faster and easier than ever before in the ways that best meet their needs. The platform features situation-based navigation so that users who are not well-versed in code books can find the information they need for any given situation - even if the information is contained in different codes. Users can bookmark and share code sections with team members. I believe FSAI members will find enormous value in LINK.
mobile or temporary healthcare facilities, and other COVID-related considerations. We produced fact sheets, NFPA Journal content, blogs, videos, webinars, white papers, and podcasts. I am particularly proud of the way that our training and certification teams stepped up to meet the challenges of the times and to help remote workers learn. As you know,

NFPA has a long, storied history of being a top provider of classroom training. Over the past five years, we have collaborated with FSAI to deliver fire protection training in India so that members are informed about key codes including NFPA 13 Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems, NFPA 20 Standard for the Installation of Stationary Pumps for Fire Protection, and NFPA 72® National Fire Alarm and Signaling Code®. I also encourage FSAI members to visit our website and look at the full array of training offerings that we offer to help them in their career, because while we continue to collaborate with organizations seeking our group training, the global trend is online learning. We can help FSAI and their members with online learning modules, live virtual training, and certification learning paths. We also recently introduced digital badge so that FSAI members can share learning capabilities via social media and email signatures. All these educational tools were in the pipeline prior to the pandemic but our team accelerated these things to help bridge the knowledge gap during unprecedented times. It is a prime example of NFPA’s more nimble approach to providing stakeholders with relevant, real world resources.

Q: FSAI is constantly championing equality, opportunities and activities for women including highly demanding industrial employment assignments such as fire safety. Our women chapter is also undertaking different training and awareness programs. In this regard what are the specific and exclusive NFPA training programs which are aimed for women?

NFPA has women working at every level of the organization, including many accomplished female engineers who serve as codes and standards subject matter experts, researchers, and industry liaisons. All our training programs are intended for the full audience we serve.

In addition, we produce various research to support women in the fire service. For example, fire departments in the United States value the insights gleaned from our Needs Assessment for the US Fire Service Report. This report noted that nearly half the firefighters in the US are destined for retirement in the next 10 years and therefore not designed with separate facilities for women. The US Fire Profile report, generated by our Applied Research team, shows that females still make up less than 10 percent of the US fire service, with approximately 100,000 female firefighters working in a volunteer or career capacity. This information helps to inform policy making, budgeting, and recruiting, while another report on the Patterns of Female Firefighter Injuries on the Fireground has helped with standard operating procedures. Currently, the Fire Protection Research Foundation, the research affiliate of NFPA, is looking at firefighter personal protective clothing and protective clothing in human form, taking into account design, comfort, and mobility issues.

Q: Sir, by and large the public needs to be better motivated, inspired and even enforced upon to get duty trained on fire and life safety. They need to obtain and utilize safety knowledge in case fire or other mishap occur and involve them or others in the vicinity.

- The expected response actions could be:
  - Initial firefighting
  - Rescue/ First Aid/ Evacuation of affected personnel
  - The locations could be:
  - Homes
  - Situations could be moving around/ along:
  - Roads
  - Shopping destinations
  - Traveling in vehicles or other modes of transport.
  - Being present at large gatherings / assemblies; congregation locations of different types.
  - While lodging in hotels or admitted to hospitals
  - Staying put at schools/ campuses etc.,

In all the above scenarios which are the types of codes, standards, training, or other NPAs that are required for the public domain? Please elaborate.

R: Nearly three years ago, NFPA introduced the NFPA Fire & Life Safety Ecosystem” to underscore that safety is a system and that we all have a role to play, including the public. It is incumbent upon us as individuals and as organizations to educate people about safety and the important role that standards play in keeping average citizens, workers, and emergency responders free from harm in any environment. NFPA offers free online access to our codes and standards for that reason.

We produce and distribute public education materials that are used by fire departments, teachers, and community leaders seeking to raise awareness of life safety threats, incident statistics and prevention tips. We have developed NFPA 1300, Standard on Community Risk Assessment and Community Risk Reduction Plan Development in recent years to heighten awareness of community risk reduction as an important prevention process for fire departments and others. We are working right now with over 300 fire-service agencies in the US as part of a pilot program to map areas of risk in communities by offering departments a custom dashboard that will help them keep track of and chart areas that have experienced fires and other types of emergencies. Using this information, public safety personnel can then take actions that will help reduce risk in communities that need it the most.

Q: Kindly provide insights about hospital safety, highlighting where and when fires could have been prevented, reduced, controlled, or mitigated. This may entail saving the lives of patients who are less mobile and motivating readers to learn about different types of incidents.

R: While the coronavirus has affected the healthcare industry in a way that modern society has not seen before, the idea of risk is not new to medical personnel, those who manage healthcare properties, or the patients and visitors who visit medical buildings. Fires can and do occur in the medical environment and given high occupancy rates, foot traffic, and the vulnerability of patients, hospital fires can have a significant impact on a community.

In direct reference to your question related to Indian experience, in August’20, eight COVID-19 patients were killed in a fire in the ICU ward of a hospital in Ahmedabad. Again within a span of three months, fire more patients were killed when a fire broke out in a COVID-19 ward in a Rajkot city hospital. That incident was the fourth in the state since the first fire in 2018, likely due to an electrical short circuit.

In January’21, Ten newborn babies died in a massive fire at a hospital in Maharashtra. There are just a few examples of hospital fires in India; I also infer there had been few more incidents in India. Hospital fires cause loss of life, property, equipment, essential supplies, and hospital records – and leave economic and business/ care continuity challenges in their wake.

Safety is a system that should be taken very seriously - especially in hospitals where many occupants will be unable to evacuate on their own or without assistance equipment.

In 2016, the US Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) called for health care facilities to follow the 2012 editions of NFPA 101® Life Safety Code and NFPA 99 Health Care Facilities Code in order to meet the requirements of the Conditions of Participation (CoP), as defined by CMS. Health care providers who participate in federal reimbursement programs are required to meet the CoP expectations, and then in September of that year, CMS announced that its emergency preparedness rule would require a coordinated set of requirements to be established by various providers. As per CoP, hospitals, transplant centers, critical access hospitals and long-term care facilities must carefully evaluate their emergency and standby power systems. Specifically, they must be inspected, tested, and maintained in accordance with the 2010 edition of NFPA 110 Standard for Emergency and Standby Power Systems, as well as the 2012 editions of both NFPA 99 and NFPA 101. These standards that pertain to healthcare facilities can be a tremendous resource around the globe.

Q: What are the important checks and balances to prevent/reduce electrical power fire incidents that generate sparks and flames because of unsafe or poorly designed/maintained electrical systems, appliances, fittings and/or fixtures?

R: There are so many opportunities for risk where electricity or power are concerned. The breadth of the
National Electrical Code® (NEC) or NFPA 70 is vast, with eighteen distinct code-making panels developing the guidance that covers everything from everyday considerations such as outlets, lighting and electrical equipment to emerging issues such as energy storage systems, microgrids, the Internet of Things, 5G, and Power over Ethernet. The complicated nature of electrical systems requires devoted professionals working with a solid framework. Whether it is the work we do to safeguard the standards development process and produce the guidance you all need in your roles or our efforts to serve modern-day practitioners with top-notch resources and research, we are 100% committed to reducing risk throughout the world. There is too much at stake to do anything less.

Q: In conclusion, do you have any additional as well as specific advice, message or counsel that would benefit our readers?

R: I would encourage FSAI and its members to use the NFPA Fire & Life Safety Ecosystem to facilitate discussions, revisit practices, and proactively work to protect people and property in India. As NFPA celebrates 125 years of championing safety this year, I can assure FSAI members that we will be doing the same on a global scale. Whether it is the work we do to safeguard the standards development process and produce the guidance you all need in your roles or our efforts to serve modern-day practitioners with top-notch resources and research, we are 100% committed to reducing risk throughout the world. There is too much at stake to do anything less.

Q: Before drawing the curtain, FSAI Journal administration would like to gratefully acknowledge NFPA’s kind gesture of permitting us to share NFPA Journal contents on regular basis.

R: Thank you for your time today – and for your interest in all that NFPA does to reduce risk in the world. We cannot do the work that we do without devoted professionals like FSAI Members. You are the face of safety in India and what you do matters.