

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 8, 2011

Lt. Governor Phil Scott works with Burlington Fire Department

Montpelier, VT - For Lt. Governor Phil Scott, yesterday's "Vermont Everyday Job" working with the Burlington Fire Department was an eye-opening experience - especially the part of the day where he couldn't see a thing.

Emergency response is unpredictable by nature, but yesterday's job shadow focused primarily on one routine aspect of the job: continual training. A firefighter needs a minimum of 140 hours of training just to suit up, explains firefighter Derek Libby, who mentored Scott for the day. Burlington firefighters receive training three weeks out of every month.

Yesterday, after being outfitted with a full set of turnout gear, boots, helmet, breathing mask and oxygen tank -- which add an extra 60-plus pounds to a firefighter's body weight -- Scott completed a training exercise where he had to crawl through several back rooms of the fire station, blindfolded, to simulate what is often a total lack of visibility in smoke-filled buildings.

Firefighters learn to compensate for their blindness in other ways, including using rope or hoses to mark their path for others behind them, and always keeping one hand on the wall as a point of reference. With one hand on the ankle of the firefighter ahead of him, the Lt. Governor crawled through rooms and hallways and down a flight of stairs, feeling his way along the walls and searching for anyone who might need to be rescued.

"That's amazing," Scott said after completing the exercise. "You have no idea where you're going, and you only have 15 or 20 minutes before your air runs out and you have to turn around. I can see where it would be really easy to get lost."

Scott worked at Fire Station #2 on North Avenue, which covers the city's Old North End and handles nearly 7,000 fire and medical calls per year. His shift exposed him to a variety of aspects of work as a firefighter - from the training, to responding to an actual medical call, to the methodical Monday-morning check of every single piece of life-safety equipment in the station's tanker and ambulance. (Each week, the crew tests every valve and switch, and verifies every expiration date, on equipment ranging from elevator keys to automatic defibrillators to liquid glucose doses.)

Of course, a day at a fire house wouldn't be complete without a legendary meal. Captain Tom Costello prepared hot jambalaya, over which the crew discussed everything from new traffic patterns around the city, to the stress of spending holidays away from their families, to which crewmember hadn't chipped in to cover the meal. "A lot of people assume that city taxpayers pay for our meals, which isn't the case," said Libby. "But, that being said, this is still the best \$5 lunch in the city."

About Lt. Gov. Phil Scott's "Vermont Everyday Jobs" Initiative

Lt. Governor Phil Scott started his "Vermont Everyday Jobs" initiative to promote Vermont businesses and highlight the hard work that Vermonters do every day in all areas of our economy. By finding out firsthand, and in a hands-on manner, what it takes to make Vermont businesses work, the Lt. Governor will gain a better understanding of what state government can do to help those businesses work better. The tour will also help to facilitate relationships and ongoing dialogue between Vermont business leaders and their representatives in state government.

In previous "Vermont Everyday Jobs," Lt. Governor Scott has worked with the Orange County Sheriff's Department, the Lake Champlain Ferry, Breakwater Cafe, the Windjammer/Best Western Inn in South Burlington, St. Albans beekeeper Michael Palmer, violin-maker Doug Cox in Brattleboro, taught second grade at Union Memorial School in Colchester, built a solar tracker at AllEarth Renewables, checked lift tickets at Stowe Mountain Resort, worked in the Emergency Department at Porter Hospital, worked with a Green Mountain Power line team, and changed oil at Vermont Quicklube.

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