

2002 Product Picks

10 new or improved products
you must check out for yourself

With hundreds of exhibitor booths and sprawling exhibit halls, this year's FDIC conference challenged even the most tireless attendees to visit each vendor and see all the gear, gadgets, tools and trucks on display. Thankfully, our tech team did a lot of the walking for you. Here, they present their picks for the best new products presented at

FDIC. They chose each for its ease of use, innovative design and its impact on how fire-rescue personnel perform their jobs. We hope this brief review inspires you to attend trade shows and take a look at what manufacturers have to offer. You just might find the perfect solution to one of your department's challenges.

GEAR GRID

Over the years, many departments have asked, "Where can we find sturdy, long-lasting racks to hold stuff in the station?" Many companies have custom built these types of storage units, but the results were hit-and-miss, and the final product may not have been sturdy.

Gear Grid is the answer. The frame is constructed of heavy-duty tubing, and the wire grids have a durable powder-coat finish that minimizes oxidation.

Each locker comes with two shelves, three apparel hooks and a space for a name plate. Gear Grid also makes some interesting wall- and mobile-mount hose-drying grids.

Gear Grid's modular design allows customization. Wall-mount units sit off the floor to allow easy cleaning underneath. The open design allows maximum air movement, which expedites gear drying.

The units are heavy duty as well; I



**MSRP: Wall Mount Lockers: \$1,093.62 for 6 racks with 20" openings, \$1,153.62 for 6 racks with 24" openings, price varies depending on the number of gear openings purchased; Mobile Locker Systems: \$1,029.00 for six pack with 20" openings, \$1,089 for 24" openings; Hose/SCBA Bottle Unit: \$1,014.50 without shelves, shelves \$31.25 each
Manufacturer: Mid-Minnesota Wire
888/643-6694 or 651-464-4468
www.geargrid.com**

stood on one, and it didn't break or bend. An optional lock-box for each locker space will hold valuables, and a mail slot allows company officers to leave messages for individual members. The gear lockers also feature locking doors.

Gear Grid comes in five colors: red, gray, blue, green and sand, with custom options also available. The racks come disassembled for ease of handling and reduced shipping costs.

VINDICATOR FIRE NOZZLES

Although the Vindicator Nozzle, manufactured by First Strike Technologies, is several years old, it has recently enjoyed a new moment in the spotlight due to positive reviews from firefighters in Las Vegas, Albuquerque, N.M., and New York City.

The Vindicator has a wide range of uses, but departments use it most commonly as the initial-attack line for a structural or deep-seated fire attack. Its unconventional design breaks the stream into large droplets and entrains air at the nozzle. This creates an excellent finished foam. Because the nozzle is machined from billet stock (no cast parts), the manufacturer claims it's quite effective at taking out glass and window sashes, and you can drive it through drywall without any concerns about damage to the nozzle.

The product is promoted as offering higher flow rates, less reaction, and a more rapid fire knockdown compared to conventional fog and smooth-bore nozzles. The Vindicator resembles a foam nozzle, but its design provides a great deal more. By design, the nozzle can deliver an aspirated water or water-and-foam stream at very low nozzle pressures without sacrificing range. At



MSRP: Light Attack (90-200 gpm) \$769.95;
Heavy Attack (175-425 gpm) \$799.95;
Blitz Attack (200-500 gpm) \$839.95;
Master Attack (650-1200 gpm) \$1099.95
Manufacturer: First Strike Technologies, Inc.
847/658-3216
www.Vindicatornozzle.com or
www.1stStrikeTech.com

50 psi, the manufacturer indicates the stream has a point of impact of more than 100 feet. If you increase the pressure, you get more flow and greater range. At 100 psi, the stream footprint is close to 200 feet—from a handline! The nozzle design plays an important role in its ability to reduce nozzle reaction and offer a more rapid heat absorption. This was confirmed by FDNY's testing (see the manufacturer's Web site for test results). Lower nozzle pressures result in more handline maneuverability and an increased level of safety.

First Strike Technologies says the Vindicator has been officially tested by the U.S. Air Force and exceeds the NFPA's requirements for foam expansion (as outlined in NFPA 412) and meets or exceeds all applicable NFPA 1964 guidelines.

Note: The Vindicator is similar to a smooth-bore nozzle in that it can't switch to a fog pattern.

The manufacturer strongly recommends that fire departments interested in the Vindicator should train to use it; company reps will travel to departments for demonstrations. They openly encourage nozzle-to-nozzle comparisons. Although they insist the Vindicator was not designed to replace all your nozzles, many departments have used it to do just that.