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tem (PES).

Together, the team tested 36 types of ropes and 19 different descenders, all built around the Gemtor harness that has been a staple of FDNY PPE for more than 30 years. In a collaborative effort with the Company Petzl, based in Clearfield Utah, the Grigri belay device was adapted from recreational climbing uses for National Fire Protection Association standards. Through the team's efforts and motivation, development took months instead of years, and the resulting Petzl EXO system was so successful that it was named Time Magazine's 2006 Invention of the Year.

One of the most significant features of the EXO system is its anchoring device, a nickel-plated steel hook. Historically, during a flashover or heat event, firefighters are forced to windows to evacuate. Without the ability to go back into the room to find a secure anchor point, a more realistic – yet more dangerous – scenario involves using the window itself as an anchor point. The system

was first put to the test on New Year's Eve – the same year as the tragedy that spawned its inception – when an FDNY firefighter used the new PES to escape a burning building. FDNY's Safety Command Battalion Chief Stephen Raynis called the successful escape “a great success story.”

Fire Ground is established

Enter FDNY Lieutenant Larry Cohen who joined the department in 1993 and retired due to respiratory complications from his actions on 9/11. Since 1997, Cohen and his partner Walt Boychick, a 25-year Fire Protection Engineer and Edison, New Jersey Volunteer Chief, have been addressing the need for firefighting training courses that they felt were missing from the academies. With a Bachelor's degree in Fire Safety Protection from Jersey City University and his staff position as a Field Instructor at the University of Illinois' Fire Service Institute, Cohen put his skills to use as a lecturer, hands-on trainer and owner of Pompton Plains-based Fire Ground

Technologies to mainstream the type of training that would lead to improved safety.

“There is a difference between scholastic and hands-on training,” Cohen explains, “and we offer a hands-on approach to our classes.” With information and skills that he picked up with the FDNY, Cohen has adjusted typical training scenarios to real-world environments, and has adapted his training method to his students' needs. “The approach is different between paid and volunteer firefighters, as well as municipal, industrial and corporate agencies,” he says. “The same goals and objectives need to be accomplished, but taking into account different levels of manpower.”

Fire Ground Technologies' mission statement is to “teach and relay information to firefighters throughout the country to help improve firefighter safety, fire ground operations, and a wide variety of other aspects of learning such as preplanning structures, municipal analysis and assessments for fire protec-

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