



FOR PARTNERS IN FIRE AND
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT IN ALBERTA

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Minister's first visit includes GEOC tour



Introducing Alberta Municipal Affairs' new minister



PREMIER ED STELMACH'S recent cabinet shuffle has already had a positive impact on the Alberta

Emergency Management Agency. The Honourable Hector Goudreau was named Minister of Municipal Affairs and Manmeet Bhullar was named Parliamentary Assistant.



Minister Goudreau is in his third term as a Member of the Legislative Assembly for Dunvegan-Central Peace. Previously, Mr. Goudreau served as Minister of Employment and Immigration and Minister of Tourism, Parks, Recreation and Culture. He has also served as a member of the Standing Policy Committee on Agriculture and Municipal Affairs, vice-chair of the Alberta Grain Commission, a member of the Historic Dunvegan Advisory Committee, a member of the Heritage Savings Trust Fund Committee and as a member of standing committees on Private Bills and Public Accounts as well as the Standing Policy Committee on Learning and Employment.

Prior to entering provincial politics, Mr. Goudreau sat as a council member with the town of Falher and also spent some time as deputy mayor.



Minister Goudreau (right) and his parliamentary assistant Manmeet Bhullar (centre) visited the Government Emergency Operations Centre (GEOC) with AEMA Managing Director Dave Hodgins to get an up-close perspective of the AEMA and its operations.

Born on October 11, 1950, Mr. Goudreau was raised on a dairy farm in Beaumont. He graduated from the University of Alberta with a Bachelor of Science degree, majoring in agriculture. He also completed a number of courses at the universities of Duluth, Minnesota and Montana.



Getting a tour of the Mobile Emergency Support and Assistance unit.

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This is the fifth issue of *On Scene*.
Let us know what you think, write to:
aema@gov.ab.ca

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Stepping up and reaching out – from ordinary to extraordinary

ON NOVEMBER 27, 2009, the Alberta Emergency Management Agency deactivated the Government Emergency Operations Centre (GEOC) after operating for almost a month. This brought to a close the response phase for Wave 2 of H1N1 in support of Alberta Health & Wellness, Alberta Health Services and in service to Albertans. The agency responded decisively when asked to assist with managing the immunization issues in Alberta. Then on January 13, 2010 the GEOC was activated again in response to the Haiti earthquake to support the Government of Canada in the repatriation of Albertans. Although the GEOC was officially deactivated more than two weeks later, many agency staff remain engaged in planning for the next phase of the response to Haiti.

With that higher goal of serving people, agency staff stepped up and reached out, often in unfamiliar roles and positions, and without a second thought. We discovered much about our own abilities and limitations and have already identified and will apply some process improvements.

“The tremendous extra effort demonstrated by agency staff during and after GEOC activations was truly exceptional.”



Dave Hodgins


We know how intense it was and also understand that activations of this length have implications related to the routine work that needed to be sustained and also

some work we were unable to do throughout the activations that needed to be addressed immediately after. The tremendous extra effort demonstrated by agency staff during and after GEOC activations was truly exceptional.

This extraordinary focus, commitment and courage by agency staff was extraordinary and has transformed the agency from “ordinary to extraordinary”

As I contemplate all of this as another defining moment in my life and career, I recall the story about an elephant and a mouse walking across a long bridge with wooden slats strung by rope high above the jungle floor. As the elephant and the mouse reached the other side of the bridge, the little mouse looked up at the elephant and said...

“... We sure shook that bridge didn’t we.”


Well, in closing I’d like to say again to all our agency staff, “thank you, and we sure shook that bridge ... didn’t we!” 

E. David Hodgins, S.B.St.J., B. App.Bus:E.S., CEM
 Managing Director,
 Alberta Emergency Management Agency

►► Continued from the cover page.

With 27 years as a district agriculturist, he has worked as a crop specialist for the provincial government, was the assistant

manager of Falher Alfalfa, an agronomist in Australia, farmed with his family and has his own farm. Mr. Goudreau was a recipient

of the Government of Alberta's employee award for 25 years of service. 

Introducing Manmeet Bhullar, Municipal Affairs Parliamentary Assistant



Manmeet Bhullar

In addition to the appointment of Hector Goudreau as Minister of Municipal Affairs, Premier Stelmach also appointed Manmeet Bhullar as the Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Mr. Bhullar is also a member of the following Legislative Assembly Committees:

- Standing Committee on Legislative Offices
- Standing Committee on Community Services

Mr. Bhullar was elected to his first term as a Member of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta for Calgary-Montrose on March 3, 2008 and served as a parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Advanced

Education and Technology and as a member of the Select Special Chief Electoral Officer Search Committee.

Mr. Bhullar holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in sociology from Athabasca University and is currently studying law. An active part of his community, he founded Inspire, a youth development organization, coordinated the Walking Hunger Away campaign in Calgary and led a team of volunteers that raised funds for the Calgary health region. His community leadership earned Mr. Bhullar the Alberta Centennial Medal, the Centennial Medallion and the Athabasca University Leadership Award.

2010 Emergency Preparedness Week

Make plans now to be prepared

Emergency Preparedness Week (EP Week) is an annual event that takes place during the first full week of May to increase public awareness about emergency preparedness and management. The theme for the 2010 Emergency Preparedness Week, which takes place May 2 - 8, 2010 is "Is Your Family Prepared?"

The first step to being prepared for all types of emergencies is really three simple steps:

- know the risks
- make a plan
- prepare a kit.

There is a wealth of information on the Internet to help communities become more aware and know what to do to prepare for emergencies. This includes information on what to include in an emergency kit and what to do during and after an emergency. For specific details, visit www.getprepared.gc.ca or visit the Alberta Emergency Management Agency website at www.aema.alberta.ca

In Alberta, municipalities respond first to local emergencies. Alberta Municipal Affairs and Housing, through the Alberta Emergency Management Agency, is also there to help when needed. The agency assists Alberta communities to mitigate, prepare for, respond to and recover from major emergencies and disasters.

Alberta's potential for risk includes avalanches, earthquakes, floods, infectious disease outbreaks, landslides, power outages, severe weather, tornadoes and wildfires. Knowing the risks in a given area will help Albertans in creating emergency plans that are specific for their area.

Step 1

Know the risks



Although the consequences of disasters can be similar, knowing the risks specific to your community and your region can help you better prepare. Find out what the hazards are in your region.

Step 2

Make a plan




It's easy and essential. Every Canadian household needs an emergency plan. It will help you and your family know what to do if disaster strikes. Make your own plan and print it out today.

Step 3

Get a kit



It doesn't take long – find out what goes into an emergency kit, or where you can buy one. An emergency kit helps ensure you and your family are ready to cope on your own for at least the first 72 hours of an emergency.

Albertans wanting to learn how to prepare for more emergencies in Alberta such as proximity to major industrial sites and proximity to dangerous goods routes are encouraged to contact their local municipal Community Emergency Management Coordinator. 

Fatally unaware

BY KYLIE-JANE DEGELING, Training Officer, Alberta Emergency Management Agency

THERE ARE PLENTY OF BAD movies around – and if you remember back, you’ll likely come across at least one of these silly storylines: an impaired parent stumbles into the kitchen to cook dinner and it burns on the stove because she dozed off; a man is almost tackled to the ground by firefighters as he attempts to re-enter his blazing home for his prized sports jersey; teens quadding on a hot day casually flick a cigarette butt, causing a raging wildfire; a person driving along the highway in a hurry misses the turn-off, and causes a pileup when backtracking.

Hollywood is full of slapstick humour, which can be great for a chuckle, but for Alberta’s many emergency response workers and volunteers, these storylines are too often a reality, and therefore not funny at all.

As a firefighter, Trent West feels he has seen almost everything, and now as Alberta’s Fire Commissioner he knows there will always be a new, “They did what?!” He still remembers clearly the father and two children who were riding a motorcycle with a sidecar while mom followed behind them on her bike. “A guy missed his turn-off, and decided to drive against the flow of traffic on an on-ramp to make his turn, causing a crash with the dad and kids. Mom watched helplessly as her family was killed right in front of her.”

As Trent tells his stories of past call-outs – many which required him and his fellow firefighters to work in extremely cold temperatures or hazardous situations – it’s evident he’s passionate about stopping the pointless and often devastating emergencies caused by lack of preparedness and lack of awareness. “A lot of focus is given to what to do when something bad happens. What we need to do is focus more on preventing it from happening in the first place. People need to be more aware of what they’re doing, and how it affects those around them.”

Albertans will be familiar with one example Trent provides – preparing for the weather. “When you walk outside in freezing temperatures, you put a jacket on because you know cold is a hazard that can kill you. Yet people will leave their heated garages to drive their heated cars in the winter, without proper winter gear like gloves and a toque. What happens if the car breaks down, or slips into a ditch? Now you’ve created a potentially life-threatening emergency situation, and could die or become badly injured because of it. If people became more aware, they’d prepare better,” West advises.

“Given that the vast majority of emergencies are entirely preventable, West is hoping people will take inventory of their actions and become more aware and prepared.”


Trent’s list of past emergencies caused by a lack of awareness is extensive. He describes house fires due to chimneys not being swept, wildfires ignited by inadequately extinguished campfires, parents leaving their lighters or matches lying around where their kids can find them and start fires, unattended candles igniting curtains and motor vehicle collisions caused by people not paying attention to the road.

He also discusses how quickly a bad situation can become worse due to a lack of awareness. “We’ve had to forcibly restrain people from re-entering their burning home and endangering themselves and others,” West stated. “It’s an ineffective use of firefighters if we have to spend our time holding someone back instead of putting out the fire. But if the person tells us what the problem is – we’ll try to retrieve it for him or her if we can safely do so. It all comes down to how what you do affects everyone else.”

Given that the vast majority of emergencies are entirely preventable, West is hoping people will take inventory of their

actions and become more aware and prepared. “Start with your home.

So many emergencies are caused by inadequate maintenance and housekeeping. Ensure chimneys are swept, the furnace is maintained, there are no materials that give off flammable vapours near sources of heat or flame, and that the areas under staircases are free of easily ignitable materials. Be aware of all the hazards in the home, and prepare yourself and your family. The simple act of ensuring that smoke and carbon monoxide alarms are working will prevent fatalities,” he added.

Ideally, West would also like people to consider installing home sprinkler systems and monitored alarm systems. “Whether you’re out of the home or fast asleep – these systems will kick into action, ultimately protecting you and the most valuable “thing” you possess; your home.” 

For more information on hazards in Alberta, contact your municipality’s director of emergency management or the Alberta Emergency Management Agency at 780-422-9000. Dial 310-0000 for toll-free access outside Edmonton or visit www.aema.alberta.ca

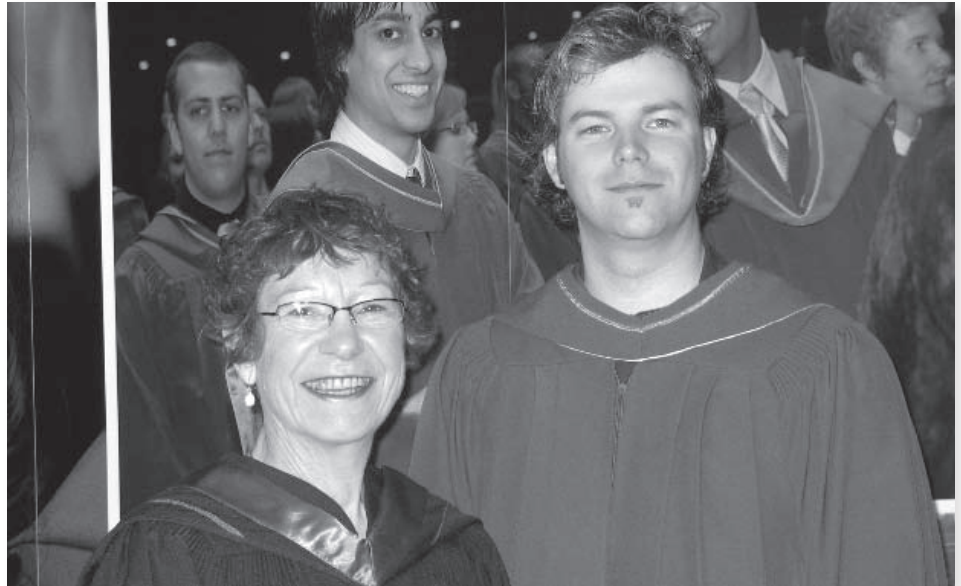
NAIT Emergency Management Program marks several milestones

BY MARION BOON, Coordinator of Nait's Emergency Management Diploma Program

2009 saw a number of exciting evolutions in NAIT's emergency management program. The core diploma curriculum has been re-launched in a new, more compact format, two certificate credentials have been created and - most excitingly - NAIT Emergency Management has welcomed its first graduate.

This unique program is currently the only diploma-level education in emergency management offered in Canada. Classes are taught entirely online, with students and instructors participating from across the country. The newly formatted diploma curriculum will allow a student studying full-time to complete classes in approximately two years, with part-time students wrapping up studies in three to four years. As always, course materials focus on four key areas: mitigation, planning, response and recovery. The fundamental practices, procedures and strategies taught can be applied to any type of emergency or disaster.

In late August, NAIT launched two new Emergency Management certificate credentials: an Industrial Emergency




Marion Boon, NAIT Emergency Management Program Coordinator and Bryan Sali, the program's first graduate.

Management Certificate and a Public Sector Emergency Management Certificate. Each of these new certificates requires the completion of five courses, which are completely transferable toward the NAIT Emergency Management diploma. They provide credentials for those students who need professional emergency management education, but perhaps not necessarily up to a diploma level. They also reward students in the diploma program with early credentials and provide an opportunity to pause and celebrate in the journey towards a full diploma.

May 2009 saw the first Emergency Management diploma graduate walk across the stage at Edmonton's Jubilee Auditorium. Bryan Sali's story is unusual in that he had no prior experience in his chosen field. Most students in the diploma program come from police, fire, EMS, security or military backgrounds. Bryan had been a self-described "jack of all trades", working in a variety of fields, including sales and heavy-duty machine operation. But, he says he truly found his niche in emergency management - knowing that he will make a difference and help people.

Months before finishing the program, Bryan landed a great job. He is a Business Continuity and Emergency Management technical writer in the City of Calgary's Utilities and Environmental Protection department. He works with various stakeholders including emergency response departments, government, business and the public to ensure that Calgary is prepared should a disaster occur.

The coordinator of NAIT's Emergency Management program, Marion Boon, was on hand to welcome her first graduate as he crossed the stage. "It was a very exciting and rewarding moment," she says. "And of course I'm thrilled - but not surprised - that Bryan has already been hired into his first job in the field. Our students have contact with actively practicing professionals and are able to establish a network that will support them as they move into the working world." 

Classes are taught entirely online, with students and instructors participating from across the country.

Want to learn more about this dynamic program? Class intakes take place in September, January and May. For more information, email emtraining@nait.ca or check out NAIT's website at www.nait.ca/em.

Recognizing extraordinary contributions

A NAME SYNONYMOUS WITH the Alberta fire service is Bill MacKay. Although born and raised in Winnipeg, Manitoba, W.D. (Bill) MacKay has spent most of his life in Edmonton.

After starting his career as an RCMP Officer in Manitoba, his transfer to Edmonton literally changed his life. While working at the RCMP building in downtown Edmonton he met a pretty lady who worked as a secretary with the RCMP. After they started dating they became aware of their employer's policy on marriage and resigned from the RCMP. "At that time, men were not allowed to marry until they had been with the RCMP for seven years," said Bill. "Lois and I didn't want to wait that long to get married, so I decided to leave. The RCMP also had a rule that married women couldn't work for the RCMP, so both of us had to find new employment."

Lois found a secretarial position with local photographer Jack Hoosey and Bill, after working for The Bay for a short time, accepted a position running the photographer's office. Unknown to Bill at the time, this experience would come in handy.

“He is the resident historian on the fire service in Alberta, and even at 85 years, his excellent memory and recall is astounding.”

A few years later, after the photographer sold his business, a chance encounter with a former RCMP colleague set Bill on the path we are most familiar with. "I was driving downtown one day and a guy ran across the road in front of my car. As I shouted at him, I realized he was Murray Bedard, the sergeant in charge of the Vegreville RCMP detachment," noted Bill. "During our conversation, Dusty mentioned that the Alberta Fire Commissioner was looking to hire someone with RCMP experience."

That fire commissioner was Austin Bridges, who was Alberta's first full-time fire commissioner. Bill joined the Fire Commissioner's Office (FCO) in July 1954 as a fire investigator. "When I started, Murray Bedard was the Deputy Fire Commissioner. He had been a former deputy chief with the Edmonton Fire Department and joined the FCO to start provincial training programs," added MacKay.

Late in 1957, during a session at the old training school in the flats, Bedard was showing a group of students how to extinguish incendiary devices. As Bill tells it, "Murray went into the building to get things started and then went out to get the class involved. Unfortunately, some of the incendiary devices that were supposed to be denuded went off. When he re-entered the building, the explosion



Bill MacKay

blew Murray out of the building. He stayed in the hospital for a while but never fully recovered and died near the end of 1957."

Bill's promotion to Deputy Fire Commissioner occurred at Austin Bridge's house one evening a few months later. "Austin called to the house and invited Lois and I over. After we arrived and were given a drink, Austin started making toasts to various people – the Minister, the Deputy Minister and then said 'and now to a new Deputy Fire Commissioner'. When I asked who that was, he said it was me." Bill remained in that position until 1973 when Austin Bridges retired. At that point, Bill became the second full-time Alberta Fire Commissioner, a position he held until his retirement in 1987.

When Bill first became the Fire Commissioner, about 20-25 people worked there. By the time he retired 20 years later, the staff complement had grown to 60. "With the need for training and the training school, that added quite

Over his 33-year career with the FCO, Bill has seen a lot of changes and points to a few key developments as the impetus for change in Alberta's fire service.

Civil Defense Organization Act

After the war ended, there was a lot of talk about Russians invading Canada on their way to invade the USA. To counter this, the Alberta government set up the Civil Defense Organization, whose purpose was to establish civil defense centres throughout Alberta that would act in the event of an emergency. It also created recognition that training was needed. Murray Bedard and Dick Beland helped with the training. Civil Defense bought five pumpers and turned them over to the FCO. These pumpers were used to help train local fire departments. Realizing that more training was required was the thrust behind the fire training school. The FCO set up programs at agricultural colleges in Olds, Vermilion and Fairview during the summer months. The hassles involved in moving equipment around the province led to the decision to create one school, and Vermilion became the chosen location.

Self Liquidating Projects Act

Allowing municipalities to borrow provincial monies to install facilities for the use of the municipalities encouraged the building and installation of water systems. With the availability of water, it made sense to establish fire departments in more communities.

Centralized Schools Act

In order to get students to the centralized schools, roads had to be built that could handle heavy equipment, such as school buses. This also meant fire trucks, which enabled fire departments to extend their services outside the town limits.

Introduction of the Alberta Fire Code in 1984

Prior to the Alberta Fire Code, a number of regulations were written and passed under Bill MacKay's initiative, including regulations dealing with bulk fuel plants, stovepipes, service stations, schools and health care as well as public assembly buildings. Enforcement of these regulations had a significant effect on fire safety in the province.

The first Alberta Fire Code came into force on August 1, 1984. The code defined a set of maintenance and operational activity controls for buildings in order to minimize the chance of fire and to ensure there is a defined plan of action for occupants to follow if fire occurs. The code also established fire safety requirements for some operations that take place outside buildings such as the bulk handling and storage of flammable or combustible liquids. A number of regulations in force at the time were incorporated into the code such as the Bulk Plant Regulation, Fireworks Regulation and the Controlled Building Regulation.

Fire Statistics Information System

Bill MacKay played a leadership role through the *Association of Canadian Fire Marshals and Fire Commissioners* in establishing the Canadian Coding Structure for fire reporting in 1971. Subsequently, Alberta adopted this coding to record fire losses in the province. The Alberta fire database was housed in a government mainframe computer for data storage and retrieval, and replaced a "primitive" key sort system that had punch cards. Bill undertook the manual task of personally sorting through reams of main-frame computer outputs to develop the fire statistics reports for Alberta. He also encouraged the training of fire officers in the municipalities on how to do basic fire investigation and submitting fire incident reports. This training became an Alberta Fire Training School program and was taken on the road to all major municipalities. It made a huge difference in the accuracy of the fire loss information in Alberta, which enabled fire cause and trend identification, leading to code amendments as well as improved fire safety through public fire safety programs.

a few staff," Bill advised. "Plus, we opened several regional offices - in Grande Prairie, Red Deer, Calgary and Lethbridge. We were much more active in our promotion of training programs. We hired a lot of people to teach them, and had training officers in each region."

In fact, Bill points to development of the training school as one of the important highlights of his career as Fire Commissioner. "It is probably the most important improvement made to the fire service in Alberta," commented Bill. "It also provided the most recognition for fire services."

After retiring from the FCO in 1987, Bill had only a short break before getting involved in yet another aspect of Alberta's fire service. "I was at the Alberta Fire Chiefs Association (AFCA) conference in Lloydminster and the current AFCA executive director approached me about becoming his replacement. I worked with him from September to December, and then accepted the position. I held the position for a number of years, but then got tired of all the travelling. With the development of the AFCA Bookstore and the growing accounting effort required, I took on that

responsibility instead. Tom Makey, the Fire Commissioner who replaced me, had recently retired so he stepped into my executive director shoes with the AFCA."

Bill's official title with the AFCA is Chief Financial Officer, but he is so much more than that. He is the resident historian on the fire service in Alberta, and even at 85 years, his excellent memory and recall is astounding. Despite a serious fall two years ago when he broke his neck while on vacation in Maui, Bill's interest, energy and resilience exemplify the attributes of this extraordinary individual. 🔥

Alberta's diva of disaster preparedness, prevention and more

IN TERMS OF GEOGRAPHY and career achievements, the old advertising slogan – we've come a long way, baby – is very apropos for Marion Boon, a former Government of Alberta employee.

Now the program coordinator for the Emergency Management Diploma Program at the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT), Marion's involvement with emergency management began many years ago.

Growing up on a farm in Northern Ireland near Belfast, Marion's keen desire to be a nurse led her to Liverpool, England where she became a registered nurse with certification in occupational health nursing. "I chose Liverpool because I thought I might meet the Beatles," Boon recalled.

Her first involvement with an emergency situation was during a Christmas day shift at the hospital when a horrific multi-vehicle collision resulted in many patients being admitted to the emergency room. Traditionally a slow, quiet day, the ER was transformed into an incredibly hectic environment with many people requiring help. It wasn't until several years later that Marion stepped back into the emergency management arena. But along the way, she acquired numerous skills and experience that would come in handy.

Wanting to see the world, Marion, her husband and two children immigrated to Canada in 1975 for an anticipated two-year stint. They landed in Edmonton, and lived for a few months in Bentley, Alberta. "At that time there were no sidewalks and the streets were gravel. Now, that was a surprise!" said Boon. After moving to Red Deer, Marion worked for the University of Alberta's renal dialysis unit caring for home dialysis patients. "I was busy raising a family but wanted to learn more about Canada so I started doing volunteer work. I got involved with the Alberta Kidney Foundation and with a dialysis patient founded the Central Alberta Chapter of

the Foundation and lobbied for the establishment of a dialysis unit at Red Deer Regional Hospital. I then somehow found myself managing the Red Deer Women's Field Hockey Team when we prepared to compete in the 1976 Alberta Summer Games."

Marion started working with the provincial government's Occupational Health Services Program, providing health promotion and screening services for provincial employees in central Alberta. In 1987 she was promoted to regional supervisor in Edmonton then manager in 1989. With the government reorganization in 1991, that program was cut. In April, she accepted one of two new occupational health consultant positions, which involved writing policies and setting standards. "It wasn't really my cup of tea," stated Boon. "I preferred being with people and helping them." A year later, Marion saw a job posting with Alberta Public Safety Services (APSS) for a consultant to assist Alberta's health care facilities and their staff prepare for disasters. "It was only a two-year secondment, but I grabbed it," added Boon. "I was working with John Robinson in the Disaster Health Services Branch and loved the job."

The job involved considerable travel working with the then 120 Alberta hospitals and conducting disaster exercises to test health facility and municipal emergency plans. "I did get to see just about every city, town, village and hamlet in Alberta, which came in very handy later in my career," noted Boon. The position also included teaching disaster health management to nursing students in Alberta's schools of nursing. "That provided a great deal of job satisfaction and was something I continued to do after I left government and moved to NAIT."

Halfway through her secondment, Marion asked if she could stay on permanently. She had also asked soon after starting with APSS if there was any emergency management education or related training or courses



Marion Boon

she could take. "John told me he had good news and bad news. The good news, he said, was that while there was no formal education in emergency management at that time there was a course in Ottawa that he would try to send me to. But he also said he'd teach me everything he knew." Marion is quick to point out that although John Robinson was self-taught, he was extremely knowledgeable and a very good teacher.

Within another reorganization in 1995, APSS became the Disaster Services Branch of Alberta Transportation and Utilities. Marion started working with Executive Director Ron Wolsey, coordinating the Alberta Disaster Financial Assistance Program to assist individuals, businesses and municipalities devastated by a disaster or emergency event. In the quiet times when there were no floods, forest fires or tornadoes impacting the province, Marion worked on school and campus emergency planning and led the development of two school disaster planning models. The plan was later translated into French and was shared across Canada. In fact, the Superintendent of the Montreal Catholic School Board called shortly after the 1998 ice storm requesting a copy of the planning model. An Alberta Advantage!

Marion's highlights include:

1992-2008 – lectured on disaster health preparedness for Alberta's schools of nursing

1996 & 1997 – Safe and Caring Schools Conference in Alberta on school disaster preparedness

1998, 2000 & 2002 – Disaster Forum School Disaster Planning

2006 & 2007 – NAIT Occupational Health & Safety Diploma Program (taught Emergency Management Course)

2006 – DRIE West (Calgary) – Human Behaviour in Disasters

2006 – Canadian Public Works Association – Emergency Management; Emergency Preparedness – personal and organizational

2007 – Beijing, China – two-day workshop on emergency management for managers/supervisors of China's oil and gas facilities

2007 – Beijing, China – First China Emergency Management Conference (presented on Human Behaviour in Disasters)

2009-2010 – NAIT Emergency Management Diploma Program (teaching Community Disaster Recovery Course)

Conference organization/ involvement

1991 – Chair, Alberta Occupational Health Nurses Annual Conference, Edmonton

1998 & 2000 – Disaster Forum – Edmonton and Calgary

1997 – Alberta Safe and Caring Schools Conference (Canadian first!)

1996-1999 – member of the Alberta Safe and Caring Schools Steering Committee – also a Canadian first

2006-2007 – Alberta Disaster Social Services Conferences – Edmonton

2009 – Canadian Risk and Hazard Network Conference (CRHNet) planning committee (held Nov 2009 in Edmonton)

Boards and committees

- CRHNet Board member
- International Association of Emergency Managers Canada Chapter – Education and Training Committee member
- NAIT Emergency Preparedness Committee plus all the other committees related to my position with the NAIT Emergency Management Diploma and Certificate Programs
- Niagara on the Lake Horticultural Society – Membership Director
- Niagara on the Lake Newcomers Club – VP, Interest Groups

"My occupational health and public health background has conditioned me to a healthy lifestyle. I exercise regularly – walking, running, cycling and golf. I cycled the Banff to Jasper highway in 1988. I would love to do something again that is equally as challenging!"

In 1999, the Disaster Services Branch moved to the Department of Municipal Affairs and was renamed Emergency Management Alberta (then the Alberta Emergency Management Agency).

In 2000, Marion was appointed Director of Training to manage the new emergency management training grants and develop emergency management training standards. Over the years, Marion has developed emergency plans for schools, healthcare facilities, educational institutions and a dam breach. She has also conducted many exercises and, as a member of the Canadian National Emergency Management Training Committee, Marion has worked with federal, provincial and territorial partners to establish national training programs and standards for Canada's emergency management personnel.

Marion's disaster experience includes a three-week assignment as part of the relief effort following the Southern California earthquake. She was also part of Alberta's response to the 1995 widespread southern Alberta floods, which were Canada's worst nature disaster at the time. Other significant Alberta involvement included the 1995


Lamont hospital fire, the 1997 Peace River ice jam flooding, the 2000 Pine Lake tornado, the 2005 central and southern Alberta floods, forest fires that forced community evacuations, train derailments and industrial incidents.

In fact, she was in Alberta's Government Emergency Operations Centre during most of these events, as well as during Y2K – December 31, 1999, the January 1998 eastern Canada ice storms and the September 11, 2001 U.S. terrorist event.

She received the Alberta Premier's Award of Excellence in 1999 for her work in promoting employee health and wellness and the Alberta Emergency Services medal in 2006 for her work in emergency management. After spending 33 years in Alberta, she recently relocated to the Niagara region of southern Ontario, where she continues to work in the emergency management field from her home office.

Marion's reputation as an emergency management expert has translated in to many speaking and presenting opportunities around the world. Most notable, says Boon, was a 2007 trip to China on behalf of NAIT. "I spoke at

the 1st China Emergency Management Conference in Beijing and I also conducted a two-day workshop for China's oil and gas emergency management personnel. It was an exciting and interesting trip that provided quite an insight into emergency management in China," said Boon. "Equally interesting was spending a weekend in Xian to see the Terracotta Warriors."

Given the lack of emergency management training in the past, it's a natural extension for Marion to be involved in creating and expanding opportunities for people to obtain education in this field. "I never could have imagined where my career would take me. Being involved in the development, implementation and delivery of the NAIT EM diploma program is the realization of a personal goal and dream," Marion stated. "I am so fortunate to have worked with wonderful people who taught me. And now I have the opportunity to help others obtain the education that is so important. Nowadays, disasters are more explicit, more complex and there are more stakeholders. People who want to help out can do a better job if they know what is required and what is involved." 

Saying goodbye to fire's true ambassador

AS MANY *Alberta On Scene* readers already know, Gloria Mercer died on January 27, 2010 of the cancer that swiftly ravaged her body. Over her almost 30-year Government of Alberta career, Gloria interacted and made friends with many people in the fire service and in emergency management. Shortly after Dave Hodgins, Managing Director of the Alberta Emergency Management Agency sent a sad message to agency staff about Gloria's passing, a flurry of emails came in from fire departments and other organizations across Alberta and beyond expressing sadness and fond memories about Gloria.

In addition to words of sympathy and remembrances of conversations and meetings with Gloria, several people also offered to help in any way possible, including lowering county flags to half mast in Gloria's honour, offering their fire departments for honour guard service, making charitable donations on Gloria's behalf and even sending to her family an edible bouquet of Gloria's favourite fruit, strawberries.

Gloria's funeral on February 2, 2010 was exceptionally well attended. In addition to family and friends, numerous members of Alberta's fire service and emergency management organizations were there. This included several former FCO staff speaking at the funeral, which included Ernie Polsom, Leduc County Fire Chief and former boss; Kevan Jess, Chief Fire Administrator, Alberta Municipal Affairs; and Bill MacKay, former Fire Commissioner of Alberta and a former boss of Gloria's too.

It is difficult to capture in words the expanse of Gloria's contributions and virtues. She truly touched everyone she encountered and is lovingly remembered by so many.

As Ernie Polsom quoted in his eulogy at Gloria's funeral, "True heroism is remarkably sober, very undramatic. It is not the urge to surpass all others at whatever cost, but the urge to service others whatever the cost.

"She truly touched everyone she encountered and is lovingly remembered by so many."

A sampling of a few of the many comments received further illustrate the respect and friendship that Gloria earned over the years.

Gloria has been an important person to most of us and our first point of contact with the FCO for many years. Out of respect and to honour Gloria's service to the fire service, I have ordered our flags at Cochrane to half-mast.

— *Mac deBeaudrap, Fire Chief Cochrane*

We have all lost a great friend but the Agency staff has lost a sister.

— *Jeremy Wagner, Fire Chief, Lac Ste Anne County and friend of Gloria's.*

Everyone who knew Gloria can only say wonderful things about her. She truly was a one-of-a-kind and will be missed by all. It was probably 15 years of talking to Gloria on the phone before I finally met her. I was amazed that she was so short – but over the years I realized that she was extremely tall in stature.

— *Glenda Dales, Mundare's 4'10" fire chief worked closely with Gloria on the AFCA annual conferences.*



Gloria Mercer

Gloria's tell it like it is, no-nonsense attitude will be greatly missed by all who knew her.

— *Brian Ballard, Regional Fire/Disaster Services Manager, Saddle Hills County.*

Gloria loved being a Regal Rep and even more she loved helping others to succeed! I keep hearing from other Regal Reps who were touched by Gloria's kindness and caring and who tell me what a big part she played in their success! We will miss her and honour her service.

— *Greg Neath CEO Regal, Barrie, Ontario*

During the 2008 Christmas break, Gloria fell and hurt her knee. She thought nothing of it until early January when the pain became too severe to manage. Provided below is an overview of Gloria's cancer ordeal.

2009

Jan. 11 – Gloria was admitted to the University of Alberta Hospital. A CT scan found a tumour on the surface of her brain.

Jan. 14 – brain surgery cancelled due to finding swollen lymph nodes.

Jan. 15 – very advanced and aggressive type of lung cancer detected. Gloria scheduled for radiation therapy.

Feb. 10 – Gloria's last radiation treatment.

Mar. 4 – Gloria's daughter Amanda's 17th birthday.

Mar. 19 – AEMA presents Gloria with a firefighter's helmet and 12 year fire service medal.

Apr. 24 – first chemotherapy appointment.

May 21 – MRI shows tumour has shrunk.

Jul. 10 – Gloria's final chemotherapy appointment.

Aug. 31 – Gloria is admitted to the Misericordia Hospital.

Sept. 8 – transferred to the University of Alberta Hospital for brain surgery.

Sept. 10 – Mundare Fire Department announces a trust fund for Gloria.

Sept. 12 – Gloria's 48th birthday.

Oct. 2 – Gloria walked out of the hospital, with assistance.

Dec. 21 – Gloria and her partner Gene shop for rings.

Dec. 23 – Val Carmody and Bonnie McLay stop by Gloria's house with an AEMA food basket.

Dec. 28 – Gloria collapses and is taken to Grey Nuns Hospital.

Dec. 31 – Another bone scan is done.

2010

Jan. 4 – Gloria is moved to palliative care.

Jan. 10 – Gloria and Gene are married in the chapel of the Grey Nuns Hospital.

Jan. 22 – Gloria and her friends enjoy a fun girl's night.

Jan. 25 – Fireman's Prayer blanket donated by Gregg Littleton was laid on Gloria's bed by Ernie Palsom.

Jan. 27 – Gloria passed away at 8:55 p.m.

Feb. 2 – Funeral held at Grace United Church in Edmonton.

Gloria demonstrated this service to others, whether it was to her family, her job, her friends, her work family, fire service or to the many other relationships she maintained in her life. This definition of heroism is one that I believe in and reflects how I think of Gloria and her life. Gloria was truly a hero in any measure that matters.


Gloria was arguably the best known member of the Fire Commissioner's Office. Not surprisingly as she worked there nearly 30 years, which included working with every modern-day Fire Commissioner except Austin Bridges. Her reputation for professionalism, knowledge and skill was

near legend and the fire service loved her and respected her. We always knew we could phone her for anything, from phone numbers to fire reports, stats to public education, FCO history to why a certain decision had been made by Bill MacKay.

Gloria was as effective a firefighter as anyone. She may not have utilized hoses and water, but she certainly did as much as anyone to reduce the impact of fire on people's lives.

She was also on a first name basis with every fire chief and safety codes officer in Alberta.

I loved that she truly cared about us and felt it all so personally. But what she loved most of all was her beautiful and talented daughter Amanda. She was Gloria's favourite topic of discussion and at every opportunity Gloria showed off Amanda's most recent photo or talked about her most recent accomplishment or interest.

Gloria demonstrated great heroism over the past year in her fight with cancer. Despite overwhelming odds, she maintained a positive attitude and fought very bravely. She inspired hope in all of us and carried that hope to the very end." 

Give us room to work

BY IAN WILSON, Managing Director of the John Petropoulos Memorial Fund – ian@jpmf.ca

THE RAIN IS POURING DOWN on the highway as tow-truck drivers, firefighters, police and paramedics converge on the wreckage of two mangled vehicles. They have to work fast to get the patients out of there, treat them and get them on their way to the hospital.

The rain makes it hard to get the job done, but the traffic is worse. Traffic has been reduced to one lane and there are enough flashing lights at the side of the road to be mistaken for a small city. But the cars, trucks, vans and semis keep rolling by – and they're not slowing down. A cruiser has already lost a side mirror and a paramedic had a near-miss scare.

The above scenario may not seem like a big deal to the average person, but it is to emergency responders, especially those who are struck while doing their jobs on Alberta roadways.

It's these far-too typical roadside encounters that are the inspiration behind Alberta's *Give Us Room to Work (GURTW)* campaign. The *GURTW* committee is comprised of personnel from police, fire, EMS, tow-truck services, etc. across the province and was formed to implement a campaign that will help reduce risks to emergency services personnel working on Alberta roadways.

But despite the provincial legislation change in October 2005, which requires that motorists slow to 60 km/hr in the adjacent lane – or slower if the posted speed is lower – and move over to another lane if it is safe to do so when passing emergency services vehicles with their lights activated, the fact is many motorists are *still* not doing so.

In 2006, nearly 400 people died and more than 27,000 people were injured in over 112,000 motor vehicle collisions in Alberta (Alberta Traffic Safety Plan, 2006). In 2007, 153,901 collisions resulted in 24,530 people being injured and 458 fatalities. Every collision, whether it results in an injury or not, requires emergency responders to be



“Every collision, whether it results in an injury or not, requires emergency responders to be on scene.”

on scene. Traffic violations, Check Stops and vehicle problems translate into thousands more first responders working on the road in the course of performing their duties.

With the increasing number of vehicles in the province and the subsequent rise in injury collisions, there is an increasing number of emergency responders working on the road. Data from collisions, as well as anecdotal reports, such as the two Alberta Motor Association (AMA) trucks that were struck by motorists during the summer of 2009, clearly indicate that some motorists are not slowing down when passing emergency services personnel working on the road.

As a result, the *Give Us Room to Work* committee is tackling this issue on many fronts, including:

• **Leadership & Collaboration** –

The committee is made up of representatives from various groups, including police, RCMP, sheriffs, peace officers, firefighters, paramedics, tow-truck services, traffic safety

advocates, non-profit organizations, etc. These stakeholders are all working to ensure the safety of emergency responders on Alberta roads.

• **Communications & Advocacy** –

Through the *SLOW DOWN: It's No Picnic* public service announcement (produced by the John Petropoulos Memorial Fund) and *Give Us Room to Work* information kits (produced by the AMA) the committee is educating Alberta motorists. As well, frequent press releases and media events get the message out to the public.

• **Education** – In conjunction with the communications/advocacy strategies used to educate the public, the *Give Us Room to Work* committee aids in roadside info-sessions (conducted by the Office of Traffic Safety's regional coordinators and others) and driver education courses. Decals with the *GURTW* message are also available for emergency vehicles through the AMA.

• **Enforcement** – Strategic enforcement of traffic safety violations is conducted throughout Alberta as another means of communicating to the public the importance of slowing down around emergency responders and giving them room to work. 🔥

The website of the John Petropoulos Memorial Fund is www.jpmf.ca. The Calgary-based non-profit organization is a member of the *Give Us Room To Work* committee. Ian can be reached at ian@jpmf.ca. For information on the *GURTW* educational resources available, please visit www.ama.ab.ca.

News for the fire service and more

BY BILL PURDY, Alberta Fire Chiefs Association Executive Director

The past summer and fall have been busy with inquiries and concerns on the province assuming ambulance services. Along with that is the reduction in the number of emergency dispatch centres. I attended the AEMA meeting in Calgary, November 4, 2009 and participated in the session on Dispatch, which included people expressing concern about the province moving too fast on this issue. Many across Alberta expressed their concerns about various problems with the dispatch system. They also relayed stories about calls being put on hold by operators during emergency situations and not enough information from one emergency centre to another. One example was a call being placed to the local dispatch centre requesting an ambulance; it is then forwarded to the responsible centre, and then they learn that a fire department is required. According to the delegates at the meeting, all information is not relayed to the responding fire department. Many fire departments now have no radio contact with the responding ambulance. The Alberta Fire Chiefs Association

will continue to monitor and work with Alberta Health Services to work through the problems and concerns. The working committee established to work on dispatch, first responders and air ambulance regulations has not had a meeting, however, I understand that Alberta Health Services will be convening a meeting in March 2010.

The interim report on Retention and Recruitment is being reviewed by the working committee on Retention and Recruitment and we hope to have an update for the 2010 conference, which takes place June 19-23, 2010 in Edmonton at the Mayfield Inn. The theme is "Thriving in Change," and the conference chair is Peter Krich, City of Camrose Fire Chief. The conference brochure for trade and members has been mailed. If you haven't received a copy or want more information, visit the AFCA website at www.afca.ab.ca

Speaking of the 2010 conference, did you know that any fire department may submit resolutions? The resolutions should be submitted to the Director of the zone in which your department is located. This information is on the AFCA website. Resolutions must be on matters of important province-wide. The Chair of the resolutions committee is Brian Ballard, Fire Chief, Saddle Hills County Fire Department and Director for Region 2.



Further to my report about the Government Request for Proposal (RFP) for the Alberta First Responders Radio Communications System, and the fact that an evaluation of the mandatory requirements set out in the RFP determined that none of the vendor proposals met all the minimum requirements, the Government of Alberta has initiated a modified RFP process as set out in the original RFP. This will give vendors an opportunity to modify their submitted proposals to meet the compliance requirement and the needs of first responders. The government anticipates that a preferred vendor may be selected in early 2010, with commencement of moving forward in spring 2010. 🔥

“The interim report on Retention and Recruitment is being reviewed by the working committee on Retention and Recruitment and we hope to have an update for the 2010 conference, which takes place June 19-23, 2010 in Edmonton at the Mayfield Inn.”

Setting the record straight about fireworks

THERE ARE FOUR CLASSES of devices commonly referred to as “fireworks” by the general public in addition to distress flares. Distress flares are not regulated by the Alberta Fire Code 2006 (AFC 06). The first three classes are fairly straightforward and well understood by users and fire departments.

The first, **firecrackers**, are prohibited from sale or use in Alberta. Site and date specific exemptions may be issued by the Chief Fire Administrator to organizations that have traditionally used these for religious and/or cultural celebrations.

Secondly there are **pyrotechnic devices**, which comply with the *Explosives Act* and are usually utilized in theatrical, concert or movie productions. The person purchasing, storing and using such devices must be trained and certified as a **pyrotechnician** by the Explosives Regulatory Division of Natural Resources Canada (ERD/NRC). The *Explosives Act* requires the approval of the event from the Authority Having Jurisdiction and also requires liability insurance in place. It is strongly recommended that comprehensive discussions take place between the **pyrotechnician** and the fire department to alleviate any concerns or misunderstandings. Recent events in Russia and Rhode Island underscore the potential for things to go tragically wrong!

The third category, **high hazard fireworks**, can only be obtained and used by persons specifically certified by ERD/NRC as a **display supervisor** (formerly **fireworks supervisor**) after completion of specific training and a period of assisting someone with a higher level of certification. These persons must obtain written permission for a display from the fire department and comply with the rules laid out in both the *Explosives Act* and the Alberta Fire Code 2006, specifying a minimum of what must be done at a display. They must also carry liability insurance. These are the displays most often seen at larger community events such as fairs, exhibitions, Canada Day, New Year’s Eve, etc.

It is the fourth category that has created increasing consternation and confusion over the past 20 years in Alberta and resulted in differing attitudes, approaches and rules in municipalities across the province.

The fourth category, **fireworks**, is commonly referred to as **shop goods, family fireworks or low hazard fireworks**. These items are commonly found for sale in many municipalities at retail stores and sometimes at roadside booths. Written permission is required from the fire department or a **forest officer** (in a forest protection area), under the terms of the AFC 2006, for anyone to sell, store, purchase, possess, handle, discharge, fire or set off of these items. Fireworks can only be purchased (noted in both the *Explosives Act* and the Alberta Fire Code 2006) by someone who is at least 18 years of age.

It must be noted that the fire department is an operational arm of the municipal government and therefore policy decisions related to providing written permission for storage, sale or use of low-hazard fireworks, in particular, must be made by the municipal council.

Requirement for permission includes the need for wholesalers or suppliers to obtain written permission from the fire department prior to providing product to any retailer. This must be done individually for each municipality.

To obtain permission to purchase these products, the purchaser must first verify to the fire department that he/she has written consent from the landowner and adjacent landowners who may be impacted by debris to discharge fireworks on their property. Discharge on public lands, in a forest protection area, on highways, road allowances, public beaches or parks is prohibited or restricted.

The following legislation applies to the storage, sale and use of **fireworks** in Alberta:

1) The *Explosives Act* as a piece of federal legislation sets out specifics for the manufacture, import, storage and

transportation of fireworks throughout Canada. It also provides for provincial and local jurisdictions to further regulate through provincial codes and municipal bylaws the sale, storage and usage of these materials.

2) In Alberta there are further requirements in the Alberta Fire Code 2006, under the *Safety Codes Act*, dealing specifically with records, processes and permissions. These requirements must be followed by anyone who wishes to store, sell, purchase and use/discharge fireworks.

The need for written permission from the fire department for anyone to sell, store, purchase or use fireworks is clear in the AFC 06. Some Alberta municipalities have written bylaws to clarify the administration of the system of permissions that are noted in Division B, Sections 3.2. & 5.7. of the AFC 06. Alberta Municipal Affairs – Codes and Standards is currently working with the Fire Technical Council of the Safety Codes Council and the Alberta Fire Chiefs Association to develop model bylaws to assist municipalities. In addition, a formal Fire Code Interpretation, dealing with the practical, technical, procedural and enforcement aspects of the AFC 06, is under development.

3) Under the *Municipal Government Act* municipalities have the ability through bylaw to make policy decisions and develop systems which guide fire departments in allowing sales and authorizing discharge of these products [or disallowing these activities within their jurisdiction] as well as deal with the practical implementation and enforcement of these decisions.

The AFC 06 does not contemplate any fire department giving written permission for the sale and purchase of these products without also giving written permission for the use and discharge of these products. Where the products are being purchased in one municipality and being discharged in another, no permission can be provided for the sale without specific written permission for the discharge

being provided by the municipality where discharge is to occur. Any fire department providing the former without the latter would be in violation of the intent of the AFC 06.

Municipal bylaws may also restrict written permissions to specific time frames throughout the year and/or provide for a system that discourages spur of the moment purchasing by restricting sales to daytime and/or weekday hours.

Where elected officials of the municipality have made the policy decision to allow the storage, sale and use of **low hazard fireworks**, the provisions of the AFC 06 which apply to the sale, storage and use of fireworks can be found in Division B, Parts 2, 3 and 5.

The following is a summary of requirements for the storage, sale, purchase, possession and discharge of **low hazard fireworks** in Alberta.

- 1) Wholesalers and retailers require fire emergency procedures to be developed and regularly reviewed with the fire department. (AFC 06 – Div B 2.8; 3.1.2.6.(1) and 3.2.2.5.)
- 2) Storage and display must be compliant with Part 3 of the AFC 06. Div B Section 3.2 lays out both the general and specific storage requirements for fireworks. (3.2.1., 3.2.2., 3.2.3., 3.2.10.) Clause 5.7.1.8.(1)(b) requires that any building or place used for sale or storage must conform with Part 3.
 - Any amount over 100 Kg gross weight shall be deemed to be “storage” and stored as per Sentence 3.2.10.5.(3).
 - All displayed product must be in lots that do not exceed 25 Kg gross weight and no product should be displayed in a manner where the product is directly accessible to any occupant.
 - It is suggested that retail staff will, once a sale has been completed with all required permissions, remove the materials the consumer has requested from display or storage and finalize the sale.
- 3) Any person wishing to sell, offer for sale, store, purchase, possess, handle, discharge, fire or set off fireworks

requires written permission of the fire department to do so. There are no exceptions. Therefore the following permissions must be obtained from the fire department, *acting as the agent of the municipality and subject to direction of the municipal council through bylaw*, prior to any fireworks being stored, sold or used in Alberta.

- The wholesaler will require written permission from the fire department to provide product to retailers within the municipality.
 - The retailer will require written permission from the fire department to store, display and sell these products.
 - The consumer will require written permission from the fire department to purchase and discharge these products. *No permission can be granted to purchase without a corresponding permission to discharge.*
 - Written consent for discharge from the landowner and any neighbouring affected landowners will be required prior to obtaining permission.
- 4) All retailers and wholesalers must retain for two years all of the following information (5.7.1.8.) and make it available upon request to the fire department and/or the authority having jurisdiction:
 - date of sale;
 - name, address and phone number of purchaser;

- description of goods sold;
- date and time of discharge, and
- the location and site description of where the fireworks will be discharged.

The first three items must be recorded and retained by all wholesalers and suppliers as well.

Kevan Jess is currently the Chief Fire Administrator for the Province of Alberta. Kevan has spent over 35 years working in public and emergency operations and training. For the 18 years prior to his present appointment, he worked as a Fire Service Advisor for Alberta Labour/Municipal Affairs. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Administration from the University of Alberta and has been a regular contributor and instructor for the Fire Emergency Training Centre (fire etc.) at Lakeland College, Lethbridge College and the Safety Codes Council. 🔥

Albertans, as well as Alberta’s municipalities and fire departments, who have questions about the sale and use of fireworks in Alberta are encouraged to contact:
Kevan Jess, Chief Fire Administrator
Safety Services
Alberta Municipal Affairs
Public Safety Division
16th Floor Commerce Place
10155 - 102 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 4L4
1-866-421-6929
or their Regional Field Officer – Fire – with the Alberta Emergency Management Agency. Regional contacts can be found at www.aema.alberta.ca/ab_contact_AEMA.cfm.

Spirit of generosity even in extreme weather

Most people know that the fire service is comprised of kind-hearted and generous people, but what people often don't know is just how much they do for their communities. One example is the Gibbons Fire Department.

On Sunday December 13 – the coldest day in North America and second coldest day around the world for the Edmonton area – 20 members of the 29-member Gibbons Fire Department bundled up for their annual food bank drive. First they handed out small bags of candy to all the homes in Gibbons with a note saying Merry Christmas from the Gibbons Fire Department. Then they went door-to-door collecting food and cash donations. Now in its 8th year, the effort raised over two tonnes of food plus \$655 in cash! All proceeds went to the Bon Accord and Gibbons Food Bank.

Eric Lowe, Gibbons Fire Chief, says that over the years, donations to the food bank have increased, but even he and his volunteers were surprised by the amount donated this year. “We are fortunate to have such great support from our community,” said Lowe. “This is the first year that we actually weighed the donations and we and the food bank staff were much impressed with the generosity of townspeople.”



Members of the Gibbons Fire Department proudly displaying their food bank donations (Photo: Courtesy of the Gibbons Free Press).

Lowe has been with the Gibbons Fire Department for 12 years, the last four as fire chief. Prior to that, he was with the military for 32 years and retired in 2007.

“In addition to fire prevention week activities at the elementary school, the fire service buys, cooks and takes dinners to seniors twice a year, and includes fire prevention information at these dinners.”

He also mentioned that his fire department is involved in other community efforts. In addition to fire prevention week activities at the elementary school, the fire service buys, cooks and takes dinners to seniors twice a year, and includes fire prevention information at these dinners. As well, he and his firefighters help with Christmas hampers each year and Lowe serves as Santa at the seniors lodge too!

In an effort to raise funds to replace their 1990 Emergency Response Unit, the fire service also organized a quad raffle fundraising event. The prize was announced after the food bank drive on December 13, 2009. The \$30,000 raised is a good start to their vehicle replacement fund. 🔥

Going from ordinary to extraordinary

BY CHAD SARTISON, CEO, The Fire Within – chad@thefirewithin.ca



the FIRE WITHIN

MUST ADMIT TO BEING excited when I found out the theme for this issue of *Alberta On Scene* was 'ordinary to extraordinary' as this has been my greatest desire for the fire service since The Fire Within's inception.

Although I wouldn't admit to watching Oprah (especially to my fellow firefighters), I did see an episode quite some time ago featuring John Travolta, who arguably lives a pretty dynamic life. He is an accomplished actor, businessman and pilot, among many other things.

When questioned about his secret to success he replied, "I choose to live life with pizzazz." When questioned by Oprah to define his answer, he responded, "it has nothing to do with money, it is the difference between choosing to drink coffee from a mug versus a styrofoam cup. Given the choice I will always go out of my way to drink from the mug." John's philosophy resonated with me and it is a perfect metaphor for how I try to live my life.

Last year I was told that some chiefs balked at my presentation at the Alberta Fire Chiefs Convention. They implied that I see the fire service through rose-colored glasses and that I am not a realist. I would argue that I choose to drink from a mug and truly believe that through accountability we can always move from 'ordinary to extraordinary.'

The Fire Within recently received a \$50,000 donation from The Motorola Foundation

"I am especially proud of this because it had nothing to do with me directly," said CEO Chad Sartison. "It was our initiative and the actions of the fire departments involved in The Fire Within that attracted this amazing contribution from such an important company. These funds will be directed towards fire and leadership education and giving back to the firefighters that give so much to the communities they serve."

Although demanding at times, I am blessed that my annual travels for The Fire Within have exposed me to countless fire departments and fire chiefs throughout North America. I have had the honour of kibitzing with Bobby Halton and Alan Brunacinni and everyone in between. As The Fire Within enters its 5th year I can say with certainty that we are all joined as a fire service by the same challenges.

One chief will share with me that recruitment and retention are worse for him because he is from a small town and has no able bodies. Another will tell me it is worse for her because she is near a major urban centre and everybody works in the city. Yet another is turning applicants away because of community initiatives and retention programs aimed at making his or her fire hall something that residents desire to become a part of.

I was recently in the United States (touring manufacturing facilities) and met a fire chief from a small southern town off of a major interstate. During our conversation, I mentioned that my department's call volumes were approximately 85. He calculated his at 220. I asked him what time of year made up the majority of his calls and he replied "Sonny, that's 220 per month!"

When I told him our 85 calls were per year, he responded in his thick southern accent "Don't yer guys get bored?"

He is the only paid member of a 100% non-paid volunteer department. I don't know how he does this but I promise as we expand The Fire Within initiative into the United States I will find

out! But what I do know is that he, his hall, his community and his challenges are no different than ours.

'Ordinary to extraordinary' is about leadership, unwavering focus and persistence. Recruitment, retention, equipment, funding, training and morale are all derivatives of sound leadership. Sure MDs, councils, CEOs and resources all influence our fire hall environments. However, through open, decisive, leadership we really can take control of our department's destiny.

The irony of The Fire Within is that departments that utilize our initiative the most actually need it the least! They are successful, well-run departments that happen to be striving for the extraordinary.

Please put on your rose-coloured glasses and look for the opportunities – not the obstacles – and the extraordinary won't be as far away as you imagine.

So what's a first step? Push your councils to not only train your firefighters but to train you! Ask for courses in leadership, motivation, communication and conflict resolution. Your councils owe you this and I guarantee you they are budgeting these types of courses for themselves. Leadership skills are no more instinctive or innate than firefighting skills; they are learned.

I know you already give enough of your time to the fire service but these skills are transferable and will make you more effective in your everyday lives. In my day job, I regularly deal with some of the wealthiest, most powerful business people in Calgary and they are always striving for knowledge and leadership skills.

Make it part of the deal – you don't have to pay me but you have to train me. Make me better than when I came and I will leave my hall and the fire service better when I leave. 🔥

Laws, Acts, Statutes, Bills, Regulations: Where are they?

Every day, you work hard to prevent, prepare for and respond to disasters and emergencies, but how often do you think about the laws that govern what you do? Are you aware of the acts and regulations that underpin your jobs and do you try to keep up-to-date with discussions about whether these laws need to be changed?

Below are some publicly available sources for viewing existing provincial Acts and Regulations as well as accessing discussions in the Alberta Legislature that could affect content and changes to legislation.

Note: This article does not deal with federal or municipal jurisdictions nor court cases.

Acts and Regulations

Queen's Printer

The Alberta Emergency Management Agency (AEMA) website has hyperlinks for the *Emergency Management Act*, Government Emergency Management Regulations and Disaster Recovery Regulations that all connect to the Queen's Printer homepage (www.qp.alberta.ca). The Queen's Printer is the "official source of Alberta government laws and publications" and allows you to search for and view laws and regulations (there may be fees to download or order print copies).

There are several ways to search the Queen's Printer site.

1) Enter **keywords** (e.g. fire, disaster, emergency) in the top-right "search catalogue" box. This retrieves Acts, Regulations and Reports with your keywords in the document title. For example, "fire" retrieves five records (not all of which may be relevant) to emergency management:

- C-5 Shotfires/Blasters Report
- Fire Code Regulation (Chapter/Regulation: 118/2007)
- Fire Control Zone Regulation (Chapter/Regulation: 29/2005)
- Firefighters' Primary Site Cancer Regulation (Chapter/Regulation: 102/2003)
- Mercury Emissions from Coal-fired Power Plants Regulation (Chapter/Regulation: 34/2006)

2) **Advanced search** is found in the "Laws Online / Catalogue" tab along the top. Searches can be more detailed but it does require you to already know some details (e.g., document title, chapter/regulation number, ISBN number or responsible ministry).

3) **Browse** lists of all Acts or Regulations (also through "Laws Online" tab). There are 592 Acts and 1,130 Regulations listed by title.

CanLII (www.canlii.org) from the Canadian Legal Information Institute offers more powerful searching of legislation (statutes & regulations), court cases and boards/tribunals from the federal and provincial jurisdictions. It also allows searching of the document text (i.e. full-text). Be aware that it is not an official site, may not have complete information and does not guarantee to be up-to-date. Even so, it is still extremely useful.

Legislature Discussions

The Legislative Assembly of Alberta website (www.assembly.ab.ca) has extensive records documenting the work of the Legislature. It is important to note that the Legislative Assembly Office is independent of the government and, in fact, the word "government" in our parliamentary tradition strictly refers only to the Premier and Cabinet.

Hansard is a transcript of almost every word uttered in the House when in session – everything from the introduction of guests to question period (n.b., not necessarily "answer" period) and debates on the various Bills before the house. Two important notes: 1) Bills become Acts after full debate and granting of Royal Assent and 2) Bill numbers (e.g. Bill 50) are temporary. If a Bill 'dies' at the end of one session¹ and is reintroduced for the next it will likely have a different number; likewise, when a Bill becomes an Act, it is given a "Chapter" number in the Statutes of Alberta.

Finding information in Hansard can be tricky and time consuming (www.assembly.ab.ca | Assembly Documents and Records) but often so worth the effort! There is a PDF file for each day's Hansard with a keyword "find" box; but since each session consists of 50+ sittings, there is a lot to wade through. The simple and advanced search options search all sittings in a given session: simple is best for single keywords or phrases while advanced is best for combining two or more keywords.

There are also "subject" and "speaker" indexes for each session that can be browsed or searched (using the 'find' box); each session's index, however, can run to 200 pages or more, making browsing tedious.

The biggest challenge (like all information searching) is to identify all the words under which your topic of interest might be discussed and how the same words might be used in other contexts. For example, "fire" captures fire prevention, fire extinguisher, fire truck, firefighter but also employment dismissal, selling assets too cheaply (fire sale), submitting questions rapidly and/or without enough thought (fire off an email), political opposition (firestorm), etc.

Committee Transcripts are also available (www.assembly.ab.ca | Assembly Documents and Records). The Standing Committee on Public Safety and Services might be of interest to the emergency management community.

Bills and Amendments (www.assembly.ab.ca | Bills and Amendments). When the media covers contentious issues before the House, it is often forgotten that Bills are proposals for laws and heated debates are part of the process. This link lists all Bills to be considered during a session and stages they are at in the process. It is useful to scan the Bill titles to see if any might apply to your interests and then read the text of the Bill.

Finding and keeping up with existing and proposed legislation relevant to your job is not easy but it is worth some effort so changes don't catch you by surprise. In addition, knowing where to follow up on sensational media coverage ensures you are not led astray by incomplete information and can make reasoned judgments about proposed changes to the laws that affect you.



¹ A session is often all the sittings in a calendar year but elections and extended sittings might affect this general rule.

What can ERAPs do for you?


ERAP is an acronym for Emergency Response Assistance Plan. Part 7 of the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Regulation requires a person who offers for transport or imports specific regulated products to do so with an approved ERAP. Examples of these products are: Liquefied Petroleum Gas, UN1075, hydrochloric acid, UN1789.

To activate the ERAP you will need to retrieve the shipping document from the transport unit. If the shipping document is not available, a copy of the shipping document can be obtained by contacting the transport company who will then contact the consignor and get the required information. The ERAP can be activated by anyone requiring assistance to deal with a dangerous goods incident and to protect the public and the environment from

harm. You can also contact the Coordination and Information Centre, (CIC) 1-800-272-9600, and request that they contact the Federal Remedial Measures Specialist (RMS) for assistance in dealing with the incident. The RMS has access to the ERAPs issued by Transport Canada and can relay information on how to deal with the product until the plan is in full response.

The main goal of an ERAP is to expedite a pre-practiced response to deal with a dangerous goods incident. First responders attend many different and unique emergency situations. These incidents are manageable provided there is an awareness of available resources and ample



communication. Use of these resources may prevent an incident from escalating. 

More information about ERAPs is available at www.transportation.alberta.ca/759.htm

ACICR update

New look, new format: 2009/2010 Alberta Injury Control Teleconference Series

BY NAN SHYBUNKA, Projects Coordinator, Alberta Centre for Injury Control & Research – nans@telus.net

The Alberta Centre for Injury Control & Research (ACICR) has presented over 100 educational teleconferences. These teleconferences contribute to the centre's goal of increasing the capacity of injury prevention practitioners to put research into action (prevention practice and policy) to address the injury issues in their communities. The teleconferences provide a mechanism for timely information sharing and a forum for discussing and sharing issues of interest with practitioners across the province.


Modifications were made to the 2009/2010 teleconference in response to participants' feedback. In the past, ACICR offered a monthly teleconference session addressing a variety of topics from September to June. Because of participants' increasingly hectic schedules and time constraints, the number of sessions was reduced so that participants

could attend sessions more consistently. Furthermore, the presentations were redesigned into a mini-series format to allow for a more in-depth examination of issues. An online survey was also added to collect feedback on individual sessions and to collect additional suggestions for future topics and or speakers. The online survey has already proven to be effective with over 70 per cent of participants responding with feedback after the teleconferences in September and October 2009.

The 2009/2010 teleconference season offers a total of six sessions divided into three mini-series. All sessions are held on the second Wednesday of the month from 9 - 10 a.m. (MST). In September and October,



the presentations addressed barriers to behaviour change and practical, effective approaches to facilitate change.

January and February examined social networking and knowledge transfer using drinking and driving social marketing campaigns as well as social networking methods employed by a national youth injury prevention program. In April and May the series will focus on advocacy and policy related to various injury issues. 

You may find further session details and registration information in the teleconference brochure and the teleconference port reservation (registration) form online at www.acicr.ualberta.ca under *Communications and Education*.

Recruitment & retention working group moving ahead full speed!

BY BRIAN MCEVOY, Recruitment & Retention Working Group Co-Chair

January 15, 2010 was the first meeting of the Recruitment & Retention Working Group for the New Year. While we realized we have accomplished a lot, we also have a long way to go.

As part of the project, we contracted Volunteer Alberta to conduct some major research which they have finalized and presented as the Phase 1 environmental scan report. The purpose of Phase 1 was to gather information from fire departments about their recruitment and retention issues and provide an analysis of the situation in Alberta. The research came up with five key areas identified; one of particular interest is the different approaches to screening applicants. The full report has been placed on the Alberta Fire Chiefs Association (AFCA) website (afca.ab.ca) for all members to read. Make sure you check the AFCA website and read the report before coming to the 2010 conference where Recruitment & Retention is on the agenda.

Also at the January 15 meeting, Karen Lynch of Volunteer Alberta presented a proposal for Phase 2 of the project indicating it will build on the findings in Phase 1. She introduced Harry Chandler of Volunteer Alberta who is joining the project as part of the Phase 2 work. In addition to his academic credentials, Harry is a volunteer firefighter in the Edmonton area with first-hand knowledge of the fire service and fire service issues. He brings additional understanding of what we need and plan to accomplish.

“The research came up with five key areas identified; one of particular interest is the different approaches to screening applicants. The full report has been placed on the Alberta Fire Chiefs Association (AFCA) website (afca.ab.ca) for all members to read.”

We plan to have the results of Phase 2 ready for the membership at the chiefs conference in June, and will be looking for members to participate in the different working groups we will be establishing as we move into a funding and implementation Phase 3. To make these working groups easier to manage and more logical for members to get together, we plan to establish them within each of the AFCA regions.

The outcome of Phase 3 will see the development of an assessment tool that can be used to determine where a department needs help, and which direction the members should take to rectify their issues, problems and needs. With this will also

be different templates and tools that can be modified and adapted to varying situations in the field, allowing fire services to create individual working plans to address local issues.

As you can see, the committee is working diligently on this initiative, and looking forward to receiving more input from the fire service in Alberta. We are in this together, working to make Alberta Fire Services sustainable, vital and effective!

Together, we can make this the best fire service there is! After all, we are:

Ordinary people, performing extraordinary tasks!

(Vegreville Fire Department motto) 

Chances are many of you have experienced it

BY IAN WILSON, Managing Director of the John Petropoulos Memorial Fund – ian@jpmf.ca

It's well after regular business hours and you're responding to an alarm call. You arrive at the scene but find no obvious signs of trouble. You have a look around ... nothing. The owner hasn't arrived yet to turn the alarm off but the door is unlocked, so with flashlight in hand, you step into the darkness. There are no obvious signs of distress, but it is a mess inside and you can't tell if what you smell is somebody's rotting lunch or if it's more chemical based than that.

There are boxes everywhere. They block the hallways, they're stacked in front of an exit and some of them are leaking. You look up to the ceiling and you notice that something is dripping on the boxes from exposed hanging wires.

The alarm is still pounding and you curse the business owner for not showing up yet to turn it off. You also curse him for not installing motion-sensor lights for occasions such as this.

Then, to your left, you hear a dull thud, followed by the sound of breaking glass. You quickly turn your head and shine a light in the area but you don't see anything.

IN THIS SCENARIO, there have already been half a dozen factors that have made this alarm call much more difficult than it had to be: the malfunctioning alarm; the potential for dangerous chemicals; the blocked hallways and exits; the exposed wires; the darkness.

These hazards are easily preventable.

This type of scenario is also the motivation behind the John Petropoulos Memorial Fund's latest project, the *Put Yourself in Our Boots* safety video and public service announcements (PSAs). There are thousands of unnecessary risks being posed to emergency responders on a daily basis, simply because workplaces are unsafe environments. The JPMF wants the public to look at workplace safety from the perspective of emergency responders, who often respond to calls after hours, in unfamiliar surroundings and under stressful conditions.

The video tells the story of Calgary Police Service Constable John Petropoulos, who died on Sept. 29, 2000 at the age of 32 while investigating a break and enter call at a warehouse. He fell through a false ceiling as there was no safety railing in place to warn him – or anyone else – of the danger. The alarm turned out to be false.

The video takes viewers through a series of building and industrial yard scenarios that are dangerous to first responders and it demonstrates the contrast between how a workplace appears during regular business hours and how it may appear during an after-hours emergency. It also illustrates the traffic hazards faced by first responders.

Accompanying the safety video are three video PSAs, each ones 30 seconds in length. They reflect the different perspectives of police, fire and EMS workers. As well, radio PSAs, print PSAs, a poster/info package, extended interviews and a *Put Yourself in Our Boots* website will be a part of the project.

Put Yourself in Our Boots is a must-have for building and safety inspectors, construction site superintendents, facility managers, building owners and those involved in workplace health and safety. It is an excellent resource for safety meetings, public presentations, community events, and relevant high school and post-secondary classes. Safety training and recruitment classes for emergency responders will also want to use the video to inform police, firefighters and paramedics about hazards they may encounter on calls at workplaces. 🔥

For more information, go to www.jpmf.ca or contact JPMF Managing Director Ian Wilson at ian@jpmf.ca.

“It (Put Yourself in Our Boots) is an excellent resource for safety meetings, public presentations, community events, and relevant high school and post-secondary classes.”

New videos available for borrowing

The following new videos are available through the Alberta Government Library, Labour Building site at 10808 – 99 Avenue, 3rd Floor in Edmonton. For more information, contact the library at 780-427-4671 or check out their online catalogue at <http://employment.alberta.ca/1733.html>

No Time to Spare

DVD Colour 11 min

This is a resource to help the fire service raise public awareness of critical fire safety issues in the home. It includes re-creation of a fatal fire to emphasize fire prevention, smoke alarms and fire evacuation. Residential sprinklers are also covered. Source: Ontario Fire Marshal.


What's Cooking – For Teens!

English and French versions DVD Colour (Power Point plus two video clips)

This is an interactive presentation for delivery by fire service educators to teenagers. It focuses on leading causes of kitchen fires and covers both smoke alarms and fire escape planning. Source: Ontario Fire Marshal.

There is no such thing as a FALSE ALARM

DVD Colour 7 minutes

Designed for teens and pre-teens, this DVD shows what really happens when a fire alarm pull station is activated. The program uses live action, animation, interview clips and music to help reinforce its teaching points. Special emphasis is given to legal consequences, costs and public harm that can result from false alarms. 

Digest

In memoriam

It is with great sadness that we note the passing of the following Alberta fire personnel:

* * * * *

Gloria Mercer, a long-service member of the Alberta Fire Commissioner's Office, died on January 27, 2010. News of her death was received with incredible sadness from hundreds of people across a broad spectrum of the fire and emergency

management service field and beyond. And rightly so, as she touched so many people with her "can do" attitude and willingness to help anyone who needed it. Read more about this extraordinary woman in the article on page 10.

* * * * *

New partnership announced by Fire Prevention Canada

Fire Prevention Canada recently announced its partnership with Last Logo's Prevention Connection. As stated on the FPC website, "the material available from Logos Prevention Connection Fire And Life Safety is an excellent supplement to the material available on our website. While Fire Prevention Canada's team of fire safety professionals work to keep the messaging clear, current and consistent, partners such as Last Logos work to bring these life-saving messages to communities."

Tracy Last, of Last Logos Promotional Inc. has been in the promotional product business since 1990. She joined her father's promotional company, which has been the Official Canadian Distributor of the Smokey Bear Wildfire Prevention Campaign since the 1970s.

For more information about Last Logos, visit www.preventionconnection.com/page/FirePrevention.html or www.lastlogos.com

Staff updates


Andrew Renfree joined the agency on December 1, 2009 as Herb Presley's replacement in the Business Continuity Section. Previously, Andy was employed by the Public Safety Division of Alberta Municipal Affairs, first as a research/writer working closely with the technical staff in Safety Services and then as the Information and Issues Coordinator, focused on risk management. Andrew was also involved on Alberta Municipal Affairs' Business Continuity team for about a year as a branch and divisional coordinator.

Len Hancock was recently announced as the successful candidate in the recent competition for Director of Field Operations. Len brings to the position experience as both a field officer and training officer. He is therefore extremely well connected to the agency's field staff and the communities they serve.

Two new field officer positions have been filled:

- **Jeremy Wagner** is the new North Central (Fire) Field Officer. Previously he was the Protective Services Manager and Fire Chief for Lac St. Anne County.
- **Don Rosland** is the new East Central (Fire) Field Officer. Don was a Deputy Fire Chief with the Camrose Fire Department.

Municipal fire loss data on AEMA website

Fire losses (number of fires, deaths, injuries, and property losses) by each municipality/ First Nations reserve are posted on the AEMA website at: www.aema.alberta.ca/se_statistics_reports.cfm 

First Aid Competition tests skill and team work

SO YOU'VE TAKEN FIRST AID and you've learned it well or you're on the health and safety team and you KNOW your First Aid. You think you're pretty good at it. Now you can prove it. St. John Ambulance presents an opportunity for teams of four to challenge themselves and others by competing in the 2010 Provincial First Aid Competitions on Saturday, April 17th in Edmonton.

At the competitions, realistic simulated emergency incidents test the First Aid knowledge and skills of each team in a timed situation. Teams provide First Aid treatment to casualties in a mock scenario created with props and volunteer casualties with simulated injuries.

Judges record the team's response and treatment of the casualties. Winners in different categories, including best teams in each division, best captain in each division and best aggregate-points-team, are presented with trophies during the banquet that follows that evening.


There are four divisions that teams can compete in, based on the level of First Aid certification:

- Emergency First Aid
- Standard First Aid
- Advanced First Aid
- Emergency Responder.

People from all walks of life participate - young first aiders, first aiders from medical areas, from mining communities, from office environments, and so on. They come from across the province and they prepare for the competitions months in advance.

"It's very much a team sport," said Beverly Lafortune, the event organizer and VP of Training and Community Services for St. John. "It's great to see how well people work together as they make decisions on the fly."

If you would like to get a team together and challenge yourselves, you can get more information and download a competitions package with registration information from the St. John Ambulance website www.sja.ca/ab.

Or, you are welcome to come to the Mayfield Inn & Trade Centre and watch how well first aid teams work when they come upon a scenario with multiple casualties. 

For more information, please contact: Danielle Deslauriers at St. John Ambulance 780-452-6565, ext. 8245 danielle.deslauriers@stjohn.ab.ca

2009 FPW recap

A look back at Fire Prevention Week 2009

Every time we hear a fire truck roll or hear their sirens, it's a moment of concern for the safety of the public and emergency responders. Although over the years we have reduced the number of fires and the destruction they bring to life and property, we need to be vigilant about fire prevention and safety, especially in homes, which is where most fire deaths occur.

Fire Prevention Week is held across North America each October as a reminder about the importance of fire safety and precaution. The 2009 campaign theme, Stay Fire Smart! Don't Get Burned, focused on burn awareness and prevention as well as keeping homes safe from the leading causes of fires. Given that thousands of scald burns occur each year across North America and most - if not all - are preventable, the 2009 theme was particularly important.

From October 4-10, 2009 fire and life safety educators across Alberta shared simple tips that everyone can do to stay fire smart and not get burned. The Alberta Emergency Management Agency (AEMA) supported these activities by developing and sharing a Fire Prevention Week campaign kit, including articles, statistics and lessons learned from actual local fires. The AEMA also hosted a media kick-off event as well as the two contests listed below. The corporate sponsor of Fire Prevention Week was ATCO Gas and ATCO Electric.

Alberta Weekly Newspaper Association contest

Every year, the AEMA hosts a contest to recognize fire prevention and safety coverage provided by members of the Alberta Weekly Newspaper Association

(AWNA) during Fire Prevention Week. All entries are judged by an independent panel for fun, innovative and informative fire prevention and safety messages, including local interest stories and pictures, editorials or the use of articles provided by the AEMA.

First place winners from each circulation category received an iPod Touch and a wall plaque. All winners and Honourable Mentions also received framed certificates, and all newspaper entries were eligible to win the grand prize draw of \$1,000.

Continued on back cover ►►

2009 Winners

Circulation: under 2,500

Winner: Fox Creek Times

Honourable Mention: MacLeod Gazette

Circulation: 2,501 - 5,000

Winner: Bonnyville Nouvelle

Honourable Mention: The Rocky Mountain House Mountaineer

Circulation: 5,501+

Winner: Leduc Representative

Honourable Mention: Innisfail Province

The grand prize winner was the Lacombe Globe. For 2009, the awards and prizes were presented by AEMA's local Field Officers since the AWNA

Symposium was postponed until 2011. We look forward to continuing this long-valued tradition and partnership with AWNA.

Children's Fire Prevention Week contest

Each year, the AEMA hosts a special contest for children across Alberta in partnership with local fire services and schools. Students

are encouraged to work through the fun and educational activities in the *Fire Safety Starts with You!* booklet, at school or at home, and enter the

province-wide contest. The winning student receives a home computer system courtesy of ATCO Gas, ATCO Electric and the AEMA. The winning child's school and homeroom teacher also each receive a \$200 cash prize.

The 2009 winner was eight-year-old Adrian Huttema from Coaldale Christian School in Coaldale. His teacher is Mr. P. Groenwold. We thank all of the local fire services and schools for promoting the contest and distributing the safety booklet to help students learn how to prevent and stay safe from fire.

Congratulations to all of the winners! 🔥



From left to right: Mark Murphy (AEMA), Joop Harthoorn (school principal), Andy VanRijn (Coaldale Fire Chief), Adrian Huttema (prize winner), Wayne Lazarick (ATCO), Jacen Abrey (AEMA), Kelly Mundel and Drew Clark (Coaldale Fire Department).

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Opinions expressed in this publication are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of AEMA or the Government of Alberta. Your comments and suggestions are encouraged.

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