



FOR PARTNERS IN FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT IN ALBERTA

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HIRF update

Dynamic awareness campaign focuses on home fires

FURTHER TO UPDATES IN previous issues of *Alberta On Scene* about activities related to the High Intensity Residential Fire (HIRF) initiative, the HIRF public awareness campaign was launched on June 16 with Global TV Edmonton.

The campaign actually encompassed three phases – discovery and research, creative development and implementation. The campaign components were developed around the following theme:

“A home fire can become life-threatening within three minutes, but it may take the fire department seven or more to arrive.”

The campaign includes a 30-second commercial, radio station announcements and posters that are designed to create a sense of urgency and motivate the audience to visit a unique website created for the campaign: www.3minutedrill.alberta.ca

The second launch of the campaign will take place during Fire Prevention Week, October 4 - 10, 2009 and during periods of increased fire frequency (e.g. winter holiday season and whenever significant fires happen anywhere in Alberta that can create an opportunity for a “teachable moment” for the public to take action to prevent fires and prepare for fire emergencies.

As Alberta’s fire/emergency services are leaders in fire safety at the local level, the public they serve have come to expect fire safety information from their local fire/emergency services. This province-wide campaign will reach many Alberta homes and is likely to generate a lot of questions in the public’s mind. To this end, the following resources are available by AEMA to support fire/emergency services in their public education/awareness activities at the community level.

1. Posters from the HIRF campaign, which will be distributed to fire departments from AEMA



COOKS FRIES IN 8 MINUTES.
CAN ENGULF YOUR KITCHEN IN 3.

A detail from one of the awareness campaign posters that was designed to alert people to some of the key causes of fire in homes – see back cover for more posters from the series.

- 2. Free fire safety pamphlets, booklets, etc.,** available through an Internet-based ordering system, visit: www.aema.alberta.ca/ps_fire_safety_publications.cfm
- 3. Fire fact sheets** posted on the AEMA website, visit: www.aema.alberta.ca/pa_safety_fact_tip_sheets.cfm
- 4. Fire safety DVD and video library,** visit: <http://employment.alberta.ca/1733.html>

Continued on the back cover ►►



***2009 Fire Prevention Week**
October 4-10, 2009 | More info on page 23.

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

*Formerly know as Alberta FIREnews.

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"Alberta – A Province Prepared"

Public safety and protection of the environment are important priorities for this government and our vision in that regard is reflected in Government of Alberta Goal 7



Dave Hodgins

which states: "Alberta will be a safe place to live, work and raise families". The Alberta Emergency Management Agency's mission toward achieving that vision is:

"to create a province-wide fire and emergency management system that protects the people of Alberta, their property, the environment and the economy from the effects of emergency events."

The above statement is the mandate of the Alberta Emergency Management Agency (AEMA). If a disaster strikes it is important that everyone is prepared, and that is something that our agency and all our staff work towards.

For families and individuals, preparedness includes having emergency supplies, evacuation plans and functioning smoke alarms in place. For emergency management volunteers and staff, preparation is equally important. In addition to having the right supplies and plans, preparedness includes training. Learning how to set up a reception centre for evacuees, how to run an emergency operations centre and how to alert citizens that there is an emergency are just a few of the types of essential training.

The AEMA offers a number of courses free of charge to every municipality in Alberta. And, our training team is willing to travel throughout the province to teach a range of courses including:

1. Basic Emergency Management
2. Emergency Operation Centre
3. Disaster Social Services
4. Emergency Public Information
5. Functional Needs

"If a disaster strikes it is important that everyone is prepared, and that is something that our agency and all our staff work towards."

6. Emergency Public Warning System
7. Municipal Elected Officials
8. Personal Emergency Preparedness Train-the-Trainer
9. Registration and Inquiry
10. Advanced Emergency Management

Each course is taught in a classroom environment, with activities and group exercises designed to provide participants with the chance to apply the skills and knowledge they gain. In addition to classroom teaching, the AEMA has developed an online Basic Emergency Management Course where participants can work at their own pace online, and instantly receive the results of their exam.

For training courses not provided by the AEMA (e.g. fire training and search and rescue), there are a variety of grants available to municipalities. In addition, the Canadian Emergency Management College in Ottawa and **fire etc.** in Vermilion run excellent courses to assist emergency response and emergency management staff to become prepared. Further details about all of these training resources can be found in the training section of the AEMA's website: www.aema.alberta.ca

Take full advantage of the opportunities available to you so that you can help your community and neighbours to be prepared for a disaster or emergency situation. 🔥

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

Taking stock of emergencies

BY JILL SCHEYK, Alberta Municipal Affairs Communications Intern

ON MAY 4, 2009, the City of Edmonton's Sir Winston Churchill Square was crowded with fire trucks and other emergency vehicles. The reason? A joint initiative by the provincial government and the City of Edmonton to kick off Emergency Preparedness week and the importance of Albertans being prepared for an emergency by putting together their own 72-hour emergency kits and drafting an emergency plan.

"Planning ahead can significantly reduce the impact of an emergency or disaster and help Albertans recover quickly," said Ray Danyluk, Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Emergency Preparedness Week recognizes that the unexpected happens all the time. Whether it's a power outage, severe weather or a wildfire, Albertans need to be prepared to take care of their basic needs for at least 72 hours.



A copy of this poster is available at:
www.getprepared.gc.ca/knw/ris/index-eng.aspx

Emergency Preparedness Week recognizes that the unexpected happens all the time. Whether it's a power outage, severe weather or a wildfire, Albertans need to be prepared to take care of their basic needs for at least 72 hours.

A well-stocked 72-hour kit should include at least the following:

- two litres of water per person per day;
- enough canned and dried food for three days;
- a manual can-opener;
- small bills and change;
- important documents like birth certificates and wills;
- a flashlight;
- a radio;
- batteries; and
- any prescription medications.

Minister Danyluk also announced the ministry's plan to strengthen the Emergency Public Warning System (EPWS) with new technology. The ministry is currently accepting proposals suggesting ways to expand the reach of EPWS. As early as next year, EPWS could include Facebook, Twitter; satellite radio and TV, text or telephony technology as well as traditional media notifications.

Alberta's EPWS has been activated over 80 times since it went into operation in 1992. While most of the activations have been weather-related, particularly for severe thunderstorms and tornado warnings, the system has also been used for telephone system failures affecting 911 emergency calls and fire-related issues. 🔥



From left to right, AEMA's Cecily Roper, Ed Hains, Ernie Polsom and Pat Mahony pose in front of their 72 hour kit.

Enhancing training

“...discussions, working groups and senior Alberta Emergency Management Agency management have focused on what training opportunities currently exist, how effective they are and what other possibilities should be created.”

THE FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES TRAINING INITIATIVE (FESTI) has been a complex and involved endeavour that has encompassed a broad group of independent components – all related to training for fire and emergency services personnel. Over the past several months, discussions, working groups and senior Alberta Emergency Management Agency (AEMA) management have focused on what training opportunities currently exist, how effective they are and what other possibilities should be created. Provided below is a progress update of some of the initiatives under FESTI.

Fire service accreditation and certification services

It's official! As of April 1, 2009, fire service accreditation and certification services were transferred to the AEMA from Lakeland College. Agency staff settled into the Vermilion Provincial Building are responsible for marking exams and receiving and reviewing applications for certifications and equivalencies. Generally speaking, the Vermilion office is the office of the provincial emergency management training Registrar. The agency will continue to work with emergency management partners to establish advisory groups that can consider accreditation and certification issues for fire, search and rescue, emergency management, disaster social services and amateur radio operators. The balance of the fire and emergency services training initiative study areas will now be conducted by outside experts and maintained by AEMA. This includes the training delivery studies, the implementation of the Incident Command System (ICS) in Alberta and

the development of the western Canadian emergency services study centre. A Request for Proposal has been developed and it is expected vendors will be chosen this fall.

Regional training sites

Alberta On Scene readers may be particularly interested in the discussion around regional practical training sites. Vendors that the agency will hire will be required to develop a process to identify suitable locations for possible sites, the content and training props required, as well as identifying ways to fund these sites. There is significant interest in regional training by other emergency services disciplines, such as police and EMS. There are also a number of existing sites to be considered during this study.

In addition to fixed sites, mobile training was raised as a possible way to improve access to training, especially in the volunteer sector. A preliminary analysis of all commercially available sites for fire service training props has been completed by Lakeland College. For anyone wanting a copy of the study, contact Chris Senaratne, AEMA Manager, Accreditation and Certification, at 780-422-9000.

Clandestine Labs

Two meetings have been held involving the Clandestine Lab Working Group. The group is developing a training strategy to deal with clandestine labs and will be capturing their recommendations in a report to be submitted to the agency executive. The recommendations will identify the people to be trained, the type of training and curriculum required, and the best training delivery methods to use in Alberta.

Alternative curriculum pilot projects

The AEMA is pleased to announce the success of the alternative curriculum pilot projects. Many thanks to Chief Parrent of Whitecourt who successfully piloted the Jones and Bartlett NFPA 1001 Firefighter Professional Qualifications program; Deputy Chief Pieper of the MD of Rockyview who piloted the Cengage Learning NFPA 1001 curriculum; and Chief Training Officer Godwin of Red Deer Emergency Services who is piloting the IFSTA NFPA 1001 curriculum. AEMA is also pleased with the outcomes of the on-line learning pilots and gratefully acknowledges the assistance of Lakeland College, EducExpert Inc. and the students from the 23 participating fire departments. The project team is recommending that these publishers and on-line providers be utilized in Alberta. 🔥

Did you know ...?

When the AEMA launched the High Intensity Residential Fire public awareness campaign in June, the website – www.3minutedrill.alberta.ca – received 70,000 hits in the first two weeks of the campaign launch.

With a little help from her friends

Gloria Mercer is tired but happy, especially after meeting with Edmonton Oilers defenceman Sheldon Souray, a treat the lifelong fan will never forget. Gloria wore her jersey to greet him at the meeting her Alberta Emergency Management Agency coworkers arranged.

She and Sheldon swapped words of encouragement – hers for his upcoming season, his for her fight with cancer. The same way Gloria has cheered for the Oilers since they first became a team in 1979, Sheldon now cheers for her.

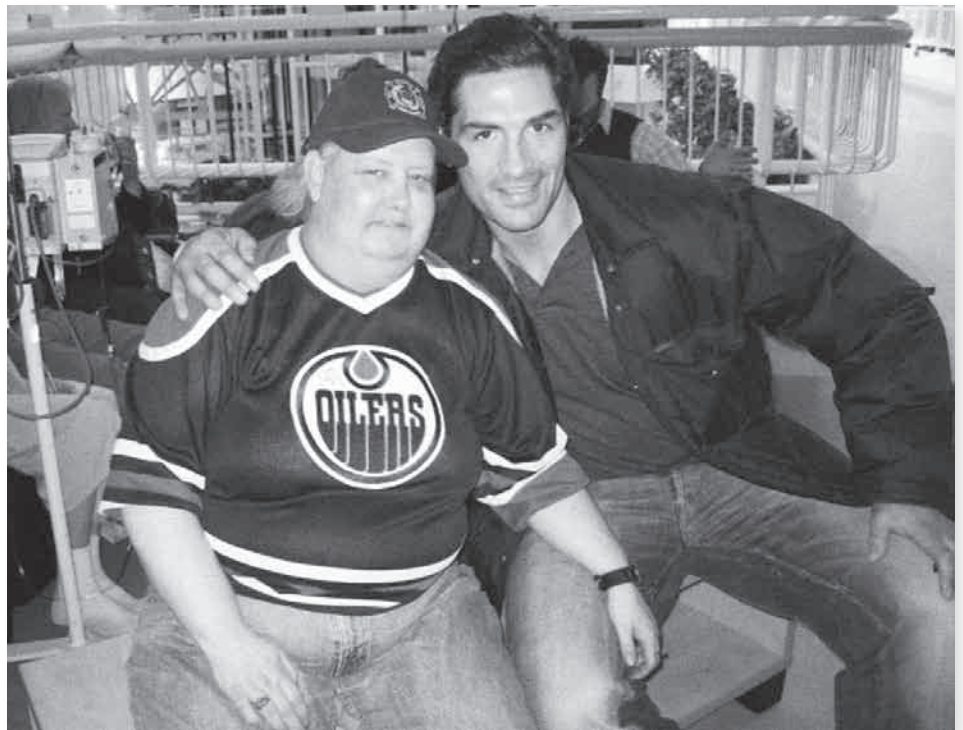
Diagnosed with an aggressive, advanced form of lung cancer, Gloria does not know how long she has to live. Her doctor told her in January it could be just a few months.

“I’m just too stubborn to die,” Gloria said. “It’s not my time to go.”

Her voice is resolved, but her eyes show her fear and fatigue. Cancer is no easy road for anyone, even for a woman whose spirited approach to work and life set her apart. “She’s tough, but she always approaches things with a sense of humour,” said Mahendra Wijayasinghe, longtime friend and coworker. “She’s an irreplaceable part of the Alberta fire service.”

Gloria, 47, was in high spirits and good health last Christmas season. It was the New Year that brought a shadow to her doorstep. In early January she fell down the stairs in her townhouse, hitting her head violently at the bottom. She began to have headaches, but dismissed them. It was only when the headaches continued and the pain became unbearable that Gloria visited the emergency room. “We thought I may have had a concussion from the fall,” she recalled.

Gloria stayed in hospital for a week. After a CT scan revealed swelling in her brain, she underwent what seemed like a



Gloria Mercer is happy to meet with Edmonton Oilers defenceman Sheldon Souray.

never-ending series of tests. “Everything was happening so fast. With all the tests they were doing, I started thinking something was definitely wrong.”

“Everything was happening so fast. With all the tests they were doing, I started thinking something was definitely wrong.”

Gloria still vividly remembers the phone call that told her how wrong things were. “It was January 19. The doctor asked me if I was sitting down... I was in shock. I had tears in my eyes and I just said ‘Oh my God. This can’t be happening. You can never prepare yourself for news like that.’”

Hopeful that shrinking the tumors could lengthen Gloria’s life, doctors immediately scheduled her for radiation therapy. She completed a course of radiation therapy that left her physically weak, but mentally strong. Her determination grows with each passing day.

Part of what spurs Gloria on is her love for her daughter Amanda, 17.

“She adores Amanda,” Mahendra added. “She often talks about Amanda’s high school graduation next year, and how important it is that she is alive to see it.”

In her 29-year career, Gloria has made more than a few coworkers into friends and they do what they can to help in this uncertain time. AEMA coworker Rudy Parenteau, Sheldon Souray’s uncle, jumped at the chance to do something special for Gloria.

“Sheldon is a big open-hearted guy... it was touching to see them together,” Rudy said. “The impact he had on her was amazing.”

Gloria’s colleagues have dropped her off at doctor’s appointments and bought her Oilers tickets to show their support.

Coworkers cheer Gloria on from the sidelines as she tackles the battle for her life. For now, Gloria pushes her fear aside and prepares herself to meet the challenge head on. 🔥



“Rewards of Partnerships” conference a success story

BY ALL ACCOUNTS, the 2009 AFCA conference was a great success, from start to finish. For the opening ceremonies, a number of special guests attended including Red Deer-North MLA Mary Anne Jablonski; Red Deer South MLA Cal Dallas; Edmonton-Castle Downs MLA Thomas Lukaszuk; Calgary Nose-Hill MLA Dr. Neil Brown; Red Deer Mayor Morris Flewwelling; Red Deer County Commissioner Rick Henderson; Red Deer Fire Services Deputy Chief John Wyatt; Red Deer County Fire Services Chief Allan Weiss; Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties Vice President Gerald Soroka; Alberta Emergency Management Agency Managing Director Dave Hodgins; Alberta Fire Commissioner Trent West and Chaplin Drew Bernard. Red Deer Fire Services presented the colour party.



An overview of the AFCA conference exhibit hall.

The Trade Show continued to be a significant part of the conference, drawing 100 interior exhibitors and 31 external booths. Trade show members were also pleased with the new format of one full day for the

trade show. The keynote speaker for the Monday breakfast was Chad Sartison who spoke of his experiences in the retention and recruitment of volunteers in the fire

services. Three hundred members and guests attended the Monday evening banquet, where the keynote speaker was Bruce Kirkby, who spoke on his experiences

AFCA business issues

During the business sessions, a new Board was elected for 2009-10, with Brian Cornforth, City of Lethbridge Fire Chief, elected President; Al Schram, Edson Fire Chief, was elected First Vice President, and Peter Krich, Chief of the Camrose Fire Department, was elected as Second Vice President. Cammie Laird, Clearwater Fire Chief; Cory Chegwyn, Yellowhead County Fire Chief; and Greg Van Tighem, Jasper Fire Chief, were all elected for a one-year term. John Helton's re-election in Region 3 was confirmed by the general membership. Brian McEvoy, Bonnyville Regional Fire Chief, became past president. Other AFCA directors are Brian Ballard, Saddle Hills County Fire Chief; Bill Graham, Barrhead Fire Chief; Bill Garries, Bentley Fire Chief; Graham Clark, High River Fire Chief; and Greg Erickson, Cardston Fire Chief. Harvey Dussault retired as Trade Director and has been replaced by Jeff Bauman, Whelen Eng. Co., Calgary. Vern Elliott, Strathcona County Deputy Chief, Operations, is the industrial representative. Presidential advisors are Ken Block, Edmonton Fire Services Fire Chief, and Ron Robinson, Medicine Hat Fire Chief.

AFCA Board members reported on activities in the various regions and other reports were received from the committee. Reports are posted on the AFCA website. The membership also approved resolutions from Region 5 requesting the Province of Alberta support and fund the dispatch of first responders. The resolutions direct that the AFCA Executive Committee meet with the Minister of Health and Wellness.

The Board of AFCA presented two resolutions:

- a cadet-training program for young people who are in high school and are interested in a firefighting career. The resolution urges the Minister of Education to consider two pilot projects in Alberta, where students would receive credits towards their high school diploma.
- amending the current bylaws to have membership fees set by the AFCA Board.

Region 1 resolution urges the Government of Alberta and the AEMA to develop a provincial framework for hazardous material response.

as an adventurer. His book was presented to the various speakers during the conference.

Tuesday the delegates got down to business. The breakfast keynote speaker was Martin Krezalek from Alberta Environment, who spoke about the Community Spill Response Program, a community-based initiative launched by Alberta Environment through ASERT. The program promotes strong relationship-building between the Government of Alberta, municipal fire services and mutual aid partners. The remainder of the day provided a number of workshops on various subjects including:

- Ed Kirtley, retired Fire Chief, Guymon Fire Department in Oklahoma, outlining the role of the fire chief in local politics;
- Karen Lynch, Executive Director of Volunteer Alberta presenting strategies to ensure that fire departments create solid recruitment and retention plans;
- Monica Ahlstrom, founding member of Rocky Mountain House Volunteer Search



Some of the many vehicles displayed at the 2009 AFCA conference.

and Rescue and the first president of Search and Rescue Alberta discussing her organization;

- Ben Kleane, Training/Safety Chief of the Cincinnati Fire Department, focusing on various extinguishment methods and the roles and responsibilities of search and rescue teams in Alberta; and

- Don Henry from **fire etc./** Lakeland College discussing Apparatus Sustainability and why we should stop employing a crisis maintenance attitude and ensure your next truck meets a standard.

The last session, by Doug Sproule, Fire Chief for NOVA Chemicals Emergency Services Department, stressed the importance of all

emergency providers working together, along with community awareness and mutual aid programs, citing the Pine Lake tornado as an example.

The keynote speaker for the noon lunch sponsored by Alberta Municipal Affairs and the AEMA was Managing Director Dave Hodgins. Dave gave an overview of the activities of the agency; Deputy Fire Commissioner Spence Sample provided an update on the new training initiatives.

Total attendance averaged 200 each day. The 2010 AFCA conference will be held in Edmonton at the Mayfield Inn, June 19 - 23, 2010. 🔥

For more information about the AFCA, contact Bill Purdy, AFCA Executive Director, at 780-892-2125 or 780-719-7939 or by email at bpurdy@xplornet.com

“The trade show continued to be a significant part of the conference, drawing 100 interior exhibitors and 31 external booths. Trade show members were also pleased with the new format of one full day for the trade show.”

Activating education for behaviour change

Wildfires in Alberta are a dangerous reality. Nearly 1,800 wildfires burned through the Forest Protection Area of Alberta in 2008. Over half were caused by the careless actions of people and many had the potential to destroy homes. Sustainable Resource Development (SRD) is taking a new approach to changing Albertans' behaviours about the importance of safe burning practices and making their homes and communities *FireSmart*. Nearly all human-caused wildfires are preventable, and engaging people at the community level is essential in changing these hazardous behaviours.

Encouraging people to change their behaviours is not an easy task. One way SRD is trying to change behaviours is by delivering personalized information on a small scale to communities. This has proven to be more effective than large-scale, broad information intensive campaigns.

"The best way to change a certain behaviour is to personalize the message," said Geoffrey

Driscoll, community relations coordinator for SRD. "By engaging residents at the community level, you can show them what they can do to participate and relay the immediate benefits to them."

In addition to other projects around the province, SRD is currently implementing a community-based social marketing pilot project in Edson. The project aims to increase the number of homes that use *FireSmart* principles in the municipality of Cardale. If successful, a broader, provincial program will be developed using tools and tactics piloted in Cardale.

Encouraging commitment in a community is an important step to changing behaviour. Studies show that people who have initially committed to a small behaviour change request are more likely to agree to a larger request in the future. For example, most people will commit to small tasks to begin engaging in *FireSmart* principles, like keeping their grass mowed and watered. They are then more likely to follow through

with larger *FireSmart* steps in the future, like installing metal fire screens on windows and doors.

"There's a feeling of dedication and consistency," said Driscoll. "Once people commit to something, there's a natural urge to continue that initiative."

Interacting with residents face-to-face is a great way to get the message across. One way SRD does this is by holding barbecues in neighbourhoods. People attend these barbecues and learn about what they can do to make their homes *FireSmart*. By getting involved in the community and interacting with residents, *FireSmart* principles are more likely to be taken home and implemented. "People really appreciate having their questions answered by someone in person," said Heather Hawkins, Wildfire Information Officer for the Foothills area. "It's a great way to connect with people in a fun, casual setting." 

For more information please visit the *FireSmart* webpage: www.firesmart.alberta.ca

Partners in protection

Uniting the *FireSmart* campaign

Too often we are made witness to a growing trend of large, uncontrolled wildland fires threatening communities and forcing evacuations. Canada has already experienced fire loss early on in the 2009 fire season. Alberta has seen homes lost in Hobbema, British Columbia has seen homes lost in 100 Mile House and 70 Miles House, Nova Scotia has seen homes lost in Halifax and countless more communities have been evacuated and have felt the social and economic disruption of wildland fire. Partners in Protection, a non-government organization, is advocating to change this disturbing trend.

Partners in Protection's mission is to facilitate interagency cooperation in the promotion of awareness and education aimed at reducing the risk of loss of life and property from fire in the wildland/urban interface. In the late 1980s, a small

group from Alberta, including the Alberta Fire Chiefs Association, came together to focus on the challenges facing emergency management systems in the wildland/urban interface. It was this gathering of forward-thinking individuals that formed the Partners in Protection Association.

Partners in Protection's membership has grown to include representatives from all across Canada and includes a diverse group of organizations, businesses, research institutes and agencies.

These groups come together to address current realities and provide proactive solutions to challenges. Current solutions are focusing on grass roots activation – building change from the ground up.



Ken Saulit and Kelly O'Shea and the mascots of interface fire (Partners in Protection Archives).

There is a growing momentum in community and neighbourhood groups activating change. The Town of Jasper, City of Kamloops, City of Calgary, Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo and the

Kananaskis Improvement District are active members of Partners in Protection and bring the values of *FireSmart* into the neighbourhoods and backyards of Canadians.

Municipalities are encouraged to join Partners in Protection and unite in the campaign to “work together for safer communities in the wildland/urban interface” (Partners in Protection’s primary objective). The Partners in Protection Association provides a venue for community leaders to share meaningful ways of

promoting, educating and empowering their communities to become *FireSmart*.

Partners in Protection is well known for developing the *FireSmart* – Protecting Your Community From Wildfire publication that has served as a framework for wildfire and emergency management agencies. In 2000, this publication received national recognition from the Canadian Institute of Planners, Natural Resources of Canada and Alberta Environment, Land and Forest Service (now Alberta Sustainable Resource Development).

The Partners in Protection Association is exploring opportunities to deliver a nationwide *FireSmart* initiative designed to move *FireSmart* beyond government regulated lands into the backyards and neighbourhoods of Canada’s communities at risk from the threat of wildland fire. When residents take action within their community they protect and prepare their community from wildland fire potentially threatening their livelihood. 

To help activate change in your community and become a member of Partners in Protection visit their webpage at: www.partnersinprotection.ab.ca

Post-secondary educational opportunities

Many field-specific educational sources available in Alberta

MOVING FROM AN INDUSTRIAL age to an information age has created many opportunities for people in a broad spectrum of fields. That is certainly true of education. Take the emergency management field for instance. Evolving from hands-on experience to a training school and specialized courses, the resources now available within the emergency management field are many. In Alberta alone, there is a wide range of post-secondary programs, from firefighter to policing to emergency communications and response.

Perhaps one of the best known is the Alberta Fire Training School, which was established in 1959. As the article on page 12 indicates, this institution has grown over the years and so have its course offerings and training opportunities, to the point where it is now included as part of Lakeland College.

And while **fire etc.**, Lakeland College is perhaps the best known educational institution for fire and emergency training and education in our province, Alberta also has a number of other post-secondary institutions that offer courses and programs in the broad field of emergency management.


- Within its Health and Safety division, the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT) offers a range of health and

safety-related courses. In addition to CPR training, they offer an Emergency Management Diploma (Distance) that includes 19 courses delivered online via WebCT plus a practicum. The Health Care Aid/Emergency Medical Responder program is a 26-week certificate program designed for Aboriginal/Métis women to obtain up-to-date health care education. Additionally, there is an Emergency Medical Responder part-time program that is delivered via webCT, culminating in a certificate upon completion. *Details about these courses are available at www.nait.ca*

- Lethbridge College has a number of courses within its Criminal Justice and Law division. This includes a two-year diploma in Policing, with both September and January admissions; successful graduates may also transfer into the third year of the Bachelor of Applied Arts – Correction Studies degree (at Lethbridge College) or the Bachelor of Professional Arts – Criminal Justice degree (through Athabasca University). This institution also offers a Criminal Justice for Aboriginal Learners program and a 32-week Métis Criminal Justice certificate. Lethbridge College also offers Fire Investigation and Prevention and Fire Administration programs that provide a Credential of Academic Achievement after completing a series of courses chosen in consultation with

the Lethbridge Fire Department. *Details about these programs are available at www.lethbridgecollege.ab.ca*

- Grant MacEwan College (now MacEwan College) offers a diploma in Police Studies completed over two years of full-time studies or part-time through evening studies. There is also a condensed stream of police studies for dedicated learners offered over 16 months of continuous study and a nine-month full-time study Aboriginal Police Studies certificate program that is delivered in a cultural context that specializes in issues facing Aboriginal communities. As well, this institution offers an eight-week Emergency Communications and Response certificate program to train dispatchers. *For more information on these programs, visit www.macewan.ca*
- Medicine Hat College also offers a nine-month Emergency Communications and Response certificate program that includes eight courses, one of which is a hands-on practicum. *For more information about this program, visit: www.mhc.ab.ca/program/ecr*

There are also many courses offered by volunteer fire departments, through industry training and from private sector companies. A quick search on Google or other internet search engines can provide many more options for those seeking additional learning opportunities. 

New role and new organization in the making

WITH AN INCREASING emphasis on emergency preparedness and the need for a coordinated effort during a major emergency, The City of Calgary and Calgary Fire Department recently embarked upon an important new initiative - revitalizing the Calgary Emergency Management Agency (CEMA) for the City of Calgary.

Agency Director Bruce Burrell (also Calgary's Fire Chief) recruited Tom Sampson to take on the role of Deputy Chief responsible for the development, organization and management of CEMA.

As Sampson points out, CEMA has five specific purposes:

1. developing emergency management policy and governance to reduce and mitigate hazards and vulnerability;
2. building a disaster-hardened and resilient community that is prepared for emergency management incidents;
3. building operational readiness by developing and managing plans, policies and procedures for incident and preparedness response;
4. strengthening Calgary emergency management, including CEMA staff and partners within The City of Calgary;

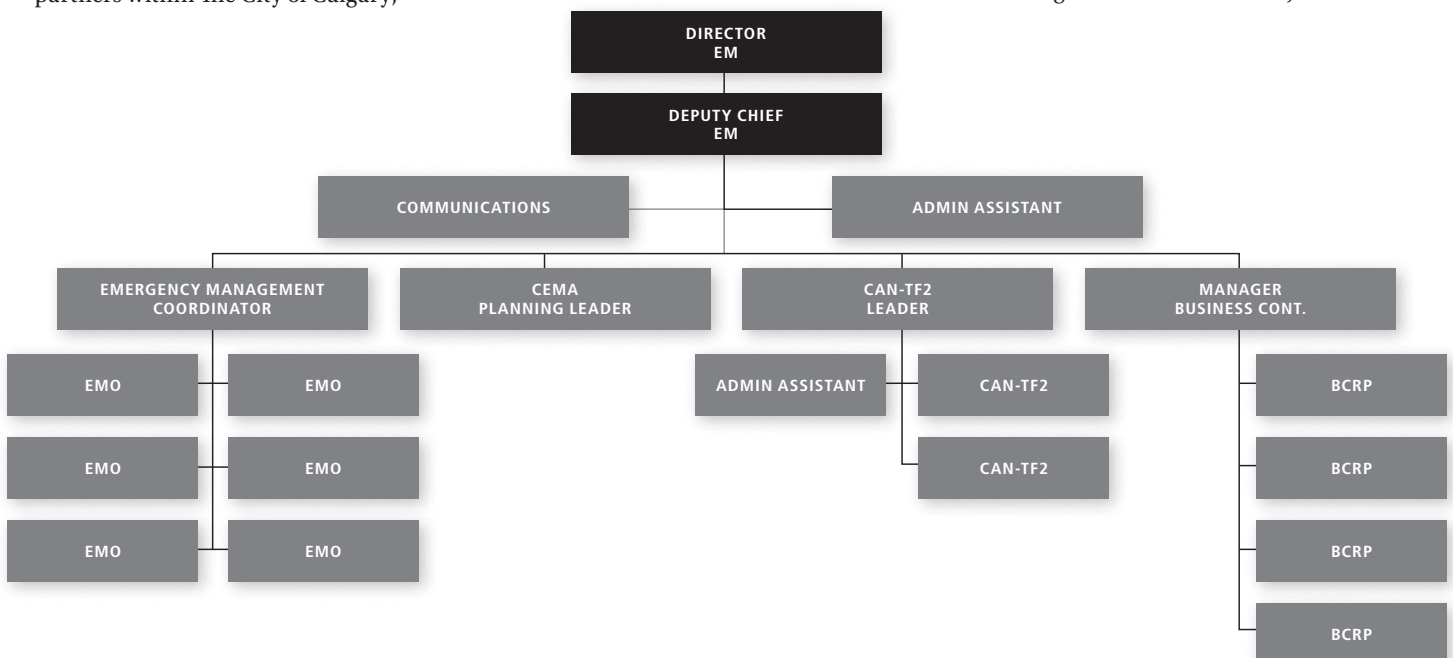


Left to right MLA Jonathan Denis, Ald. Hawkesworth, Community President McDermid, Ald Chabot, Ald Farrell, Mayor Bronconnier, Deputy Sampson, Ald Ceci.

5. developing key recovery plans and protocols with the Calgary community to prepare for post-incident relationship management.

While Deputy Chief Sampson is still in the process of hiring staff, he anticipates that CEMA will be fully staffed by fall 2009. The completed staff complement

will include an Emergency Management Coordinator and six emergency management officers, a CEMA Lead Planner (designated professional planner), three staff from the Canada Task Force 2, Alberta Region (HUSAR), and one manager with staff devoted to business continuity and recovery planning (as indicated in the organization chart below).



With 24 plus years' experience in Emergency Medical Services, most recently as chief of EMS Calgary for 12 years, Sampson is excited about this new opportunity. "This is such an interesting challenge, especially with so many great people in the business," stated Sampson. "I'm really looking forward

to getting CEMA fully functioning and also engaging with partners in the community and across Alberta and Canada."

Enthusied by a May 2009 City of Calgary survey that indicated over three-quarters of Calgarians claim to have made some

type of preparation for a disaster (up nine per cent compared from 2006), Sampson added, "that's a great starting point toward our efforts to getting more and more Calgarians prepared for a possible emergency situation." 

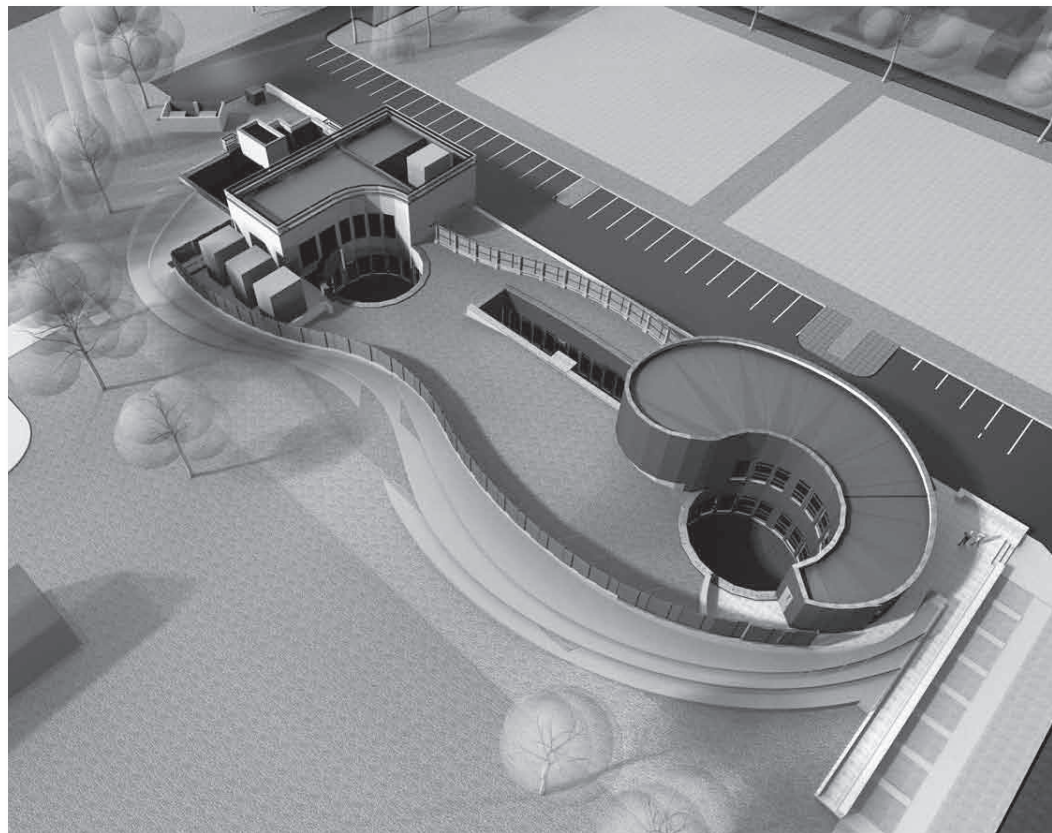


Calgary Emergency Management Agency members are joined by Mayor Dave Bronconnier and members of Calgary City Council and MLA Jonathan Denis.

CEMA unveils new emergency operations centre

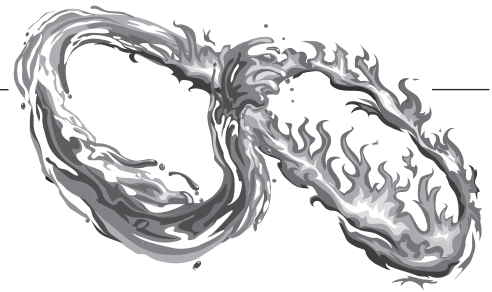
The ground-breaking ceremony for the Calgary Emergency Management Agency's Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) was held on Tuesday June 16, 2009. The new 53,000-square-foot facility encompasses three floors, with most of the facility underground.

"The EOC is well positioned to deal with the elements as well as emergency conditions," noted Sampson. "In addition to the building layout and structure, it was also designed to enable us to run off the grid for a minimum of 72 hours. As well, only the public area for the media centre is situated above ground level."



An artist rendering of the Calgary Emergency Operations Centre.

Long history of successful growth continues



fire etc. LAKELAND COLLEGE emergency training centre

For 50 years, **fire etc.**, Lakeland College's emergency training centre, has set the standard for firefighting instruction.

The organization serves students from across Canada and around the world at its headquarters in Vermilion, Alberta as well as through distance learning and by taking its services to client locations.

fire etc. has its roots in the post-World War II era, when massive infrastructure development was taking place in Alberta's urban and rural communities. To respond to this growth, an organization was needed to provide training for firefighters in Alberta. Initially there was a mobile, nameless unit that trained Alberta's volunteer fire departments. In 1959, a Fire Officers Training School was established in Vermilion, under the jurisdiction of the Alberta Fire Commissioner's Office.

In 1968, the organization was renamed the Alberta Fire Training School. Beginning in 1974, courses were restructured and firefighting and fire officer training was split into distinct career paths. National

Fire Protection Association standards were adopted in the late 1970s to guide course development.

In 1998, the school moved from provincial government jurisdiction to become a subsidiary corporation of its neighbour, Lakeland College. The **fire etc.** identity was established in 2002; in 2004, the organization melded completely with the college, becoming **fire etc.**, Lakeland College's emergency training centre.

fire etc. continues to make adjustments to its programming and modes of delivery. Today the emergency training centre is known for its wide range of emergency services programming. Training includes municipal, industrial, airport and wildland firefighting, workplace health and safety, emergency services management and administration skills development, emergency preparedness for municipalities, public sector organizations and industry, pre-employment programs and, as of September 2009, emergency medical services programs.


"From the instructors on the frontlines to our administrative and support personnel, every staff member at the college is dedicated to one goal: working together to deliver top-quality services that meet the needs of our clients," said Denis Cunninghame, acting dean of **fire etc.** "Through the efforts of our students, instructors and staff, we're proud to say we've made a difference."

Cunninghame noted that they have had second and third-generation students take training from **fire etc.** "We've also had the children of our instructors follow in their footsteps and work at the school," he said.

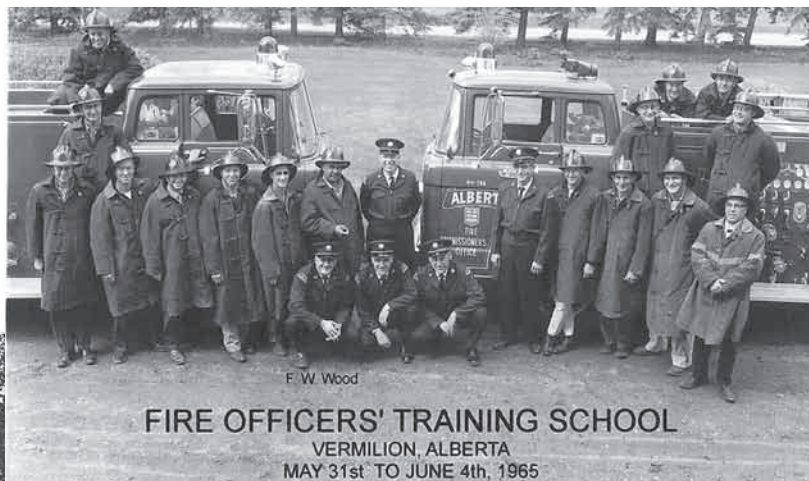
Among the full-time programs offered by **fire etc.** are firefighting, emergency services technology and the Bachelor of

Applied Sciences: Emergency Services. Starting this fall, **fire etc.** will also offer paramedic and emergency medical technician (EMT) programs. These programs will be offered primarily online with some days spent in class learning technical skills. The on-site portion of the programs will be offered in Camrose.

"The paramedic diploma and EMT certificate programs are a great addition to our emergency services offerings," added Cunninghame.

The new programs help Lakeland College move closer towards its goal of being a leader in all emergency services training. 

These photos reflect some of the changes that have occurred over the years.



For more information on **fire etc.** visit www.lakelandcollege.ca

Gaining access to library resources



PREVIOUSLY, we introduced fire and emergency management resources available at the Commerce Place site of the Alberta Government Library (AGL). November 2008 (*Alberta FIREnews*) listed 40 books and 7 journals and May 2009 (*Alberta On Scene*) introduced Press Display for online newspaper access. This article helps clarify who can use our materials and how to go about it.

Anyone is welcome to read our books and journals on-site. We are located on the 5th floor of Commerce Place in downtown Edmonton and open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. weekdays. Although small, we have a few comfortable chairs, tables and desks for visitor use. For those who cannot easily visit us or need more time to digest all that important information, borrowing is possible but the details depend on your library connections.

Books

We are a member of the NEOS consortium with 18 other government, hospital, college and university systems throughout Alberta (see www.neoslibraries.ca/node/5). NEOS card holders can check-out our books on-site or request them through the NEOS catalogue to be delivered to any other site. Government of Alberta employees and University of Alberta staff/students, for example, are among those eligible for NEOS cards. *Search NEOS:* <http://catalogue.library.ualberta.ca>

Note: anyone can search but only NEOS cardholders can “request/hold this item” online.

Non-NEOS members: The TAL consortium (The Alberta Library) includes almost 300 Alberta libraries. TAL cards are issued by your home library (e.g. local public library) and we attach an AGL barcode so you can borrow items on-site. You can also request our items through the TAL online catalogue. *Search TALonline:* www.talonline.ca

If neither of these options is available to you (e.g. you live outside Alberta), your local library can request an Interlibrary Loan. Use the NEOS or TAL catalogue to find an item, then contact your library.

Another great place to search is WorldCat that brings hundreds of library collections from around the world into one place. Our collection is there, usually under University of Alberta. *Search WorldCat:* www.worldcat.org

Journals (and magazines)

Print journals (i.e. the hard copies) stay on our periodicals display shelves for a certain period, then can be circulated to GOA employees on request, then can be checked out. We keep many back issues.

On-line access to journals and articles is increasingly popular but few are free. In fact, online access usually has a significant cost, often based on how many people can access them at one time. Access can be limited by passwords or to certain computer addresses.

Government of Alberta employees have access to many journals on-line and we can request individual articles from unsubscribed journals. Depending on the subscription license, we can sometimes forward articles to non-government employees or suggest alternative methods of access.

GOA employees: “Online Journals A-Z” shows our online subscriptions: www.servicelink.gov.ab.ca/libraries, click “journals.”

Non-GOA: check your home library’s online subscriptions first. Many journals also have their own website where full articles are available for free or a per-article fee. Google scholar sometimes works, too.

Databases

The information world is increasingly complex and the idea that all information is on the internet for free is simply not true.

There certainly is a lot of free information but not all of it is credible, relevant to your needs or even easy to find.

Here is a basic outline of credible information production from research to article to publication to index to database to aggregator.

Writers/researchers write articles for newspapers, magazines and journals, which are checked for credibility then published. Indexers pick out identifying information (e.g. title, author, date, source) and assign subjects (a.k.a. topics or descriptors) to make articles easier to find – some indexes include more than 25 different fields! Databases compile several indexes to allow broader searches. Aggregators bundle databases to allow even broader searches.

Finding information is complicated because the scale is staggering. For example,

- Press Display (database) has thousands of articles every day from 700 newspapers in 37 different languages.
- Business Source Complete (database) has articles from over 1200 journals dating back to the 1880s.
- EbscoHost (aggregator) has more than 25 databases (including Business Source Complete) that can be searched individually or in any combination.

And these are just three of the many, many search tools we have available. Talk about trying to find a needle in a haystack!

If the old days were about the challenge of “finding,” the new world is all about “filtering.” This is the difference between “I want everything you can find about firefighting” and the much more difficult, “how do I find 10 good articles out of the 10,000,000 hits I get on the internet?” Actually, it’s probably more like, “how do I find the best articles when they don’t even show up in my Google search result?”

More on that last part in future issues. Stay tuned! 🔥

Reaching out – the ERCB’s community and Aboriginal Relations Team

BY GREG GILBERTSON, Operations Leader, ERCB Community and Aboriginal Relations Team

“The licensee is the duty holder.” For the Alberta Energy Resources Conservation Board (ERCB), this statement lies at the heart of the regulatory system. Any company issued a license, approval or in receipt of a decision from the ERCB must agree with, and be bound by, this basic principle.

Equally, the ERCB is responsible for ensuring that proposed changes to any requirements for the oil and gas industry are practical, enhance existing public safety protection and resource conservation measures, are based on credible science and are technologically sound.

In fulfilling this responsibility, on a daily basis the ERCB makes difficult decisions that must balance the interests of all stakeholders. This is clearly the case with requirements around emergency planning and response, which, because of the subject matter, typically attracts a high level of interest and extensive debate across a wide range of stakeholders with very diverse viewpoints.

As Michael Louie of the ERCB’s Emergency Planning and Assessment Team stated in a May 2009 *Alberta On Scene* article: “The ERCB continues to work with its emergency response partners and stakeholders to promote the evolution of emergency management in Alberta.” While emergency response in Alberta is certainly evolving, for the ERCB it is equally important to understand that our stakeholders themselves are also evolving.

Back in the 1970s the ERCB only dealt with approximately 70 to 80 oil and gas companies. Even through the 1980s and early 1990s, an average busy year saw 5,000 to 9,000 wells drilled. Today, there are more than 1,500 companies and over 90,000 wells have been drilled in Alberta since 2004. From the late 1990s into the early part of this decade:

- the provincial population grew dramatically,
- more people than ever began living in rural areas adjacent to large population centres,
- towns and villages saw significant population increases and “country



Community and Aboriginal Relations (CAR) – Back Row (from top): Tina Hronek, Bruce Gladue, Annette Ozirny, Esther Johnston, Steve Harrington, Susan MacDonald, Ryan Bartlett, Lauren Eslinger, Leo Touchette. Front Row (from top): Maria Skog, Jennifer Lutz, Carla Giesbrecht, Greg Gilbertson, Rhonda Busch, Leanne Chartrand, Crystal Cassidy.

residential, acreage living and recreational property” became common terms, and this was coupled with an increasing amount of “sour” gas and oil exploration and production (“sour” refers to gas and oil containing highly toxic hydrogen) sulphide.

Because sour exploration and production operations require emergency response plans (ERPs), and all ERPs require public consultation, there was a growing exposure to the oil and gas industry and to the ERCB across communities, First Nations and local governments. In the course of a few years, sour gas and oil development brought potential involvement in emergency preparedness to the doorstep of citizens, jurisdictions and communities that had no prior experience, nor previous involvement in this area.

The result was an emerging awareness and concern from the public, local governments and their first responders about the oil and gas industry in general and, specifically, an increasing awareness of the potential hazard of sour gas and oil. This led to a growing demand from these groups for more and

better information about the industry, the ERCB, its energy development application process and about emergency planning and response.

In order to provide not only information, but also the context needed to apply this information, the ERCB took a closer look at its interaction with all of its stakeholders. One result was the launch in 2000 of a province-wide initiative to look at any and all aspects related to Public Safety and Sour Gas (PSSG). Significant stakeholder engagement resulted in 87 recommendations being made to the Board on how to improve the sour gas regulatory regime, all of which were successfully addressed by the end of 2007. An important part of this initiative was the launch in 2006-07 of a group of dedicated outreach relationship specialists called the Community and Aboriginal Relations (CAR) team.

Today, there are 16 CAR team members distributed across ERCB field centres in Medicine Hat, Grande Prairie, St. Albert, Red Deer, Drayton Valley, Bonnyville, Midnapore and in the Calgary main

office. The team is highly trained in public participation and stakeholder relations skills and identify emerging issues and work with all stakeholders to resolve issues and concerns. Not surprisingly, one of the most common concerns revolves around emergency planning and response.


For many members of the public and for local government administrative staff and elected councils, discussing emergency response is like learning a second language. Suddenly, concepts such as Emergency Planning Zones (EPZs), Initial Isolation Zones (IIZs), Emergency Awareness Zones (EAZs) and Protective Action Zones (PAZs) become the emergency planning and response

equivalent of Latin – it all sounds vaguely familiar but I have no idea what it means.

CAR team members attempt to meet proactively with anyone who needs help in learning about any ERCB process. The team offers the needed education and/or information in order for any individual or group to understand:

- how they may be affected by an energy development,
- that they have a right to become involved and learn about the development, and
- how to have questions, issues, concerns addressed in a meaningful manner by both the petroleum industry applicant and the ERCB.

In a nutshell, CAR promotes sustainable decisions – made by the public, industry, local government, First Nations or any other party – by recognizing the needs and interests of all participants and by providing the most relevant information needed to make the right decision.

Hopefully, CAR's involvement can also show participants how their input positively affected the eventual outcome. The team estimates they spoke with more than 20,000 Albertans in 2008. 

More information on the ERCB's CAR team can be obtained from Greg Gilbertson, Operations Leader, via greg.gilbertson@ercb.ca

ACICR update

Canadian injury prevention curriculum revised

The Alberta Centre for Injury Control & Research (ACICR) has delivered the Canadian Injury Prevention Curriculum to over 240 Albertans since 2004. This two-day workshop provides practitioners in a variety of sectors with an understanding of the theory and practice of injury prevention and provides the tools needed to develop and implement effective programs.

Through the cooperation and funding of Health Canada, the curriculum was developed and pilot tested by a project advisory group consisting of members from the Canadian Collaborating Centres for Injury Prevention, representing each of the provinces. The development process for the curriculum included a needs assessment of injury prevention practitioners across Canada to determine the target audience for the curriculum as well as an environmental scan to determine and review existing injury




prevention curricula available nationally and internationally. Writers were then hired to compile and develop the content of the curriculum and an initial draft version was piloted in eight locations across the country. With feedback gathered from both facilitators and participants, revisions were made to the curriculum for the development of the first edition.

The Canadian Injury Prevention Curriculum has recently undergone an extensive review process for a second edition, based upon four years of evaluation feedback from participants. Having participated in this



extensive evaluation and revision process, ACICR is pleased to be delivering the revised curriculum in Alberta.

Through a combination of presentations, group discussion and a group project, the following areas are addressed:

1. Introduction to Injury Prevention
2. Impact and Classification of Injuries
3. Defining the Problem
4. Identifying the Risk Factors
5. Selecting an Intervention
6. Implementation and Evaluation 

For more information visit the website at www.acicr.ualberta.ca, or contact Lynda McPhee, ACICR Education Coordinator at 780-492-9768 or lynda.mcphee@ualberta.ca



Making the connection is key

A COMMON CONCERN across Alberta and beyond is how to get people involved in a cause and give freely of their time. This is especially important for volunteer fire departments. As reported in previous issues of this publication, recruitment and retention is something that the Alberta Emergency Management Agency (AEMA) and the Alberta Fire Chiefs Association (AFCA) are working on. In addition to establishing a working group on recruitment and retention, the AEMA also connected with Linda Graff, an international expert on volunteerism who has worked with emergency services, to kick off the inaugural meeting of the joint AEMA/AFCA working group. Karen Lynch, Executive Director of Volunteer Alberta was also invited to that session.

Subsequently Volunteer Alberta was engaged by the AFCA to assist with their efforts on this issue. Lynch was also invited as a presenter at the 2009 AFCA conference in Red Deer. During her presentation, Lynch advised that there are a number of factors that need to be considered when trying to retain or recruit volunteers. These include current trends about volunteering, which have changed over the years, what volunteers are looking for and what barriers keep people from volunteering.

“The number one reason why people volunteer is because they believe in the cause,” said Lynch. “And, the number one reason why people continue to volunteer is that they feel a connection to the organization.” Lynch also pointed out that the volunteer fire service has a number of unique challenges for volunteers.

Volunteering by the numbers

Alberta’s average for volunteer hours contributed – 175 hours

- Edmonton volunteer rate – 47%, contributing an average of 202 hours
- Calgary volunteer rate – 45%, contributing an average of 143 hours

Motivations

- Personally believe in cause – 95%
- Use skills and experiences – 85%
- Personally affected by cause organization supports – 72%
- Explore own strengths – 57%
- Friends – 35%
- Improve job opportunities – 18%

Barriers to volunteering

- No time – 77%
- Already made volunteering contribution – 36%
- No one has personally asked you – 17%
- Dissatisfied – 9%
- Don’t know how – 8%

What volunteers want

- Compelling mission
- Make a difference/change the world
- Use skills and experience
- Time specific-short term; variable hours
- Increasing authority /scope
- Custom designed

This includes:

- personal costs and expenses
- a great emphasis on training
- less control over timing
- perceptions versus reality
- high expectations from the community
- personal risk – not too many volunteer positions require you to put your life on the line.

These challenges make volunteering with a fire department quite different from other volunteer opportunities. But there’s also hope. By knowing what potential volunteers are looking for, you can tailor your recruitment – and retention – programs to their needs.

So what are potential volunteers looking for? In general, volunteers are looking for a compelling mission, a way to make a difference, the opportunity to use their skills and experience and opportunities for increasing their authority or scope. They’re also looking for time specific or short-term opportunities, or variable hours.

During the Fall 2009 regional meetings conducted by the AEMA, similar results were voiced. The reasons for volunteering with a fire department included supporting their community, a desire to save and rescue, community ownership, giving something back, preventing tragedy, contributing skills, personal challenge, life skills, accomplishment and satisfaction, team work and camaraderie, getting to know people, fulfillment and youth aspirations

as well as career possibilities. Some of the barriers that keep potential volunteers away are time away from work and/or family, lack of support from employers, support from family, structural challenges, public perceptions and competition for time.

According to the fall meeting feedback, potential fire service volunteers are looking for an opportunity that makes good use of their time, makes a real difference, uses or builds on their skills and provides professional leadership. This is valuable information for any fire service looking to recruit or retain their volunteer firefighters. Knowing the reasons for volunteering, what volunteers are looking for and what barriers need to be overcome helps you tailor your recruitment efforts to be successful.

“Trends in volunteering have changed over the years,” said Lynch. “Leadership is a significant factor. Volunteers are looking for more complex opportunities that also provide recognition. As well, volunteer recruitment strategies need to be multi-pronged to reach out to those willing to give of their time.” As Lynch pointed out at the AFCA conference session, the challenge for fire services is to make sure that a connection is made with potential volunteers. This includes setting a culture for involvement and creating a structure that allows for it to happen. 🔥

“By knowing what potential volunteers are looking for, you can tailor your recruitment – and retention – programs to their needs.”


For more information about volunteering or volunteer statistics, visit www.volunteeralberta.ab.ca

Provincial dangerous goods reporting and the CIC

The Coordination and Information Centre (CIC) is the 24-hour emergency centre for Alberta Transportation's Dangerous Goods and Rail Safety Branch. The centre was created in 1984 in response to an agreement with the federal government to provide a provincial contact for emergency response to dangerous goods related incidents. These incidents include imminent and accidental releases of regulated products identified in the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Regulation. *The regulation requires that any release of dangerous goods exceeding the amounts of the table in Part 8, below, is to be immediately reported to the CIC at 1-800-272-9600.*

The continued success of the CIC prompted Alberta Environment, the Natural Resources Conservation Board (NRCB) and the Energy Resources Conservation Board (ERCB) to utilize it as their after hours and emergency contact centre. The Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act requires the CIC to be immediately notified upon becoming aware of a release of an environmentally hazardous substance. As a result of combining resources, the caller is able to notify Alberta Environment and Alberta Dangerous Goods with one call. After hours notifications to ERCB can be made through the CIC by contacting the local area office which is forwarded through

to the centre. *NRCB complaints regarding intensive livestock operations are reported to 1-866-383-6722.*

The CIC is comprised of highly educated and motivated staff providing resource information for dangerous goods and emergency call coordination for hazardous incidents endangering public safety. Some of these incidents include natural disasters, industrial incidents, rail incidents and vehicle collisions involving dangerous goods. 

Please feel free to contact the CIC at 1-800-272-9600 for dangerous goods inquiries or reports and 1-800-222-6514 for environmental emergencies and public complaints.

Class	Quantity	Emission Level
1	Any quantity that (a) could pose a danger to public safety or greater than 50 kilograms; or (b) is included in Class 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, or 1.5 and is (i) not subject to special provision 85 or 86 but exceeds 10 kilograms net explosives quantity; or (ii) subject to special provision 85 or 86 and the number of articles exceeds 1,000.	
2	Any quantity that could pose a danger to public safety or any sustained release of 10 minutes or more	
3	200 litres	
4	25 kilograms	
5.1	50 kilograms or 50 litres	
5.2	1 kilogram or 1 litre	
6.1	1 kilogram or 1 litre	
6.2	Any quantity	
7	Any quantity that could pose a danger to public safety	An emission level greater than the emission level established in section 20 of the "Packaging and Transport of Nuclear Substances Regulation"
8	5 kilograms or 5 litres	
9	25 kilograms or 25 litres	



Scouting begins at home

FIVE SCOUTS from the Red Deer 18th Morrisroe Troop that helped kick-off Emergency Preparedness Week in Edmonton are also the first in Canada to achieve the new emergency preparedness badge. Cody Richards, Monica Scott, John Scott, Evan Schollie and Bruce Schollie were congratulated by Ray Danyluk, Minister of Municipal Affairs, at the May 4 event and were presented with a special



Minister Danyluk shakes hands of the first five Canadian Scouts to earn the Emergency Preparedness badge.

campfire blanket badge (as illustrated) and certificate from the Alberta Emergency Management Agency (AEMA). The emergency preparedness badge is a natural fit with the Scouts, whose motto is “Be Prepared.”

Scouts Canada officially recognized emergency preparedness for the first time this year, with an award for Cubs and a challenge badge for Scouts. To earn the badge, Scouts had to prepare their own 72-hour emergency kit according to government guidelines. They also had to learn evacuation drills, shelters and how to be self-reliant for 72 hours.

Incidentally, this is not the first time this particular troop of Scouts has led the way since it was established in 1972. “The Red Deer 18th Morrisroe was one of the first Scout troops in Alberta to have its entire troop,



Minister Ray Danyluk addresses the crowd at the 2009 Emergency Preparedness Week kick off.

including leaders, trained in standard first aid, Level C CPR and automated external defibrillation,” said Derrick Richards, group commissioner and troop councillor. “That exceeds the badge requirements.” The Red Deer Scouts were also famous for capturing the local police chief’s killer in 1911, when scouting was relatively new in Canada. 🔥

For a good cause

Firefighters to be recognized in proposed statue

An alumnus and long-time instructor at Lakeland College is spearheading efforts to have a life-size statue of a firefighter added to Vermilion’s landscape.

Lloyd Seath, a 1941 graduate of Vermilion Agriculture School and a college instructor from 1952 until 1981, believes the statue would be a fitting tribute to firefighters “who provide a great value to all of us” as well as to **fire etc.**, Lakeland College’s emergency training centre, in recognition of its provincial, national and international role in training firefighters.

Seath has discussed the project with numerous groups and has received nothing but support for the project. “Everyone is saying ‘Yes, this is a great idea, we’re all for

this’. I haven’t had one group or person say this is a bad idea,” said Seath.

To get the project rolling, Seath hired sculptor Susan Velder of Saskatchewan to create four small models. Well-known for her Regina-based statue of Queen Elizabeth II riding a horse, Velder created small models of a firefighter standing, a firefighter and a baby, two firefighters fighting a fire and a firefighter helping a mother and a child. These models were displayed at Vermilion locations and area residents voted in favour of a statue of an individual firefighter.

Now efforts are underway to raise money for the project. The cost is estimated to be about \$100,000. Seath is willing to donate

up to 10 per cent of the cost of the project to a maximum of \$10,000. Now he’s busy generating more vocal and financial support for the project.

“We’ve started the Vermilion and Community Firefighter Statue Committee to help organize the project. There will be a subcommittee responsible for fundraising and applying for grants,” added Seath. “As 2009 is the 50th anniversary of **fire etc.**, I hope we’re able to raise enough funds in the near future so we can announce this year that the project will go ahead.” 🔥

If you are interested in making a donation, please contact the Town of Vermilion at 780-853-5358 or email dpollard@vermilion.ca

Focusing on fire service education

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

We train, train, train in the fire service. Why? To keep us safe, of course, but at what expense?

I am a staunch advocate of training. In fact, it's number one in The Fire Within mantra "Train, Educate, Equip". However, as time goes on I am beginning to realize that often we train but don't educate (there is a difference) and worse yet, training often comes at the expense of everything else in our halls.

Training is perhaps one of the most beneficial tools the fire service has to offer firefighters in its arsenal, but it is important to realize the results generated by a training night are never indifferent.

A good training night can build morale and cohesion in your fire hall or it can forge apathy and indifference. It can teach us skills and build future leaders or it can breed contempt and frustration. Training can build the foundation of a life-long commitment and love for the fire service or it can push a rookie out before he has had the time to realize his potential.

I know we, as the fire service, take training seriously, but I don't believe we seriously realize how high the stakes are each and



the FIRE WITHIN

every time we train. Training can be one of the biggest factors influencing morale and, perhaps more importantly, plays a key role in the retention of firefighters. It is also one of the few areas of the fire service that we have complete control of.

What we train, when we train and for how long is as different as the halls themselves, but these key factors are all consistent:

- 1. Always start on time – period.** There is nothing more frustrating than making the effort to arrive on time only to blow 45 minutes waiting for others less committed to arrive. This quickly builds a culture of apathy and indifference and your committed members will adapt to be less committed.
- 2. Equally important is to finish on time.** If circumstances dictate that you are going to go over on time, ask the permission of the group and let the majority rule. This allows us as firefighters to build expectations and plan.

- 3. Build a culture of openness in your training.** "Training is NOT testing". This is so important that I will say it again. "Training is not testing". When it feels like testing, we are afraid of making mistakes so we stand back and the ones who know use it as an opportunity to show off. Training is about making mistakes and learning from those mistakes, not just our own, but everyone else's. Mistakes make far more powerful learning opportunities than successes and they provide opportunities for mentorship and leadership.
- 4. Make sure you educate while you train.** To learn a routine on a pump panel will work until it doesn't. If that routine is not backed by education (i.e. what each step means, why we do it and how it influences the overall result) we have nothing to fall back on when things go wrong. Then we come looking for the fire chief. The problem is that in a volunteer environment, the fire chief is not always there. When we are educated, we have the tools to assess the situation and make conclusions.
- 5. You learn more from teaching than learning.** Give your rookies a chance to teach as well. Be there to guide and correct them, but always remember an officer's job is to create future officers, not show off that they already know everything. Perhaps more importantly, always remember officers should be training too. When did Tiger Woods stop training? Watching officers stand around as if they are above the exercises because they supposedly know it builds division in the hall and sets a bad example.

This is why I think officers should only be allowed to hold a position for a maximum of two years ... but that's another article. 🔥

“Training can build the foundation of a life-long commitment and love for the fire service or it can push a rookie out before he has had the time to realize his potential.”

Saying goodbye to an illustrious career

Many people in emergency management are familiar with Arnprior, Ontario, the former location of the Government of Canada's Emergency Management Preparedness College; however, many may not be aware of an interesting coincidence between this picturesque town near Ottawa and Alberta's Emergency Public Warning System (EPWS).

Edmonton's deadly tornado in 1987 was the impetus for the creation of Alberta's EPWS. Although it went through several iterations to become the effective world-class warning system that it is today, one person was an integral part of its creation right from the start. The Alberta Emergency Management Agency's Herb Presley, who joined Alberta Public Safety Services (APSS) six weeks before Edmonton's tornado occurred and was one of the first people in the Government Emergency Operations Centre (GEOC) when the tornado hit, was the man charged with responsibility to develop and implement Alberta's EPWS.

Born in Arnprior, Ontario, Herb's interesting and successful career has been focused primarily on helping others (see below for a chronological listing). Herb met his wife Sandy at the Salvation Army's two-year training college in Toronto (which has

since relocated to Winnipeg, Manitoba) and together they worked for the Salvation Army for a number of years. He left the ministry in 1969 and, after a number of different positions, Herb found himself working for APSS, which over the years had various name changes but is now part of the Alberta Emergency Management Agency.

When the tornado hit Edmonton, Herb's supervisor told him to go to the GEOC; upon entering the GEOC, his first priority was trying to answer all the calls coming in from around the world asking for details about the tornado. Hearing an announcer on the radio talking about the traffic problems resulting from the tornado, Herb called CHQT Radio and requested they use their helicopter to fly over the area and report what they saw. This enabled the GEOC to get an initial assessment of where the damage was and how extensive.

After the tornado, a community debriefing for all agencies took place and one of the recurring comments was "we had no warning." Herb contacted Environment Canada to find out why. The answer was that Environment Canada did provide a warning 23 minutes before the tornado hit, but many of the radio stations didn't receive it due to a glitch in the system over which the warnings were provided. This resulted in Herb being commissioned by APSS to investigate and research public warning systems



A photo of Herb at his desk.

in Alberta. His first effort was meeting with various media news directors to find out how the warnings went out. From this, a working group was set up to work towards a solution. That included working with the Canadian Radio and Television Commission (CRTC) to eventually create a special broadcast license exemption that would allow an automatic interrupt for emergency situations. Incidentally, Dave Hodgins, Managing Director of the AEMA, was a member of this working group. At the time he was the Deputy Fire Chief for Strathcona County.

Work progressed on the creation of an emergency public warning system for several years, including a two-year pilot test in the Edmonton area and eventual expansion to Calgary in 1995. When the Pine Lake Tornado occurred, this provided further support for the creation and implementation of a province-wide system, which is now in place for every emergency situation, including Amber Alerts.

While Herb readily admits that his career has been extremely interesting, he is also looking forward to a more relaxed time with family and friends that won't be interrupted when an emergency situation arises. With nine grandchildren and both he and his wife loving to plan and travel to different locations around the world, Herb's retirement is bound to be just as interesting and enjoyable.

Best wishes for a great retirement life Herb! 🔥

Herb's career at a glance

- Attended the Salvation Army Training College for Officers in Toronto, Ontario.
- After an appointment in Kempville, Ontario, Herb and his wife were transferred to Fort McLeod, Alberta.
- Herb left Salvation Army employment to become a field officer with the Canadian Cancer Society in Calgary.
- He then moved to Lac La Biche as Preventive Social Services Director with what is now known as Family and Community Social Services.
- Preventive Social Services consultant with the Government of Alberta in Edmonton.
- Left the service industry and worked as a Prudential Life Insurance agent for a year, where he quickly rose to the prestigious Million Dollar Round Table.
- Became founding director of the George Spady Centre in Edmonton. He spent 3 1/2 years there, hiring and training staff.
- Employed by the Alberta Cancer Foundation, where he set up the legacy program.
- Moved to Alberta Public Safety Services (which eventually became the Alberta Emergency Management Agency), where he has remained for 23 years.
- August 2009 retires from full-time paid employment.

STORM

On July 31, 1987, a tornado smashed into the City of Edmonton, Alberta, Canada and its eastern suburb of Sherwood Park. Twenty-seven people lost their lives and over 350 people received debilitating injuries. In the aftermath of the storm, Herbert Presley, a Disaster Services Officer for the Alberta government, wrote a poem:

The boiling clouds flood the
cauldron of the universe,
And spill into a crystal sky.
Lightening flashes in the
looming darkness.
Storm.

Ominous. Wicked. Threatening.
Rain; curtain hiding a vicious finger.
Wind; blowing a cacophony
of destruction.
In the mist a twisting, snakelike
shadow.
Storm.

Writhing. Moving. Deadly.
An aftermath of destruction, sorrow.
Lives rammed into reality.
Bodies smashed into ground.
Storm.

Remember. Fear. Anxiety.
People who will never be the same.
Memories that will live on forever.
Fearful, struggling, because of
Storm.

— J. Herbert Presley

Transfer of accreditation and certification administration

Fire service accreditation returns to provincial control

THE PROVINCE of Alberta has been an accredited entity for fire service certification through the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications (ProBoard) since 1984. The International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC), a second fire service accrediting body, was formed in the early 1990s and the province joined this group in 1993 and was first accredited in 1996. These two accreditations have continued to this day with only the governance and administration undergoing some changes through this period.

The Fire Commissioner's Office (FCO) in Alberta held the accreditation on behalf of the Government of Alberta (GOA) from 1984 until the Alberta Fire Training School (AFTS) that was under the FCO became a stand alone GOA unit in 1993. AFTS became the accredited entity in the province and this change of governance and administration continued until 1998 at which time the GOA transferred the AFTS to Lakeland College (LC), a provincial post-secondary college. An agreement was signed between the GOA and LC, which


Certification is the authorization or providing someone with an official statement that sets out the persons qualifications against a standard.

allowed LC, through the fire school, to manage the provincial accreditation system on behalf of the province. With the formation of the Alberta Emergency Management Agency (AEMA) and the hiring of its first managing director in 2007, open forum type meetings held with the stakeholders strongly recommended the fire service accreditation needed to be brought back to direct provincial control rather than being administered through the post-secondary college system. This culminated in the accreditation coming back to AEMA effective April 2009. While there are many details yet to be worked out an effort will be made to make this transition as seamless as possible.

In the fire service context, accreditation of an entity is a quality control/assurance process that evaluates the entity's policies and procedures for certification against a set of measurable criteria made up of best practices in the field. Certification is the authorization of providing someone with an official statement that sets out the person's qualifications against a standard.

At present, the AEMA holds accreditation to evaluate and certify to 31 levels through ProBoard and 21 levels through IFSAC of various NFPA Professional Qualifications Standards.

All fire service certification applications and requests for equivalency and prior learning assessment recognition should be sent to:
Attention: Registrar
Alberta Emergency Management Agency
Box 23, 4701 - 52 Street
Vermilion, AB T9X 1J9
Phone: 780-853-8224
Fax: 780-853-8222

To expedite the decision-making process, applications should include all supplementary information such as certificates, transcripts, course content, etc. 

Sample forms are available at www.aema.alberta.ca

Digest

In Memoriam

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

Harley Arcand, firefighter with the Alexis First Nation Fire Department, suffered a fatal heart attack while on duty fighting a fire on Saturday June 13, 2009.

Marty Dobbin passed away at his home on July 11, 2009. He was the Yukon Territory Fire Marshall for three years and was considered the backbone of the Volunteer Fire Service in the Yukon.

Daryl Hay passed away on March 27, 2009 from a snowmobiling accident. He actively volunteered his time and resources to local fire departments in the Carbon area long before he became a volunteer fire captain with the Carbon Fire Department from 2001 to 2009.

Todd Enzie, Deputy Fire Chief with Trochu & District Fire, died suddenly on June 10, 2009.

Captain Bob Chalmers, a 35-year veteran of Edmonton Fire and Rescue, passed away on July 6, 2009 after a courageous battle with cancer.

Agency comings and goings

Tom Harnos is the new Field Officer in the Calgary region. His broad range of experience includes being active in the emergency services industry for 21 years as volunteer firefighter, dispatcher and dispatch supervisor, career and volunteer Emergency Medical Technician and has been responsible for overall fire and emergency medical system management with the Pincher Creek Emergency Services, a post he has held since 2006. During that time he completed the NFPA 1001 Firefighter Qualification series, some of the NFPA 1021 Fire Officer qualifications, Incident Command System (to I-400) and Priority Dispatch for Fire/Emergency Medical System certification. Tom is also a member of the Fire Investigators Association of Alberta and the Alberta College of Paramedics.

On May 4, 2009, **Pat Mahoney** joined the agency as a field officer in the North Central region. Most recently Pat worked with Transport Canada as a Dangerous Goods Inspector – Air. He has also been a member of the Bon Accord Fire Department since 2000, where he progressed through the ranks of Firefighter, Captain,

Deputy Chief and, in 2005, Fire Chief. He is a fully qualified firefighter, Fire Service Instructor, Dangerous Goods Inspector and Safety Codes Officer and served in the Canadian Armed Forces as a military police officer for 13 years at locations across Canada.

Humyra Sabir returned to the agency on April 30 following the curtailment of her one-year secondment in Corporate Strategic Services due to budget constraints. However, her return presents an excellent opportunity to continue the intent and spirit of the secondment as the agency explores then establishes a modern and sustainable 911 system in Alberta. Humyra will concentrate almost exclusively on this complex project over the next several months.

Larissa Mich joined the agency in a temporary part-time position as the Administrative Coordinator for Risk, Plans and Consequence Management. She has eight years experience as a legal assistant for an Edmonton law firm and is in the final stages of completing her Political Science degree at Grant MacEwan College.

Margie Nunweiler worked eight years with LandLink Consulting primarily dealing with Disaster

Recovery Programs before joining the agency on June 2, 2009 as a program coordinator. Her knowledge of disaster programs includes providing customer service in the registration offices, checking evaluated files to the final payment process. Margie also brings experience in many areas of the telephone industry such as yellow page creation, mobile services and residential business office services as a result of her years with AGT and Ed Tel before the amalgamation to TELUS. She will be located at the Canadian Western Bank building.

Colin Blair accepted a two-year secondment as Section Head, Policy and Project Coordination with the Water Policy Branch of Alberta Environment starting June 1. Having been with Municipal Affairs since November 2003, Colin collaborated with key players in emergency management representing municipalities, industry, non-government organizations and provincial and federal departments. He has distinguished himself in many areas, not least of which was co-chair of the Senior Officials Representing Emergency Management (SOREM) group. He has truly been a great ambassador for Alberta.

Kallie Price accepted a promotion and position with Alberta Energy. We wish Kallie much luck and success in her new position and look forward to seeing her representing her new ministry during training and Government Emergency Operations Centre activations.

Brad Andres accepted the position of Manager of Emergency Planning at Agriculture and Rural Development, commencing July 13. He will certainly be missed for his outstanding planning and leadership qualities, and in particular for the work that he has done in preparing the province for a pandemic. **Jonathan Klein** will assume Brad's pandemic planning portfolio.

Leslie Simpson, administrative assistant to the Manager, Stakeholder Relations, transferred to Alberta Energy on July 31.

2009 annual hose coupling competition

The 2009 Annual Hose Coupling Competition takes place in Vegreville, Alberta on Saturday August 15, 2009 as they celebrate their 100 year anniversary as a fire department.

►► *Digest continued...*

Expanding role for Medicine Hat fire chief

City of Medicine Hat Fire Chief Ron Robinson has added director of emergency management (formerly known as director of disaster services) to his duties. He has National Fire Protection Association training, is a certified Safety Codes Inspector and Investigator, has completed two years toward a Bachelor of Applied Emergency Services Administration degree and is the chair of the Fire Technical Council for the Province of Alberta.

Fire Services Medals

The Alberta Emergency Management Agency is planning to host two Fire Services Exemplary Service Medals in 2009; one in Calgary and one in Edmonton. Although the ceremony dates and locations have not yet been finalized, the nominations for the 2009 year closed on April 24, 2009. As soon as details are finalized, information will be sent out. 



2009 Fire Prevention Week

Burn awareness and prevention focus of the 2009 campaign


FIRE PREVENTION WEEK is held across North America each October as a reminder about the importance of fire safety and precaution. This year's campaign theme, Stay Fire Smart! Don't Get Burned, focuses on burn awareness and prevention as well as keeping homes safe from the leading causes of home fires. Given that thousands of scald burns occur each year across North America, and most – if not all – are preventable, this year's theme is particularly important.

From October 4 - 10, 2009, fire and life safety educators across Canada will share simple tips that everyone can do to stay fire smart and not get burned. These include testing the water before putting a child in a bath and keeping hot liquids away from young children. While this sounds like common sense, too often, young children between the ages of 1 and 4 are admitted to hospital due to burns from contact

with hot drinks, food, fats, fluids, vapours or appliances. Similarly, wearing short or close-fitting sleeves when cooking on the stovetop may show foresight. This and other simple actions may be all it takes to prevent devastating burns.

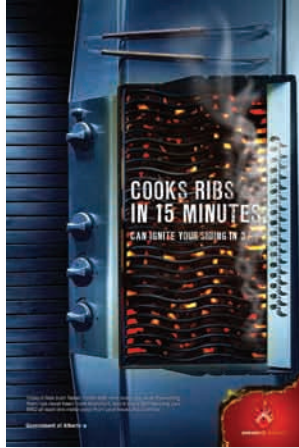
The Alberta Emergency Management Agency's (AEMA) website – www.aema.gov.ab.ca – will offer the following campaign items starting in mid August:

1. Fire Prevention Week 2009 campaign kit, containing a theme article, home fire prevention articles, fire hazard checklist, safety tips, statistical information and messages from the Managing Director of AEMA and the Alberta Fire Commissioner.

2. Children's program designed for grades K to 3 in participating communities. The material includes an activity booklet, a letter to the fire chief, classroom teacher and parent/caregiver and a Fire Safety Education Success tracking form as well as instructions on implementing the program locally. Activity booklets are shipped from the printer in late August to municipal fire/emergency service departments in participating municipalities.
3. Other activities planned for the 2009 Fire Prevention Week include a kick-off event during the week, media interviews by AEMA staff, coverage in Alberta Weekly Newspaper Association (AWNA) papers and public service announcements. This year's Fire Prevention Week campaign is sponsored by ATCO Gas and ATCO Electric. 

For further information, contact Mahendra Wijayasinghe, Manager, Research & Analysis, AEMA at 780-415-0456 or mahendra.wijayasinghe@gov.ab.ca

► Continued from the cover page.



5. Sparky costumes and Hazard Houses, visit: www.aema.alberta.ca/723.cfm

6. Advice and guidance on public education or fire statistics from AEMA, call toll-free (310-0000) 780-422-9000 or email aema@gov.ab.ca

7. On request radio broadcast of fire safety announcements whenever a significant fire happens in any Alberta community, to take advantage of a “teachable moment. Fire chiefs may wish to contact the AEMA at 1-866-618-2362 or email: aema@gov.ab.ca (see below for more complete AEMA contact details).

On request radio broadcasts:

If there is a significant fire in your community and as the fire chief you believe the radio announcements should be run locally to educate the public, please consider the following criteria before you decide to call the AEMA:



Campaign in the making

The campaign is a coordinated effort by Alberta Municipal Affairs’ Alberta Emergency Management Agency (AEMA), the Public Safety Division (PSD) and the department’s Communications Branch.

The campaign stems from one of the 18 recommendations accepted by the Government of Alberta from the HIRF working group that was created by the province to examine ways to reduce the incidence and impact of major residential fires – to increase public education efforts to give Albertans information to prevent fires.

The working group included representatives from the Alberta government, municipal emergency services (including the Edmonton and Calgary fire departments), the Safety Codes Council, municipal officials and a fire protection engineer.

A significant fire incident:

- has caused a death or serious injury (e.g. third degree burns – extensive/life-threatening)
- has caused significant property damage (totally burned out structure – house, arena, store, building complex)
- has resulted in partial damage to structure and also made habitation or business continuity impossible
- has spread from one property to another very rapidly and with high intensity
- has involved a building under construction with exposed wood frame, combustibles, lack of good fire safety practices on site, etc.
- which in the opinion of the local fire chief needs a radio broadcast. 🔥

Note: Fires due to arson or fire setting are somewhat difficult to link to radio coverage as the investigation may take time to determine origin and cause.

Alberta On Scene is published by the Alberta Emergency Management Agency for the information of fire/emergency management professionals and others with a related interest in this field.

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