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Springbank Emergency Services Centre

Innovative vision creates new fire service approach

Thinking outside the box and envisioning new ways to utilize resources is resulting in an innovative approach to providing fire and rescue services just west of Calgary. The Springbank Emergency Services Centre will soon be a reality thanks to the cooperation and vision of several partners—the Rocky View Fire Service, the Calgary Fire Department, the Municipal District of Rocky View and the Calgary Airport Authority.

“This opportunity really came about through the vision of Pat Graham when he was the fire chief of Rocky View,” said Wayne Morris, Calgary Fire Department’s fire chief. “Pat was looking for a way to better utilize resources and improve the response times for this expanding community. His vision and the ongoing enthusiasm and commitment of Cammie Laird, who replaced Pat as fire chief at Rocky View, has resulted in a very innovative and unique program that will provide efficient emergency and rescue services to Springbank area residents.”

According to Pat Graham, Alberta’s Fire Commissioner, “The project began by looking for a way to take advantage of economies of scale to improve the standards and services in the fast-growing area of Springbank. Because the Calgary Fire



Artist's rendering of Springbank Emergency Services Centre

Department had a mutual agreement with Rocky View, meeting with Wayne Morris was my first step. The plan just started rolling from there.”

The new facility, which is expected to be operational by spring 2003, is beneficial in many ways, says Morris. “Through the Springbank Centre, we will be able to provide practicum opportunities for those training to become firefighters. Once students have completed their 1001 course, we will be able to augment that with additional training at Springbank. And because the proposal is for both part-time and full-time firefighting personnel, Springbank will also open the door for those interested in the fire service who want to get some experience before applying full time.”

“They say that necessity is the mother of invention,” adds Cammie Laird, Rocky View fire chief. “Collectively, the emergency service providers noted a need for

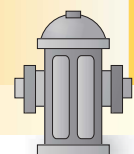
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The Alberta Fire Commissioner's Office wishes you and your family a safe and happy holiday season.

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Innovative vision...

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an enhanced level of service in the Springbank area. From there we proceeded with the visioning to deliver enhanced service. It is our hope that the Springbank Emergency Centre project will be the inspiration for other municipalities grappling with ways to coordinate resources and dollars. Hopefully, we're providing them with the template to explore new and innovative opportunities to provide service to their communities."

Not only will the new facility provide the community with enhanced emergency service capabilities, it will also address other community needs such as a community meeting place and a disaster reception centre. Services will be delivered by a combination of fire and emergency medical services (EMS) personnel through a staffing system that includes full-time staff, part-time paid on-call personnel from other Rocky View stations, local volunteers and apprenticeship students. "The intent is for each shift to have as a

minimum one cross-trained paramedic/firefighter along with three other firefighters and EMS personnel," said Laird. "We will also maintain a pool of on-call part-time paid personnel from our other area stations who will be utilized to enhance the station's staff complement."

The Springbank Centre will also serve as a pilot for providing greater exposure for programs such as blood pressure clinics and other related preventative maintenance programs. Former Municipal Manager Peter Kivisto considered this partnership the type of leading-edge initiative that would benefit municipal residents as well as all the partners involved in the project. In fact, the "outside the box" thinking has resulted in the community providing resounding support for the Springbank Emergency Services Centre.

As Laird points out, the new facility can also offer additional opportunities for other organizations that expressed interest in this project. "This is not just about building another fire station," states Laird. "This is about economically delivering the best possible service to our community. By networking and fostering partnerships, we

will be better able to meet all our combined goals more quickly and in a much more efficient and effective manner." 

How did it come about?

- Vision from Pat Graham about improving service levels
- Discussions with Wayne Morris of Calgary Fire Department
- Discussions with other potential partners—Calgary Airport Authority (provided the land and moral support) and Peter Kivisto, then municipal manager for the M.D. of Rocky View
- Envisioning what the facility would look like in terms of services:
 - four firefighters on the pump at any given time
 - all firefighters trained in fire rescue and cross-trained in Firefighter 1001 and Rescue Motor Vehicle Extraction
 - at least one paramedic firefighter and one other firefighter with training as a Fire Medical Responder
 - opportunities for both full-time and part-time firefighters

Fire Commissioner's Office update

Changing the way of doing business... CONTINUED!

In previous issues we told you about some of the changes taking place at the Fire Commissioner's Office (FCO). Here's the latest on FCO changes geared to improving service for Alberta's fire community.

The newest addition to the Fire Commissioner's Office is Ernie Polsom, who took over as the Assistant Fire Commissioner on September 3, 2002. Most recently, Ernie was the Emergency Services Director for the Town of Taber, which included responsibility for both fire and ambulance services. This coming spring will mark 20 years in the fire service for Ernie, who started out as a volunteer in The Pas, Manitoba,




Above: Ernie Polsom, Assistant Fire Commissioner

Right: Gloria Mercer and Val Carmody



after being coerced into joining the local fire department by some friends. "I fell in love with the work," says Ernie, "and I've been committed to it since. This new position is a natural progression for me." Ernie says he's already enjoying his new

position and the great people he's working with. His only complaint is the longer commute. "In Taber I lived one and half blocks from the fire hall. Now, I have about a half-hour commute from home to the office, but it's worth it."

Val Carmody also joined the office in September. While some may consider her a new employee, Val actually has a long history with the FCO. She was responsible for the data entry of fire statistics for over 10 years before moving on to other pursuits. She returned to fire data entry in 1993, but worked from her home for about six years. As of September, she is now full-time in the Fire Commissioner's Office. She and Gloria Mercer serve as front-line staff for statistics reporting. 



Putting the spotlight on fire safety officers

Continuing with our profile on the transfer of six staff from the Safety Services Branch of Alberta Municipal Affairs to the Fire Commissioner's Office (FCO), this issue we feature two fire safety officers who both joined the Red Deer office in 1985.

Frank Harris

When the Red Deer office advertised for two full-time fire safety officers, both Frank Harris and Tom O'Gorman applied, and they have been covering the greater central Alberta area ever since. In addition to his position with the government, Frank has also spent 16 years as a volunteer firefighter with the Sylvan Lake Fire Department, an active department that averages between 130 to 140 calls a year.

Frank admits that a fair bit of his time is spent on the road and working at hours beyond the regular workday. Frank's responsibilities include mentoring fire departments, doing municipal reviews, undertaking fire investigations and testing fire departments. "Because the majority of the fire departments I work with are volunteer, the best time to connect with



them is during the evenings and weekends," said Frank. His boundary of responsibility runs from the County of

Red Deer in the south to the MD of Mountainview in the north, and stretches from the Saskatchewan border in the east to Clearwater County in the west.

When asked what's the best thing about his position, Frank is quick to respond, "meeting the diversity of people involved in the fire service in Alberta." Frank says he's developed good relationships with the fire departments in his area, and looks forward to continuing his work with them.

While dealing with deaths and injuries due to fire is the worst part of the job, Frank feels that through his work as a safety officer, he's helping firefighters and fire departments lessen the number of incidents. And, that's a good thing.




Tom O'Gorman

Having traveled around the world with the Canadian Forces, Tom finally settled down in 1985 when he accepted a full-time position as fire safety officer in Red Deer.

Tom first joined the Canadian Forces in 1962 as a field engineer. He received his basic training in Chilliwack, B.C., then went on to Gaagetown, New Brunswick, before being transferred to Germany. While in Germany, Tom was introduced to the fire service, and in 1978 he took his first formal course in firefighting. From 1978 to 1985, Tom served with the Canadian Forces Fire Academy in Borden, Ontario.

After more than 20 years in the forces, Tom retired from there but not from working. In fact, being offered the full-time position in Red Deer helped him decide to retire from the military.

As a fire safety officer, Tom's jurisdiction includes Red Deer north to Leduc and east to Provost. Like Frank, Tom does quite a bit of traveling to meet with various fire departments. And also like Frank, Tom says one of the best things about the position is the people. "I get to meet a lot of people and I'm dealing with new and different things all the time," said Tom. 



Fire Prevention Week 2002

Once again, a wide number of fire prevention activities took place across Alberta to highlight October 6 to 12 as Fire Prevention Week 2002. To promote the National Fire Protection Association's theme *Team Up For Fire Safety!*, the Fire Commissioner's Office (FCO) created and distributed campaign kits to all fire departments in Alberta. As well, the Alberta FCO along with the Fire Commissioner's Offices in B.C. and Manitoba again partnered with McDonald's Restaurants in the production and distribution of colourful activity booklets, both in English and French, designed especially for children in grades 4 to 6. A total of 165,656 booklets were distributed to 154 fire departments and health authorities across Alberta.

As well, approximately 22,000 pamphlets, booklets and cards were distributed on various fire prevention and safety topics. These were sent to fire departments and other organizations that requested them for distribution to the public. The FCO also handled a number of requests for Sparky costumes, the fire hydrant robot and fire safety display units.



Pat Graham and Fire Chief Randy Wolsey of the Edmonton Emergency Response Department also appeared on the A-Channel Big Breakfast show in Edmonton to promote Fire Prevention Week. Then on October 11, ACCESS TV broadcast the Family Fire Safety Video. (This showing was made possible, in part, by the FCO and Alberta Learning. Permission for broadcasting was given by Michael Grant of Worldtrends Inc., Unionville, Ontario.)

This year's efforts also included the contest with the Alberta Weekly Newspapers Association (AWNA) to recognize the valuable support Alberta weekly newspapers provide in educating Albertans about fire safety. All awards will be given out during the annual AWNA Symposium being held January 24 to 26, 2003 in Calgary. This year's grand prize, courtesy of the Coast Plaza Hotel, is a weekend getaway for two, including Sunday brunch, at the Coast Plaza Hotel and Conference Centre, the hotel hosting the symposium.



As usual, Sparky was a big hit.

And the winner is...

Lethbridge's Caylin Jensen is Alberta's winner of the Fire Prevention Week contest conducted in partnership with McDonald's Restaurants. Caylin won a home computer courtesy of the Alberta Fire Chiefs Association and the Fire Commissioner's Office for her activity booklet. Her winning entry also resulted in her school, Lakeview Elementary, and her classroom teacher each receiving \$200 cheques from the Fire Commissioner's Office for school supplies.

Peace Country groups team up for Fire Prevention Week

On Saturday, October 12, six Peace Country organizations hosted a FireSmart, Home Safety and Fire Prevention Week display in the Riverdrive Mall in Peace River. The following groups participated:

- Peace River Fire Department
- Weberville Fire Department

- Peace Regional Emergency Medical Service
- Alberta Environment
- Fire Commissioner's Office
- Grande Prairie and District Burn Society

Outside the mall the Grande Prairie and District Burn Society had its Fire Safety House on display and kids and their families were invited to go through the



Peace Country residents learn about smoke alarms during Fire Prevention Week.

house and practise getting out safely. They were also taught the benefits of having smoke alarms and having an escape route planned. Peace River's Fire Department



also had a pumper truck on display for the families to tour.

Inside the mall, Peace Regional Emergency Medical Services had a display which featured a 911 call centre, and kids and families were asked to call and report an emergency. The operator then fielded the call and provided a response.

Alberta Environment featured its FireSmart Program and provided brochures to the visitors. Weberville and Peace River fire departments had displays on smoke alarms and preparing an escape plan.

All of the organizations participating also manned fire-related games throughout the mall. Kids had to participate in six areas and get a passport stamped for each station before they could enter a draw for a prize. Over 150 families attended this successful event. 🔥



L-R: Sparky, Assistant Fire Commissioner Ernie Polsom and Fire Safety Officer Ed Pomerleau speak to about 200 elementary school students at Madonna Catholic School in Sherwood Park as part of Fire Prevention Week 2002.

Network getting things done

Risk Watch continues to make progress in Alberta

The *Risk Watch* Implementation Network Committee continues to make progress in its efforts to expand injury prevention education of children through the use of *Risk Watch* materials in Alberta and Canada. Here's a brief outline of where the committee is at with its initiatives:

- The Health and Life Skills Curriculum Linkage Project has been completed. Angie Peters, with Grande Prairie and Area Safe Communities, is still working on other curriculum linkages (i.e. Math, Social Studies, Physical Education, Language Arts, and Science). A resource manual containing best practices to help communities/organizations implement *Risk Watch* in their communities is currently being worked on, with funding received from the Alberta Centre for Injury Control and Research.
- An application for the National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA) *Risk Watch* Champion Award 2003 has been submitted. The award provides winners

with training to introduce the *Risk Watch* Program in local communities. The members of the Champion Management Team nominated for Alberta are: Ken McMullen (fire prevention officer, MD of Rocky View #44), Dave McKenna (EMT/Lt. Grande Cache Emergency Medical Services and Fire Department) Ken Fuhrmann (RCMP constable Strathcona County), and Jan De Leeuw (principal of Edmonton's Dunluce Elementary School).

- The Fire Commissioner's Office will include a section on *Risk Watch* on its website.
- The K-9 Health and Life Skills Curriculum Guide to Implementation (a useful 700-page guide for teachers) is set for completion and distribution in December 2002. A draft guide is posted on the Alberta Learning web site at: www.learning.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/by/Subject/healthpls/

healthgi.asp and the final version will also be posted on the web site.

- At the national level, an agreement has been reached to "Canadianize" the NFPA's *Risk Watch* binders, and also translate the information into French. This initiative is being conducted through the Ontario Fire Marshal's Office. Potential corporate sponsors are being contacted regarding funding needs. 🔥

If you would like more information about *Risk Watch* or would like to join the *Risk Watch* Implementation Network, please contact Assistant Fire Commissioner Mahendra Wijayasinghe at 415-0546.

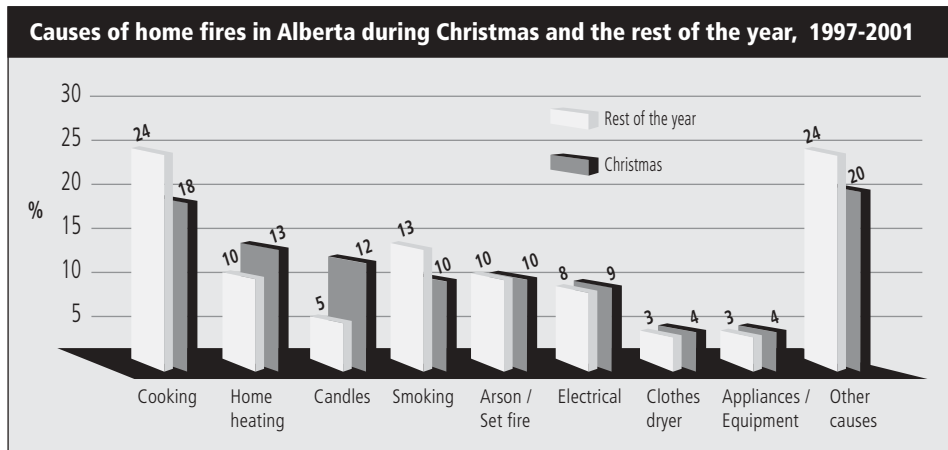
Fire risk increases during holiday season

The December/January holiday season is a happy and joyous occasion for many. Festivities bring people together to join in celebration. However, the combination of sub-zero temperatures, short days and the holiday season, which includes Christmas and New Year celebrations, all add up to a higher fire risk in our homes.

By looking at the fire statistics collected by the Fire Commissioner's Office (FCO), we see that the fire risk is high during the Christmas period from December 15 to December 31, when compared with the rest of the year from January 1 to December 14. These two periods are compared by fire causes in the bar chart on the right and by four fire loss measures in the table below.

The bar chart shows that many causes of home fires are similar during the Christmas season when compared to the rest of the year. The exceptions are fires related to candles (up by 140%), home heating (up by 30%) and electrical sources (up by 13%). There was only one reported fire related to Christmas trees—one in a natural tree caused by combustible items placed too close to a candle.

Since only 17 days are included in the Christmas period compared to 348 days in the rest of the year, the numbers in the table below were calculated to compare the Christmas period with a typical 17-day period during the rest of the year to make a more meaningful comparison.



These calculations indicate that all four fire-loss measures increase during the Christmas period:

- fires (up by 42%)
- fire deaths (up by 60%)
- fire injuries (up by 53%)
- property losses (up by 65%)

The eight fire deaths during the Christmas seasons of 1997 to 2001 were all adults (six men and two women) who died in separate fires. The causes of three of these fatal fires were unknown. Two fire deaths were from careless smoking that ignited bedding or clothing, one from an electrical short circuit igniting structural materials, one from the ignition of gasoline and one from the misuse of plastics ignited by a lighter. The 78 injuries were sustained primarily in fires related to cooking, candles, smoking, home heating, electrical, flammable/combustible liquid vapours catching fire and children playing with fire.

We must remind ourselves that although home fire causes are similar during the holidays and the rest of the year, some fire causes definitely increase during the Christmas period. They are fires related to candles, home heating and electrical. The hectic schedules during this time can mask the need to be safe, and shortcuts may be taken or activities done in a hurry, which may compromise safety. Proper planning and keeping safety a priority are essential for a fire-safe holiday season. Albertans are reminded to ensure they have working smoke alarms and a well-rehearsed home fire escape plan in case a fire breaks out in their homes. 🔥

This year's holiday fire safety campaign kit is posted on the FCO web site: www.gov.ab.ca/ma/fco. It will also be made available to newspapers and other media outlets. For further information or to obtain hard copies of the kit, please call the FCO at (780) 427-8392.

Home fire losses: Christmas period vs. rest of the year, Alberta (1997-2001)				
17-Day Period	Fires	Deaths	Injuries	Property loss (\$)
Christmas (Dec. 15 - Dec. 31)	513	8	78	\$20,062,576
Rest of the year (Jan. 1 - Dec. 14)	359	5	51	\$12,127,407



Fire museum coming to Vermilion

A new adventure in fire awareness is coming soon to Alberta. FireWorks, the Canadian Fire Museum and Discovery Centre, is slated to open in Vermilion in 2005, in conjunction with Alberta's 100th anniversary celebrations.

Being built adjacent to **fire etc.**, the former Alberta Fire Training School, FireWorks is a world-class facility that will celebrate all the realms of fire—courage, innovation and dedication in the field of firefighting. The museum (interactive centre) will showcase the history, development and expansion of the firefighting service. It will highlight how fire actually works, both as friend and foe, and provide interactive displays that enable visitors to get a sense of what it feels like to be surrounded by a forest fire, feel how hard it is to hold a fire hose, and play detective in fire scenarios.

In addition to having an appealing focus, the close proximity of FireWorks to the **fire etc.** training school is also seen as a very positive development. "Having the two facilities side-by-side will allow the training activities of **fire etc.** to be showcased for museum visitors as well as allow convenient access to the interactive museum for all our students," said Don Gnatiuk, Chief Executive Officer of **fire etc.**

FireWorks™


Canadian Fire Museum & Discovery Centre

According to Executive Director Glen McPherson, there will be something for everyone. "Our display areas cover historical fires, fire combustion, fire behaviour, firefighting practices, what it takes to be a firefighter, how to fight forest fires, and arson investigation. Through hands-on activities and extraordinary

...there will be something for everyone.

visual displays, all our visitors, young and old, will be entertained and educated about the fascination and fear surrounding fire."

Even the architecture of the site has been designed for visual appeal. At the entrance of the museum will be the FireWorks eternal flame, serving as a reminder of those who made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty. Within the museum's walls, flames are a continuous theme. And, at the back of the building there will be a fire playground, where children can play in a landscaped fire garden and picnic area.

Stay tuned for more information and the official opening date. And, plan to visit Vermilion once the FireWorks interactive museum is open. It's sure to be a highly entertaining and informative adventure for everyone. 



Glen McPherson, Executive Director of FireWorks™, Canadian Fire Museum & Discovery Centre

Photo courtesy of FireWorks™, Canadian Fire Museum & Discovery Centre



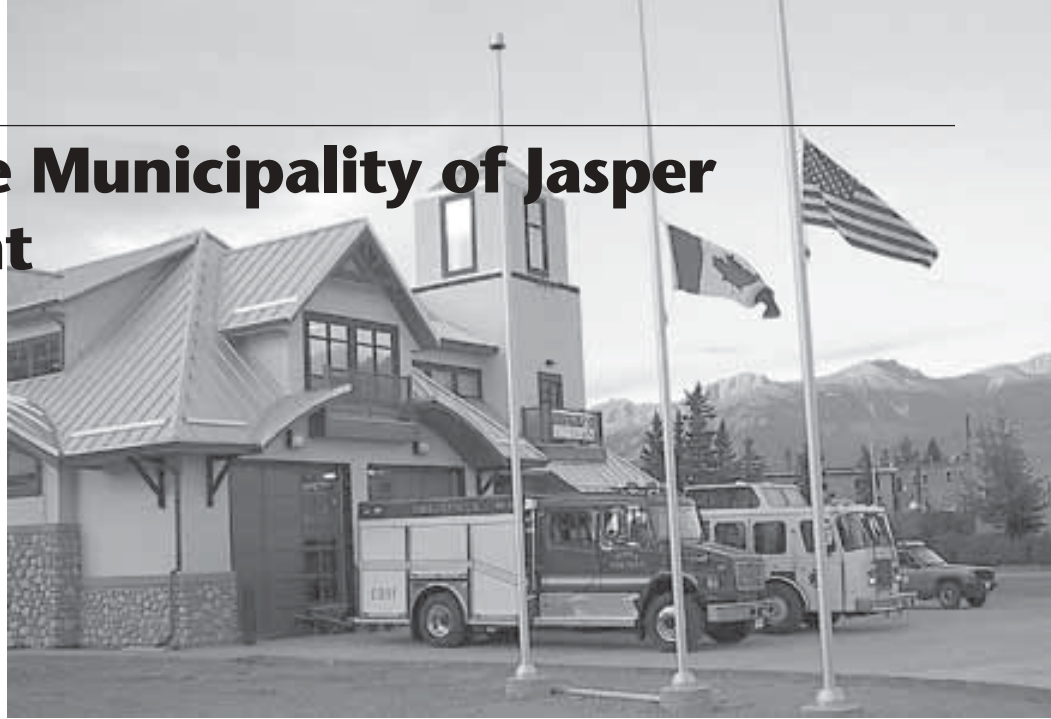
Focusing on the Municipality of Jasper Fire Department

Surrounded by the majestic Rocky Mountains, the Town of Jasper is well known as a breathtaking tourist destination. But what many might not know is that within the town is a very dynamic and comprehensive fire department.

With Fire Chief Greg Van Tighem at the helm, the Municipality of Jasper's fire department has expanded to meet the diverse challenges that come with responsibility for fire protection and rescue services in Jasper National Park. Canada's largest Rocky Mountain park, it also includes one of North America's largest natural areas and wildlife sanctuaries, which span over 4,200 square miles. The Jasper Fire Department's response area includes all of Jasper National Park plus 60 kilometres into British Columbia to Mount Robson—a total of over 10,000 square kilometres. In addition to the expansive perimeter, the year-round permanent population of Jasper is 4,700, a number that is greatly increased with seasonal staff and as many as 25,000 tourists in the park on any summer day.

The Jasper Fire Department has been operated by Parks Canada since 1914. However, on April 1, 2002, Jasper became the newest municipality in Alberta. This resulted in the fire department moving under the jurisdiction of the Municipality of Jasper. Through an agreement with the federal government, the Jasper Fire Department still provides its services to the entire park and the fire chief has the authority to enforce the National Parks Fire Protection Regulations outside the municipal boundaries.

The town also has mutual aid agreements with surrounding fire services, including Hinton and Yellowhead County to the east and Lake Louise to the south. Arrangements are also in place with the Parks Canada Warden department and the Jasper Park Lodge Fire Brigade.



The new two-storey, eight-bay Jasper Emergency Services Building houses the fire department and the ambulance contractor as well as a large meeting room, two 2-bedroom apartments and two dorm rooms. The completion of the building was made possible through joint funding between the Municipality of Jasper and Parks Canada.

Van Tighem became the full-time fire chief for Parks Canada in 1999, after serving as the volunteer deputy chief for six years. Prior to that, he was employed at Jasper Park Lodge for 14 years as the fleet/vehicle manager and training officer for its volunteer fire service. As Van Tighem sees it, fire service is almost an inherited trait. "Both my grandfathers were fire chiefs in Strathmore in the 1920s and early 30s and my younger brother is a firefighter in Yellowknife," he said.

In his position as full-time fire chief, Van Tighem is responsible for all operations of the fire department as well as disaster planning and managing the municipality's ambulance contract and the emergency services building. "We respond to over 100 calls per year, the majority being highway accidents and alarm investigations, however, we usually manage three or four working fires," said Van Tighem. The department also has a very active health and safety committee adhering to NFPA 1500 and is presently implementing a physical fitness program.

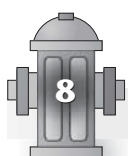
The department holds weekly training sessions for two and a half hours every Tuesday evening on a wide range of topics such as dangerous goods response, wildland firefighting, ice and swift water rescue, low- to medium-angle rescue and

Significant local fires:

- 1920 - house fire killed six people, all members of the same family
- 1924 - CNR Station
- 1932 - entire Jasper Park Lodge burned
- 1946 - Mountain Motors Building
- 1952 - the main lodge at Jasper Park Lodge burned to the ground, one fatality
- 1967 - Spero's Nightclub
- 2000 - Moab Lake fire
- 2000 - Outlook Cabin fire at Jasper Park Lodge

vehicle extraction. Currently, 10 of the 25 department volunteers are fully 1001 certified and four more are slated to be certified by next year. As Van Tighem is proud to point out, "We are very proactive when it comes to improving individual skills. We use a wide variety of training methods and instructors, with all of our training based on certifiable standards such as NFPA. In addition to our in-house weekly training, we try to host at least two local fire etc. courses per year as well as send each of our members to the training centre in Vermilion at least once a year."

In addition to Van Tighem, the department consists of one full-time deputy chief, Ron Stanko, three volunteer captains, three volunteer lieutenants, three volunteer safety officers and



16 firefighters. "We are fortunate to have a lot of individual expertise within our ranks," says Van Tighem. "We have members trained as paramedics, EMTs, EMRs, swift water rescue technicians, wildland firefighting training officers, and helicopter and fixed wing pilots. And, to keep everyone's skills well honed, staff undergo cross training with the Jasper Park Lodge Fire Brigade a few times per year where we work on mutual aid tactics, pre-planned scenarios and basic skills. We usually end the season with a joint training day and then a barbeque at the Jasper Park Lodge."

The fire department also has established a good working and training relationship with the park wardens and the Parks Canada initial attack crew. "Given our location, we have also formed a very active interface steering committee to deal with the wildland urban interface issues surrounding the town site and outlying commercial developments."

Beyond the intensive training and response to incidents, the fire department is also active and visible in the community. At the school level, using the *Risk Watch* and *Learn Not to Burn* materials, Van Tighem visits every elementary grade class twice a year (during Fire Prevention Week and again in the spring) and plans are underway to fully implement *Risk Watch* by next year.

Within the community, a fire prevention display is erected at all community gatherings with the fire department's mascot Sparky in attendance. During Fire Prevention Week, the department holds an open house and every Christmas Eve firefighters and their families visit every household in town—Santa Claus rides on the pumpers, delivering candy canes and fire prevention handouts. The department also appoints a Grade 3 student to be fire chief for a day, and participates in the McDonald's fire prevention program. Additionally, local businesses are provided with free fire safety training and assistance with emergency evacuation plans. "We believe in being visible in the community," says Van Tighem. "Keeping the message alive about fire safety and fire prevention helps everyone." 



Some members of the Jasper Park Lodge fire service.

Jasper Park Lodge provides initial response

Anyone who has visited or stayed at this world-famous lodge knows its large, sprawling premises and beautiful, isolated location. But these attributes that make JPL a wonderful place to visit also provide firefighting challenges. As a result, the JPL fire personnel serve as first responders for any fire incident. However, members only provide external support because they don't have breathing apparatus. According to Henri Gendre, the JPL fire chief for more than 10 years, "one of our first major responsibilities is to establish water and provide external support until the Municipality of Jasper Fire Department arrives."

The 12 to 14 members are all employees of the lodge, and more than half have been part of the fire service for more than three years. All JPL fire personnel are certified in advanced first aid, and six members are also certified in flat ice rescue. As well, all security staff are trained in first aid and emergency medical response. Members train twice a month, take part in a drill once a month and also participate in some training with the Municipality of Jasper fire department.

The JPL's fire equipment includes two pumpers. One is a 1973 Saskatchewan pumper and the other is a 1943 Ford pumper. While the former vehicle is in active use, the 1943 model is now used as the parade truck for Jasper's annual Canada Day parade.

While JPL's fire personnel are quick to respond to any situation, the lodge has had a couple of significant fires in the past. The first was the 1932 fire that burned down the entire lodge. More recently, the 2002 fire destroyed the Outlook Cabin, which was built in 1929 for the King and Queen of England when they stayed in Jasper. The cabin has since been rebuilt, but all the memorabilia housed in the cabin at the time of the fire was irreplaceable.

Helping out a long way from home

In recent issues of Alberta Fire News, we have featured Alberta fire personnel helping New York recover from the terrorism attacks on the World Trade Centre. In this issue, we highlight a City of Edmonton firefighter who, in his Red Cross volunteer role, also provided assistance near Ground Zero.

Edmonton resident Todd Weiss was one of 19 delegates from across Alberta, along with other Canadians, who went to the United States in three-week stints supporting Red Cross efforts to help those affected by the September 11 attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Centre. Weiss was assigned to a respite centre operating out of the bottom three floors of the deserted Marriott Financial Centre Hotel at the southwest corner of the Ground Zero site in New York City. Weiss spent three weeks at Ground Zero as a health technician, providing treatment for minor health problems to construction workers, firefighters, police, soldiers and other workers on-site.

As the terrorist attacks occurred, Weiss was just finishing his shift at Fire Hall No. 1 in Edmonton. That afternoon, and in the days to follow, Weiss was at the Edmonton Red Cross office helping set up equipment, and then answering phone calls from area residents making inquiries regarding friends and relatives in New York and from those interested in helping out in some way. Approximately three and a half weeks later, Weiss was the only Canadian among Red Cross volunteers staffing the Respite Centre South at Ground Zero. "The respite centre was a relief centre for all the workers—firefighters, police, army, steel workers, crane operators and other volunteer staff," said Weiss. "Our job was to assist them however we could, whether they needed a place to sleep, something to eat, bandages, Tylenol, gloves, socks or foot care." According to Weiss, many of the workers never left the area. "Lots of the

guys, such as truck drivers, never went home. They just stayed there and slept there."

"Even though I arrived at Ground Zero three weeks after the disaster, there was still a tremendous amount of work to do. Everything was still burning and workers were pulling out red hot beams from the rubble," said Weiss. As a firefighter, Weiss is used to dealing with very difficult situations. However, he is quick to point out that such a volunteer assignment isn't for everyone. "It's a different kind of stress," said Weiss. "Ultimately, your job is to stay focused and help those in need."



Todd Weiss, firefighter with the Edmonton Emergency Response Department

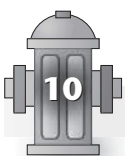
Weiss also participated in one previous disaster relief effort with the American Red Cross. His assignment was in Missouri, where he worked in health services, looking after the well being of the workers as well as those people displaced by the devastating Midwest floods in 1993. Locally, Weiss is an active Canadian Red Cross disaster response volunteer.

While working at Ground Zero may be considered a plum assignment to many, Weiss says that his opportunity was the result of starting at local events and expanding his skills through training offered by the Red Cross. In addition to the Midwest floods, he managed a 400-person refuge site for Kosovo refugees in Halifax in 1999, and spent two days at the reception centre set up during wildfires in Fort McMurray earlier this summer, as well as one day at the reception centre at Red Earth Creek. "The Red Cross puts out a call to its volunteers, asking for those with specific skills. If you have those skills and the availability, you're put on alert and wait for a call."

With Ground Zero, the American Red Cross asked for people with past American Red Cross experience, with medical services and mass care training. The Canadian Red Cross national office in Ottawa contacted all regional offices with a request that any volunteers meeting the criteria and wanting to go to New York should put their names on the waiting list. Weiss' volunteer résumé was sent to Ottawa, then forwarded on to the American Red Cross office in Washington, D.C., to be put on a waiting list. "When you're put on the waiting list, you have to be prepared to go within 24 hours," said Weiss. "I got a call on Friday at 4 p.m., and left the next morning at 7:30 a.m. for New York."

Weiss says Edmonton Fire Chief Randy Wolsey deserves credit for his support. "Chief Wolsey used to volunteer with the Red Cross, so he was very receptive to my request," said Weiss. "All the guys I work with were very proud of my assignment, and I know that many of them wanted to go and help out too. When I returned, I received lots of pats on the back from them."


When asked if he'd encourage others to volunteer with the Red Cross, Weiss is very positive. "I get far more out of it than I put



into it. I get to put many different skills into practice and I also have the opportunity to work with fantastic people who care, want to volunteer and want to help out. We all have the same goals and work together," said Weiss.

The Red Cross uses volunteers in a wide range of capacities and Weiss strongly encourages others to consider volunteering. "One of the really great things about the Red Cross is the flexibility you have. I don't have to commit to a certain amount of hours or specific shifts. Rather, they work around my schedule and commitments." Married, with two young children, Weiss already has a full plate, but relishes the opportunity to assist wherever he's needed. "I like that you go out and help someone, and do something that others perhaps don't want to do or think they don't have the time to do."

Weiss first volunteered with the Red Cross in 1993, but didn't become a full-time volunteer until 1998. According to Weiss, "I like what the Red Cross stands for. They aren't biased and they don't duplicate what other organizations do. No one does what they do."

Weiss says that help is needed on an ongoing basis. "While it's wonderful that so many people want to help out however they can when there is a major disaster, it's important to realize that help is needed throughout the year, not just when a big event happens. Too often I go to a smaller disaster and we're struggling to have enough resources to adequately help those in need." 

For more information about the Canadian Red Cross check out its web site at www.redcross.ca. If you're interested in volunteering or making a donation, call 1-800-418-1111 or contact your local Red Cross office.

Reaching out to help those in need

The Canadian Red Cross helps people affected by emergencies and disaster situations, ranging from a house fire to a flood that disrupts an entire region of the

who provide time and expertise. The Canadian Red Cross is part of the international Red Cross movement, which is the largest disaster preparedness and relief network in the world.

Global efforts, which can involve many national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, are coordinated through the Federation of Red Cross and the International Committee of the Red Cross, both based in Geneva, Switzerland.

Red Cross emergency response teams are made up of dedicated volunteers who are ready to provide help 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week. When responding to a crisis call, emergency response team workers at the scene determine the needs of the people affected and work to ensure immediate basic needs are met, such as the provision of shelter. Many other staff and volunteers provide support to the

Red Cross relief operation—they recruit and train volunteers, coordinate responses, process donations, handle logistics, facilitate communication, fundraise, and many other activities. As a result of their efforts, services are delivered in a timely and efficient way. Additional Red Cross personnel serve as a link between the Red Cross relief operation and the affected community, other voluntary agencies, government, businesses, community groups and the media. This ensures that efforts are coordinated, resources are shared and, ultimately, community needs are met.

It takes cooperation and a team of many people with diverse expertise and experience to successfully carry on the work of the Red Cross.

country. Following a disaster, the Red Cross works with governments and other humanitarian organizations to provide for people's basic needs—food, clothing, shelter, first aid, emotional support and family reunification. The specific services offered are based on the community's needs and the role that the Red Cross has in the local disaster response plan. While much of the work to assist people occurs behind the scenes, it always involves activities that ensure timely services are delivered to those affected.

All Red Cross assistance is provided free of charge and is made possible because of the generosity of financial donors and volunteers



Canadian Red Cross Croix-Rouge canadienne





fire etc.

Doing the research to get the results

Last issue we told you about changes to the Alberta Fire Training School, including its name change and new direction. In this and future issues, we'll keep you aware of activities and events at what is now called fire etc.

fire etc. and an Edmonton-based software firm have joined forces on a research project to analyse the emergency evacuation plan for a major downtown Edmonton high-rise business complex.

The project team is analysing and validating the evacuation plan through computer modeling that includes the use of artificial intelligence and simulations. The intent is to use the software to analyse and assess existing evacuation procedures and to predict and prevent emer-

gencies. In addition, by using real-time simulation factors such as distance traveled, speed and building occupancy loads, the study will predict the performance of people and buildings in an emergency situation. The research will also analyse the current level of preparedness including assessment of life safety features and fire protection equipment.

Seminar planned on construction fires

The Alberta Construction Safety Association (ACSA) is working with fire etc. to deliver a province-wide seminar called Fire Safety on Construction Sites. The one-day session will cover topics such as fire behaviour, fire causes, building construction methods using combustible materials, management support, training of workers, and general fire prevention. The seminar will be offered in the spring at two locations, to cover the northern and southern regions. For more information contact the ACSA at (780) 453-3311 or (403) 291-3710.

"By combining the expertise of the software firm with our experience of over 40 years in emergency services training, we believe we are in a position to increase the probability of effective and efficient emergency evacuation procedures, to be able to prevent emergencies, and to be better prepared in the event of an emergency," says Les Brinkworth, Vice-President of Business Development for fire etc. "The purpose is to increase our chances of saving people, property and the environment in the event of an emergency involving a target hazard such as a high-rise structure."

According to Brinkworth, the team looked for a suitable complex that would be considered a major challenge in the event of a large-scale emergency, so that the principles for modeling the simulations can be applied to pre-emergency planning and disaster management in any number of settings. "We are excited about the outcomes and the ability to prove or disprove theories through the expertise of the scientists on the team and the software assistance. This research will be of benefit to the emergency services industry as a whole," added Brinkworth.

The project was the focus of two presentations made by Brinkworth at the Fire Rescue Canada conference in Calgary in September 2002, where it generated substantial interest among municipal and industrial participants from across the country, as well as representatives from New York.

Other major research projects underway at fire etc. include a study into the best location for an emergency services station in a city of 50,000 people, a conceptual regional disaster plan for an alliance of several urban and rural municipalities, and a regional emergency services study involving a county, a city and an international airport. 🔥

For further information, please contact Les Brinkworth at fire etc. at (780) 853-5800.



Electrical safety seminars coming soon

Working on behalf of its members, which include all the large fire departments as well as many of the smaller ones, the Alberta Fire Chiefs' Association (AFCA) has been very busy over the past few months. Since their annual meeting in Jasper in May 2002 (which was reported in the August 2002 edition of *Alberta Fire News*), the AFCA has been concentrating on two initiatives in particular.

The electrical safety seminars are just about ready, reports AFCA President Laird Burton. "We're hoping to conduct these seminars in January and February. I'll be going out to each region and putting on the sessions myself, through a 'train the trainer' approach. That will enable each region to have a dedicated trainer who can then train other personnel at fire departments."

With several hundred near misses every year, the electrical safety seminars are a very important aspect of fire training and protection. "The seminars will focus on just about everything related to electrical wires being down, from fires to motor vehicle collisions, said Burton. "And, we certainly appreciate the support of ATCO's Electrical Division. Through its generous donation, we are able to get these important seminars up and running soon."

Another important issue that encompassed much of the association's time was the Government of Alberta's Patient Focused Emergency Medical Services report (referred to as the Cenaiko report because it was chaired by Harvey Cenaiko, MLA, Calgary Buffalo) on ambulance service across the province.


"The AFCA has put considerable energy and resources into a response to this report," said Burton. "On behalf of our members, we looked at the report from a provincial perspective as well as for those offering integrated services. In addition to hosting a teleconference meeting, we've

points out, the Cenaiko report and its nine recommendations are critical for the whole fire service, but especially for integrated departments.

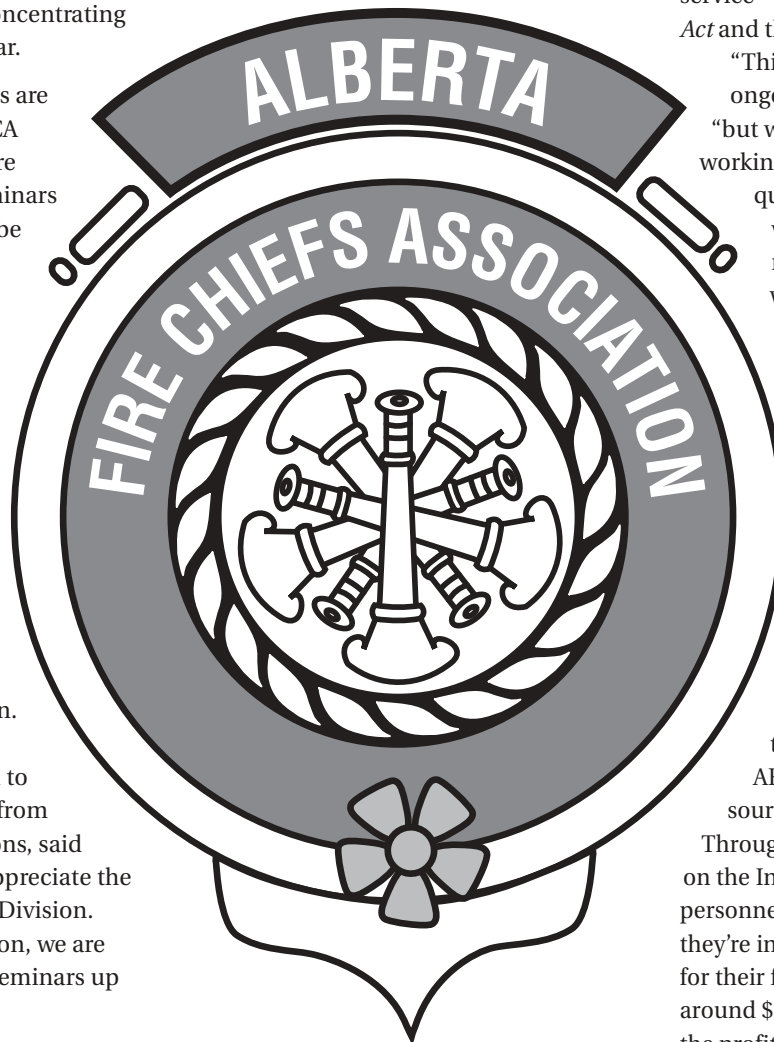
There have also been discussions with government departments regarding two pieces of legislation that affect the fire service—the *Forest and Prairie Protection Act* and the *Municipal Government Act*.

"This is an issue that has been ongoing for some time," said Burton, "but we're finally talking about it and working towards a resolution." Burton is quick to add that he's really pleased with the positive working relationship that has developed with government, especially in working with Denis St. Arnaud, Assistant Deputy Minister, Public Safety Services and Brad Pickering, Deputy Minister, Alberta Municipal Affairs. "Working with these gentlemen has enabled us to make progress on this issue, and I'm looking forward to ongoing dialogue on other issues too," said Burton.

In addition to working on issues that affect the fire service, the AFCA also serves as a valuable source for fire-related materials.

Through its electronic bookstore (located on the Internet at www.afca.ab.ca), fire personnel can easily order the materials they're interested in plus generate savings for their fire departments. "Our sales are around \$800,000 a year now, and most of the profit is put back into fire organizations," said Burton. "The AFCA gets a minimal profit, but most of the savings go back to AFCA members who buy the books." Burton says that in addition to Alberta, materials are also sold to British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, the Northwest Territories and the Yukon. 

conducted numerous exchanges with fire departments across Alberta to create the unified response document that was submitted to government. As Burton



Home-heating fires double in colder months

Albertans can expect a 100% increase in home-heating fires during the colder months!

This brief report is based on an analysis of fire incident data for the 10-year period from 1992 to 2002 in the Fire Statistics Information System (FSIS) at the Fire Commissioner's Office. For purposes of analysis, the year was divided into two seasons: warm (April to September, inclusive) and cold (October to March, inclusive). "Homes" are defined as one- and two-family dwellings (includes newer manufactured homes), apartments and mobile homes.

The most remarkable difference between warm and cold season home fire causes, according to Table 1, is a 100% increase (7% vs 14%) in the contribution of heating equipment fires to home fires. This increase, though expected, clearly points out the hazards associated with the increased use of heating equipment during the cold season. The number of deaths,

injuries and dollar losses from property damage resulting from heating-related fires also increased in the cold season compared to the warm season by 86%, 57% and 110%, respectively.

Another significant difference between the warm and cold season is in the number of deaths associated with cooking-related fires. For reasons not clear from the data, the number of cooking-related deaths in the cold season is 283% higher than in the warm season. Further analysis of this data is provided on the next page.

Heating equipment, as captured in the FSIS, can be broadly classified into three groups: central heating units (furnaces and water heaters), portable and fixed space heaters (fireplaces, space heaters), and related equipment (chimneys/vents). The distribution of fires related to these three groups of heating equipment is shown in Table 2.

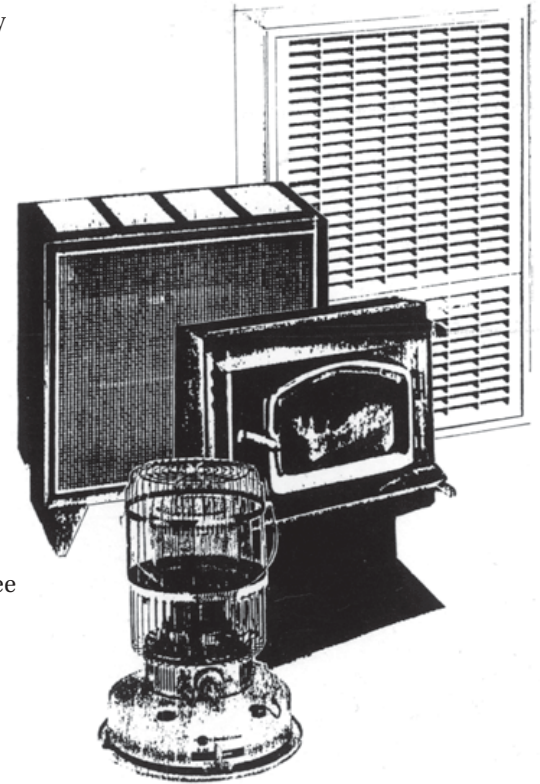


Table 1 below provides a comparison of major fire causes in Alberta homes during the warm and cold seasons as defined above.

Fire causes	Cold season (October to March)					Warm season (April to September)				
	Fires	%	Deaths	Injuries	\$ Losses	Fires	%	Deaths	Injuries	\$ Losses
Cooking	1,897	22	23	374	28,135,814	2,511	28	6	406	30,538,055
Heating	1,253	14	13	141	39,568,671	593	7	7	90	18,817,584
Smoking	916	10	34	233	21,767,781	1,134	13	45	235	36,591,316
Arson/set fires	769	9	4	80	26,140,745	936	11	15	114	26,392,036
Child fireplay	576	7	4	168	15,531,962	520	6	9	141	14,489,285
Electrical	774	8	8	70	33,647,492	723	8	2	61	30,047,526
Candles	476	5	6	98	9,664,742	275	3	5	77	6,770,730
Clothes dryer	313	4	1	19	2,995,839	292	3	0	3	2,499,734
Exposure fire	294	3	0	0	7,010,752	387	4	0	3	60,866,956
Appliances/equipment	282	3	1	24	7,304,719	254	3	1	14	6,257,338
All other	1,268	14	34	162	22,991,794	1,273	14	26	164	60,539,404
Total	8,818	100	128	1,369	264,828,857	8,898	100	116	1,308	309,025,970



Cold and warm season home-heating fires by type of heating equipment Table 2

Type of heating equipment	% of Heating Fires		
	Warm season	Cold season	% Change (warm to cold)
Central heating:			
Furnaces	30	22	-36
Water heaters	22	8	-63
Portable/fixed space heating:			
Fireplaces	18	22	+22
Space heaters	8	15	+88
Chimneys/vents	20	30	+50
Unclassified heating equipment	3	3	0
Total	100	100	-

The following conclusions may be drawn:

- The contribution of portable/fixed heating systems and chimneys/vents to home fires increases 45% from the warm season (46%) to the cold season (67%).
- Compared to the warm season, cold season fires related to fireplaces and space heaters increase by 22% and 88%, respectively.

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Exploring the reasons for high cooking-related fire deaths in the colder months

The number of fire deaths related to cooking was 283% more in the cold season (23) compared to those in the warm season (6). Further analyses were conducted on a series of variables to identify reasons for this remarkable difference. Relevant points from the analyses that may reveal some clues to this difference are listed below:

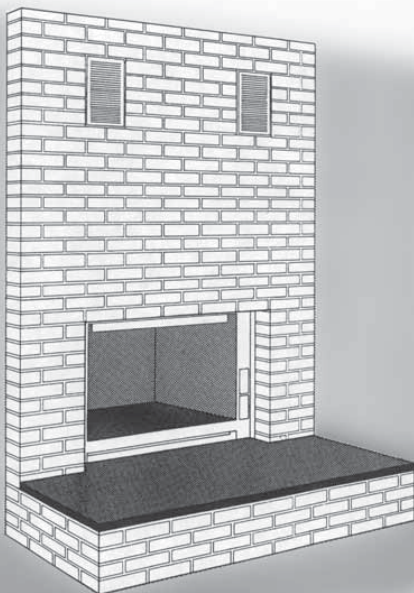
1. Ignition of clothing was a factor in the deaths of about 38% of the fatalities in the cold season, compared to 0% in the warm season.
2. Seniors 65 years and over represented 38% of the fatalities in the cold season and 16% in the warm season. The majority of fatalities in both seasons was persons between the ages of 17 and 61. Three children under nine died in the cold season compared to one in the warm season.
3. Asleep or impaired by alcohol/drugs/medication were factors in 46% of the deaths in the cold season and in 50% of the deaths in the warm season.
4. More males than females died in cooking-related fires irrespective of the season. However, in the cold season, male to female ratio was 2:1 and in the warm season the ratio was 6:1.
5. Fires started in pans or pots heated on stovetop burners accounted for a similar number of fatalities in both the warm and cold seasons. In the cold season, additional fatalities resulted from ignition of nearby combustibles by a stovetop burner or from the use of wood stoves.
6. Cooking oil was the most common material first ignited in cooking fires in both seasons.
7. One/two family dwellings had the most cooking-related fire fatalities irrespective of the season.
8. The number of fatalities between urban (cities) and other centres in the cold and warm seasons were in the ratios of 13:10 and 2:4, respectively.
9. Time of day when fatalities occurred was as follows: 100% of all fatalities in the warm season were between the hours of 10:30 p.m. to 6:30 a.m. In the cold season, 43% were between 10:30 p.m. and 6:30 a.m.; 21% were between 6:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m.; and 35% were between 2:30 p.m. and 10:30 p.m.
10. In the cold season 52% of deaths were from smoke inhalation, 35% from burns and 13% from other causes. In the warm season, 83% was from smoke inhalation and 17% was from other causes.
11. January, February and March accounted for 71% of all cooking-related fire deaths in the cold season.
12. Smoke alarms were absent in homes where 14 people died in the cold season. In the remaining 9 deaths, activation of smoke alarms was as follows: activated, but did not assist occupant evacuation (1); no activation due to lack of a battery (1); activation unknown (4).

The above results do not reveal any clear-cut reasons why the number of fatalities from cooking fires is very high in the cold season as compared to the warm season. The smaller number of fatalities also limits such a comparison, especially in the warm season. It may be speculated that clothing ignition and related burn injuries as well as a higher number of deaths in seniors and children may be factors in the higher mortality in the cold season. Ignition of clothing was involved in 9 deaths in the cold season: outer clothing (2); sleepwear (3); underclothing (1); and other clothing (3). Other possible reasons for the higher number of cold season cooking fatalities are the lack of smoke alarm protection; an increased use of alternate cooking equipment (for example, wood stoves/barbecues), which may pose additional unanticipated hazards, and the possible use of cooking equipment as heating sources in the winter.

Home-heating fires double in colder months

...continued from previous page

- It appears that portable and fixed space heaters pose a greater risk in Alberta homes because of their higher use and also because they provide so many more opportunities for error by the people using them: in installing them; maintaining them; fueling them; operating them and arranging household contents around them.
- The contribution of central heating systems to home fires decreases from warm season (52%) to the cold season (30%). This is probably a reflection of the higher use of portable/fixed heating systems in the cold season by Albertans. An increase in the cost of natural gas can result in a higher use of alternate heat sources such as fireplaces and wood stoves. Use of such equipment can be linked to fire incidents caused by improper installation, use, and maintenance.
- Portable and fixed space heating systems accounted for 10 out of 14 deaths (data not presented) in the cold season.

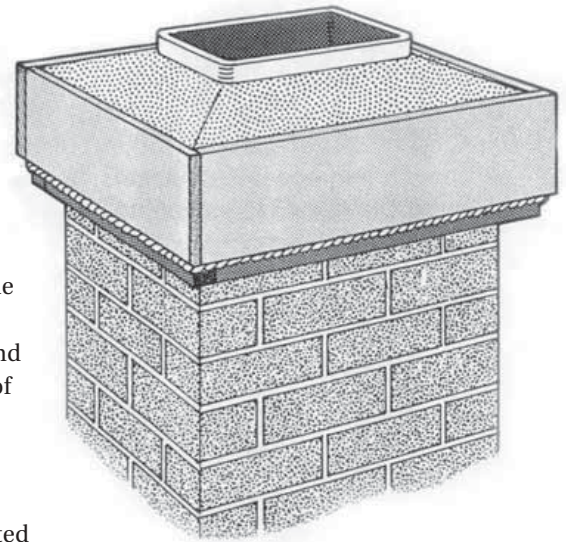



However, the majority of heating equipment related fire injuries (data not presented) both in the warm (93%) and cold season (54%) were associated with central heating systems.

- Furnaces and water heaters contribute relatively less to Alberta home fires during the cold season. The primary reasons may be that they require fewer human interventions and therefore fewer errors occur. Causes of fires involving furnaces and water heaters are more likely to involve mechanical/electrical failures.

The following fire safety tips are suggested in the hope that the frequency and severity of heating related fires during this cold season will be reduced:

- When buying a new heating unit, make sure it carries the mark of an independent testing laboratory. Be sure that a qualified technician installs the unit or checks that the unit has been installed properly.
- Wood and coal stoves, fireplaces, chimneys, chimney connectors, and all other solid-fueled heating equipment need to be inspected annually by a professional and cleaned as often as the inspections indicate.
- Space heaters need space. With very few exceptions, home heating devices need one metre clearance from combustibles.
- A portable kerosene heater must be fueled only in a well-ventilated area, free of flame and other heat sources, and only when the device has cooled completely. Use only the type of kerosene specified by the manufacturer for that device. Never use gasoline instead of kerosene.



- When turning a heating device on or off, be careful to follow the manufacturer's instructions. When buying heaters, look for devices with automatic shut-off features.
- Be sure any gas-fueled heating device is installed with proper attention to ventilation.
- Major causes of home heating fires include (a) lack of regular cleaning, which leads to creosote buildup in fireplaces and other wood-burning devices and associated chimneys and connectors; (b) failing to give space, by installing or placing heaters too close to combustibles or placing combustibles too close to heaters; (c) basic flaws in the construction or design of wood-burning heating equipment and (d) fueling errors involving liquid or gas-fueled heating equipment.
- Albertans are encouraged to take extra precautions when using portable or fixed heating systems such as space heaters, fireplaces and the associated chimneys and vents.
- When using heating equipment, hazards other than fire must also be kept in mind, particularly contact burns and carbon monoxide poisoning. 

Preventing fires in rural Alberta

During the course of my work, I have the opportunity to inspect rural public and semi-public buildings under our insurance program. These buildings consist of community halls, curling rinks, indoor skating arenas and concession buildings for rodeo grounds and ball diamonds.


There are some very fine structures out there, well built and well maintained and there are also some buildings that are not so fine. For example, community halls range from new buildings to old school buildings that have been altered to meet the community's needs. The same goes for curling rinks and arenas, which range in age from the very new, with modern ice-making facilities, to the extremely old that rely on Mother Nature for ice control.

Most of these facilities are wood-frame construction and are therefore considered combustible. And, most of the rural com-

munity halls allow smoking on the premises, while most curling rinks have a lounge area where smoking is allowed. As well, many of these buildings have on-site cooking facilities.

Through our inspections, we often discover corrections or improvements that need to be made to ensure that these buildings follow the fire code. For example, fire extinguishers have often not been inspected as required in the fire code.

Similarly, many rural buildings don't have smoke alarms and, in some, the fire escape doors aren't easily accessible. While we understand that many people place bars across doors to prevent access by vandals to the interior of the building, the fact remains that emergency exit doors must be accessible when a room is occupied.

From January 1, 1997 to August 12, 2002, our clients reported more than 80 incidents of vandalism to owned buildings, 11 fires/arsons exceeding \$2.6 million and one boiler failure. While we are fortunate there was no loss of life from any of these incidents, I encourage everyone to check community buildings on a continual basis to ensure they meet fire code regulations. Together, we can take the necessary measures to provide safe environments for Albertans. 

Recognition for contribution to fellow citizens

Alberta's Fire Commissioner receives medal

Lieutenant Governor Lois Hole presented Fire Commissioner Pat Graham with the Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Commemorative Medal in Calgary on November 13, 2002. The medal commemorates the 50th anniversary of Her Majesty's reign as Queen of Canada and was awarded to Canadians who have made a significant contribution to their fellow citizens, their community or to Canada.



Fire Commissioner Pat Graham after receiving the Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Commemorative Medal.


Article provided by Bob Zifkin, Alberta Fire News Editorial Board member and a representative of the insurance industry in Alberta. He is currently employed as a Loss Prevention Officer and Risk Manager with the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties insurance division, Jubilee Insurance Agencies Limited.

Memorial unveiled in Strathcona County

Following years of fundraising and months of design and construction, the Strathcona Fallen Fire Fighters Memorial was officially unveiled on October 18, 2002. The Strathcona Firefighters' Honour Guard led a parade of more than 150 firefighters, emergency medical personnel and police officers in a combined march through Sherwood Park to the memorial. Included at the rear of the parade were an engine and ambulance that carried the four flags (Canada, Alberta, Strathcona County and the International Association of Firefighters—Local 2461) to the memorial site.

Located next to Strathcona County Emergency Service's Station #1 in Sherwood Park, Alberta, the memorial is a 6-foot-tall by 16-foot-wide bronze plaque depicting fire, rescue and emergency medical services activities. The memorial provides a place for members of the department and citizens of Strathcona



County to honour all emergency services personnel who have lost their lives while responding to the needs of the citizens they are honoured to protect. 

From left to right: Lieutenant Michael (Todd) Nixon, Officer of the Guard; Deputy Chief Brian Parker and IAFF Local 2461 President Darrell Reid. All three have bowed their heads following the sounding of the last alarm at the dedication ceremony.

Expert advice from our two Rays

You were asking...




Ray Cox, Edmonton and Ray Ligenza, Calgary

- Q.** I own a small restaurant in northern Alberta and have been told by the company that services my **dry chemical kitchen fire suppression system** that it has to be replaced. Is this correct?
- A.** A STANDATA bulletin was recently issued to inform owners that Municipal Affairs has become aware that manufacturers of fire suppression systems have stopped producing dry chemical powders and parts for recharging existing dry chemical kitchen fire suppression systems. This means that owners may no longer be able to get

their existing dry chemical kitchen fire suppression systems serviced and maintained as required by the Alberta Fire Code.

If your system needs to be serviced and this is no longer possible, you are advised to install a listed automatic

kitchen fire suppression system that complies with either:

- ULC/ORD-C1254.6-1995, "Fire Testing of Restaurant Cooking Area Fire Extinguishing System Units", or
- UL-300, "Fire Testing of Fire Extinguishing Systems for Protection of Restaurant Cooking Areas." 

These questions and answers were prepared by Ray Cox (780) 415-0508, Edmonton, and Ray Ligenza (403) 297-5797, Calgary. Both Cox and Ligenza are technical advisors for Technical Services, Building and Fire Safety, in the Public Safety Division of Alberta Municipal Affairs.

Digest



Long-serving fire chief retires

After 41 years in the fire service, Wainwright Fire Chief George Greer retired. George started as a driver with the fire department of the National Defence base in Wainwright in 1961. From there, he moved into a role as firefighter at the base, then with the Wainwright volunteer fire department. He moved into the role of captain before assuming the position of fire chief in 1988. According to Wainwright Mayor Norm Coleman, "George has done the community of Wainwright an excellent service for 41 years. This is a significant achievement and we are very grateful to him. We will certainly miss him, but we wish him the best."

Safe Communities launched in Fort McMurray

This summer, the municipality of Wood Buffalo became the 31st safe community in Canada to join the Safe Communities Foundation network. At a designation ceremony held June 8, 2002, the Safe Communities Foundation presented Wood Buffalo with a designation plaque in recognition of its ambitious plan for injury reduction over the next year. The Wood Buffalo Safe/Healthy Community Network represents a broad cross-section of the community, which includes the RCMP, rescue and fire services, Suncor Energy, Syncrude Canada, YMCA, health units, school boards, small businesses, provincial and municipal governments, media and unions.

Mark your calendar

The 2003 Provincial Hose Coupling Contest takes place in Millet from August 16 to 17. More information will be available in the new year.

Fort Mac firefighter toughest alive

Steve Eliason, a firefighter with the Fort McMurray Fire Department, took home the gold when he was crowned the Toughest Firefighter Alive on at the World Firefighters Games in New Zealand, October 27. Eliason competed against 20 firefighters in the over-18 competition and finished with a time of 10 minutes 58 seconds. The event included a hose run, firefighters' obstacle course, and a tower and stair climb. Forty-four Fort McMurray firefighters, nurses, paramedics and other emergency services personnel traveled to Christchurch, New Zealand, for the seventh annual World Firefighters Games from October 26 to November 2. They brought home seven gold, three silver and six bronze medals.

Staying alert to changes

Did you know that a number of fire safety campaigns, *Alberta Fire News*, safety bulletins, recall notices and standards are issued throughout the year? To ensure that you're up-to-date on the latest information about safety issues, check out the FCO web site on a regular basis at: www.gov.ab.ca/ma/fco.

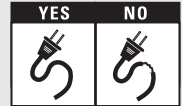
Name that building...

If you've recently driven along 186 Street near 106A Avenue in Edmonton, you can't help but notice a huge concrete seven-storey building. The Practical Training Facility officially opened in September 2002. The building, which is one of the largest of its type in North America, was purposely designed for training and practice of firefighting, search and rescue, and rope rescue operations. As Eric Crozier, chief training officer with Edmonton's Emergency Response Department stated at the official opening, "it gives us live fire training 365 days a year."

The night before Christmas for firefighters

(back by popular demand)

'Twas the night before Christmas when all through the house,
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse,
When down through the chimney all covered with soot,
Came the SPIRIT OF FIRE, an ugly galoot.



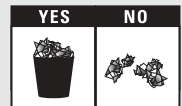
His eyes glowed like embers, his features were stern,
As he looked all around for something to burn.
What he saw made him grumble, his anger grew higher,
For there wasn't a thing that would start a good fire.



No door had been blocked by the big Christmas tree,
It stood in the corner leaving passage-ways free,
The lights that glowed brightly for Betty and Jim,
Had been hung with precaution so none touched a limb.



All the wiring was new, not a break could be seen,
And water at its base kept the tree nice and green,
The tree had been trimmed by a mother insistent,
That the ornaments used, must be fire-resistant.



And would you believe it, right next to the tree,
Was a suitable box for holding debris;
A place to throw wrappings of paper and string,
From all of the gifts that Santa might bring.



The ugly galoot was so mad he near bust,
As he climbed up the chimney in utter disgust,
For the folks in this home had paid close attention,
To all the rules of good FIRE PREVENTION.

New videos

Every Second Counts

A fire safety-training program for employees of care and treatment occupancies

Produced by the Ontario Fire Marshal's Public Fire Safety Council, this 20-minute video is directed at staff in health care and institutional facilities. The importance of staff being prepared for a fire emergency is emphasized under the following topics:

- Fire and smoke spread quickly
- Common causes of fires
- Demonstration of how an actual fire can spread
- Dangers of smoke, carbon monoxide, heat and fire to patients and staff
- Fire emergency recognition and containment, fire alarm systems, fire compartmentation or zones, and automatic sprinkler systems
- Training and supervision of staff
- Five-step emergency response (R.E.A.C.T.)
- Individual and team responses in an emergency, and
- Patient evacuation techniques and procedures.

Home Fire Drills: What Every Parent Should Know

How would kids react in a realistic fire drill? The shocking difference between what children learn at school about fire drills and how they actually respond to home fires is demonstrated in this 11-minute video produced by NFPA in cooperation with WCCO-TV in Minneapolis. The program is based on four families who participated in a simulated fire drill. The results were disappointing. The children involved made several potentially life-threatening errors during the simulations: running through smoke; not recognizing the sound of the smoke alarm; going back to sleep while the alarm is sounding; waiting for an adult to come and help them; etc. None of the families had practised a home fire drill. The simulation is repeated after the children are instructed and fire drills are practised, and the results show the benefits of having working smoke alarms and practising home fire drills.

These and other fire protection videos can be borrowed free of charge from the audio-visual collection at the Human Resources and Employment library by calling 780-415-0576. A complete listing of audio-visual resources is available at the Fire Commissioner's Office web site: www.gov.ab.ca/ma/fco

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Disaster Services becomes EMA

EMA unveiled at crisis management conference

The new vision for crisis and consequence management in Alberta was rolled out on November 6 at the *Crisis Management: An Alberta Perspective* conference in Calgary, attended by many members of Alberta's fire service. The fire service plays a critical role in emergency response, often being among those first on the scene of emergencies.

Emergency Management Alberta (EMA), the new name for Alberta Disaster Services, will coordinate all activities around preparing for, responding to, recovering from and reducing the risk of major emergencies and disasters in the province.

"After the events of September 11, it was necessary to re-evaluate Alberta Municipal Affairs' role in crisis management," said Guy Boutilier, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Minister responsible for emergency management in Alberta. "This new identity is a better reflection of the business we are now in and reaffirms our commitment to ensuring that Alberta is as prepared as it can be for whatever lies ahead."

The responsibilities of EMA include:

- Working with communities and local industry, advising on how to reduce the risk, and assisting in preparing emergency plans, training and exercises
- Working with provincial government departments and agencies, advising on how to reduce the risk, and assisting in preparing business resumption plans, training and exercises
- Coordinating assistance to communities, when needed, in the event of local major emergencies and disasters
- Coordinating the cross-government response to widespread major emergencies and disasters
- Coordinating cross-government all-sector activities related to preparing for

and reducing the risk of terrorism, otherwise known as Alberta's crisis management process


- Supporting rapid recovery for Albertans and Alberta communities who have suffered uninsurable losses and extraordinary operational costs during a major emergency or disaster

Emergency Management Alberta will place more emphasis on terrorism than its predecessor. One of the measures that will be incorporated is the five-level threat system used by the RCMP and in the United States. The system categorizes threats of terrorism by five alert levels (no threat, low, medium, high and imminent) and is similar to the colour-coded alerts used by U.S. Homeland Security.



The responsibility for determining the threat level rests with the Alberta Solicitor General's office. It has established a new Security Information Management Unit to work with RCMP and Alberta-based intelligence units for this purpose. EMA will send

written and pre-recorded alerts when threat levels change to first-responders across the province, including fire, police, emergency medical services personnel, Alberta communities, industry, provincial departments and federal emergency management partners.

The *Crisis Management: An Alberta Perspective* conference, which took place on November 6 and 7, 2002, brought together members of the provincial government, municipal government, first-response organizations and the private sector to integrate the province's crisis management process with these important partners. 

For more information on Emergency Management Alberta, visit the Alberta Municipal Affairs web site at www.gov.ab.ca/ma.