



Alberta

FIRE NEWS

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Alberta fire departments answer B.C.'s call for help



Flames paint the sky orange as fires rage out of control near Kelowna, B.C. Alberta fire fighters offered personnel and apparatus to assist firefighters in B.C. with containing this and other blazes over the past summer.

A top news story all summer was the devastating fires in British Columbia, but did you know that there was an Alberta connection?


As B.C. firefighters battled to control fires burning out of control across the province, the Alberta government received a request from the Fire Commissioner of British Columbia for assistance to help combat these fires.

"Alberta and British Columbia have always enjoyed a relationship of mutual support during crises of this nature, so when the request came in, we immediately forwarded it to fire departments across Alberta," said Pat Graham, Fire Commissioner of Alberta.

Fire departments across the province were quick to offer both personnel and apparatus to assist firefighters in B.C.

More than 65 firefighters and numerous pumpers were deployed to B.C. and quickly became part of the 500 firefighters and 166 vehicles simultaneously working on eight interface fires in the province.

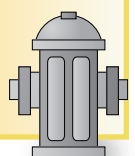
"In addition to assistance provided at the Okanogan Mountain fire, many of the Alberta firefighters were deployed to the Kootenay region, near Cranbrook," said Rick Dumala, Fire Commissioner for British Columbia. "That fire had more potential to cause structural damage than the Okanogan Mountain fire, so we were very appreciative of the assistance provided by Alberta."

"There was a terrific response to B.C.'s request for help," added Graham. "Fire departments of all sizes were more than willing to provide whatever assistance they could, and my hat goes off to everyone for their tremendous support for fellow firefighters in need." 

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Alberta
MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS



Spreading the word... in Spanish

We all know the importance of fire prevention education. We also know that by sharing information with the public there have been significant reductions in certain types of fires over the years. That's why it's encouraging to hear about Victor Fernandez, a member of the St. Albert Fire Department, who is making a significant difference in the Hispanic community.

Before emigrating to Canada from Chile in 1980, Victor was a firefighter with the Santiago Fire Department. He now works as an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) with the St. Albert Fire Department. His fire prevention awareness activities began with a request from Sociedad Cultural Chileno Canadiense, a local Latino association, to give a talk about the basics of fire prevention in very simple and easy-to-understand language. As Fernandez explains, "in our culture our elderly parents live with us, so they naturally serve as babysitters if the Mom and Dad go out to a movie or for dinner. But the grandparents often don't speak English and don't know what to do if the smoke alarm goes off or how to use a fire extinguisher. So I was asked to put on a very basic session to help the grandparents."

Fernandez says that his first session dealt with how to check the batteries of a smoke alarm and how to plan an escape. "The audience was very interested in the topic, which resulted in holding more sessions for other people. I've also expanded beyond fire prevention to CPR courses and tours of the local fire hall," said Fernandez. In total, Fernandez estimates he's presented to about 300 people from the Hispanic community. In addition to the presenta-



Fernandez receives the Meritorious Service Medal from Governor General Romeo LeBlanc in 1996.

tions in St. Albert, he has also conducted sessions in Edmonton and Calgary and has had a few articles in the Latino association's newsletter, *Chileno de Corazón*, a quarterly publication that is distributed to about 1,500 people.

"I really like to help people and it is truly satisfying to do something for the community," said Fernandez. His caring nature and "do it" attitude also resulted in his being one of only 12 people across Canada to receive the Meritorious Service Medal from Governor General Romeo LeBlanc in 1996. In addition, Fernandez was also awarded the Emergency Medical Services Exemplary Service Medal in 2001 and the Alberta Emergency Services Medal in 2003.

St. Albert Fire Chief Len Clark is quick to acknowledge Fernandez's contributions. "Victor has always been very proactive in community involvement and we certainly appreciate his efforts in promoting fire prevention and public safety. While this is something that Victor initiated on his own, it really is beneficial for the community too."




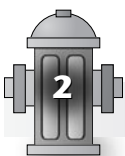
St. Albert Fire Department member Victor Fernandez is taking his fire prevention and fire safety message to the Hispanic Community

Thanks to donations from members of the St. Albert Fire Department, Edmonton Fire Department, Morinville Fire Department, Namao Fire Department, Calahoo Fire Department, Tubman's Dry Cleaning (St. Albert) and ISECO Boots (Edmonton branch), Fernandez sent 21 boxes of firefighting protective gear to the Santiago-Chile Volunteer Fire Department, Station #18. Details of the boxes' contents are as follows:

45 firefighters' gear	2 security belts
47 station wear shirts	3 rescue harnesses
12 firefighter helmets	3 summer/fall jackets
15 Scott-Pak 2.2	4 winter jackets
21 Scott-Pak 2.2 masks	2 spot lights
74 Scott-Pak 2.2 cylinders	9 suspenders
6 pairs of station wear boots	4 pairs firefighter boots and medical supplies
4 rescue ropes	

While Fernandez is currently the only Hispanic firefighter providing this service to the Hispanic community, he hopes that others will follow his lead. "After all, I do hope to retire one day, and before doing that I would like to know that others will be able to teach fire prevention and education within our community."

Fernandez's latest endeavour is to help firefighters in his homeland. "In Chile, all firefighters are volunteer, and most of them don't have what is considered standard equipment here," said Fernandez. "On a visit back to Chile many years ago, I remember telling my friends that not only are firefighters paid in Canada, but they're also provided uniforms and equipment. Most of my friends could not believe it. After legislation protecting firefighters was proclaimed, I started thinking about them again, and the kind of equipment that they're currently using. So, over the past several months, I have been gathering donations of equipment such as breathing apparatus, tanks, gear, boots and helmets from fire departments." 



Volunteer firefighters and the WCB

Here at the WCB, we recognize that one size does not fit all of our clients, and so we look at everyone's case individually. As volunteer firefighters, your situation is unique. Since working as a volunteer is not usually a full-time job, some challenges can pop up from time to time, usually around whether the injury stands the "is it work-related?" test. The WCB does have criteria to help us determine who is—and who is not—eligible for compensation benefits. It's simple and makes a lot of sense.

Accepting a claim

A Workers' Compensation claim has to meet the following requirements:

- The worker and employer must be under the *Workers' Compensation Act** and;
- The injury must arise out of and occur in the course of employment

So, for example, if you have suffered a knee injury, then you have to confirm the injury happened at work, while you were on the job. If you hurt your knee during a round of weekend football with some friends, this would not meet the criteria.

*Note: Volunteer firefighters fall under the *Workers' Compensation Act*.

When an injury is work-related

The WCB looks at the following factors when gathering factual information to accept a claim.

- Medical diagnosis: A lot of weight is placed on objective, clinical information, so the physician's report (what the



Donna Chimko, Customer Service Account Manager, WCB-Alberta (Edmonton) and Teri Spohr, Customer Service Account Manager, WCB-Alberta (Calgary)

- doctor has to say about the injury) is often critical.
- Workplace factors: The WCB will examine the workplace for any events or conditions (for example, exposure to toxic chemical smoke in fires and how that might have played a role in a lung disease claim) that may have contributed to the injury.
- Personal factors: Factors that are personal to you and are not part of the workplace. Personal factors include whether you smoke, your health, diet, exercise and pre-existing conditions, like asthma. None of these would be caused by work but could be causing you problems.

Worker benefits

Once your claim is accepted you may be eligible for one or more of the following:


- Wage Replacement
- Medical Costs
- Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- Recognition of a Permanent Disability

Calculating benefits

How much you receive in benefits depends on how much money you earn.

Your annual gross earnings are insured up to a maximum of \$58,800. Benefits are based on 90 per cent of net earnings. If, for example, you gross \$40,000 from your regular employment, then your net income would be calculated at \$30,393.91. So your weekly compensation amount would be \$524.61, or \$2,279.54 per month.

If you are unemployed at the time of the injury, your benefits are based on 'Value of Service.' In a volunteer firefighter's case, the WCB would take the usual rate a firefighter earns, and match up the rate based on your years of experience to determine the compensation benefits.

This is a basic overview of what the WCB takes into consideration with each new claim and how the benefits are calculated. 

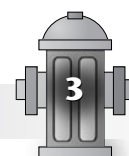
So you were hurt on the job—what now?

Just follow these simple steps:

- Tell your fire chief or deputy
- Record the particulars (particulars include: name, date, time, cause of injury, description of injury and who you reported to).
- Get medical attention immediately, if required.
- If required, complete a Workers' Report of Injury. Your employer should have a form or you can download a Workers' Report of Injury through the WCB website www.wcb.ab.ca. You can also pick one up in our Edmonton or Calgary offices.

We invite you to visit our website at www.wcb.ab.ca for more detailed information on everything from our online reporting services to a detailed listing of benefits based on income.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to give us a call or connect with us through e-mail. Donna Chimko can be reached in Edmonton at (780) 498-7658 or donna.chimko@wcb.ab.ca. Teri Spohr can be reached in Calgary at 403-517-6181 or teri.spohr@wcb.ab.ca.



Alberta teacher wins "Teacher of the Year" award

Rae McMullen, a Grade 3 and 4 teacher at Chris Akkerman Elementary School in Calgary, beat out colleagues from across North America to win the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 2003 'Teacher of the Year' Award.

"I believe very strongly in safety education and the *Risk Watch* program, so it was truly a great honour to win this award," said McMullen. "Hopefully it will encourage other teachers in Alberta and beyond to incorporate the *Risk Watch* program into their teachings too."

Those thoughts are echoed by Sean Tracey, NFPA Regional Director for Canada. "This is a tremendous recognition for Rae McMullen but also a significant recognition of the growing success of *Risk Watch* throughout Canada," said Tracey in a news release announcing this year's winner.

A teacher for 14 years, McMullen has been teaching the *Risk Watch* program since 1999. Prior to that, she used the Learn Not to Burn program in the classroom. In addition to including the *Risk Watch* program within the Health component of her lesson plans, McMullen also integrates *Risk Watch* into every teachable moment that arises.

"Just about every day something comes up that enables me to integrate a component of *Risk Watch* into what we are learning," said McMullen. "For example, the school-based swimming lessons provided an ideal opportunity to focus on the water safety section. Similarly, whenever there's an article in the news that relates to safety, especially those involving children, we also discuss it and I relate it to the *Risk Watch* material. We also extended the program into Halloween and trick-or-treat safety, as well as posters about Christmas-related safety."

McMullen says that the best way for students to learn is by empowering them to take responsibility for their environment, both at home and at school. In addition, letters, checklists and informational sheets are sent home to help encourage parents and caregivers to reinforce the safety messages that their children are learning in school.



Rae McMullen, a Grade 3 and 4 teacher at Chris Akkerman Elementary School in Calgary, winner of the National Fire Protection Association's 2003 "Teacher of the Year" Award for her work with the *Risk Watch* program.



McMullen also believes in spreading the word about *Risk Watch*. Whenever possible, her students shared what they were learning with other classes of students. "When our classroom created bus safety skits, we invited the Early Childhood Services students to our presentations, and when we brought in the Hazard House, other students were invited to participate too."

The fact that her husband, Ken McMullen, is also involved in fire safety (formerly a Fire Prevention Officer with Rocky View Fire Service and now a Fire Safety Officer with the Alberta Fire Commissioner's Office) has provided the opportunity for both of them to conduct several educational workshops on *Risk Watch* and safety education to communities in southern Alberta.

Congratulations Rae, and keep up the great work! 🔥



The "Teacher of the Year Award" was developed by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) in 1996 to recognize teachers who have demonstrated excellence and innovation in the use of the *Risk Watch* program. The award is co-sponsored by NFPA and the family of Rhea Reiss, a longtime advocate for safety education and wife of past NFPA Board Chair Martin Reiss.

Nominees for the award must be full-time or part-time classroom teachers or daycare providers in a public, private or parochial school system who have used *Risk Watch* in a consistent and creative manner. Nominees must be able to document an improvement in the safety knowledge and behaviour of participating students and their families. NFPA also requires each nomination be accompanied by an original *Risk Watch* lesson plan. A copy of Rae McMullen's award winning lesson plan is available at: www.nfpa.org/riskwatch/lsn_34_powerpoint.html



Community contributions create Westlock Fire Safety House program

Thanks to the efforts of one dedicated member of Alberta's fire service and the generosity of area residents and businesses, students in the Pembina Hills Regional Division will soon be enhancing their fire prevention education program through a Fire Safety House.

As an Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) with the ambulance service of the Westlock fire department, deputy chief for the Town of Westlock Fire Department and the chief for the County of Westlock Fire Department, Glenn Latimer is very involved in fire protection and safety in the Westlock area. But what he really enjoys best is spending time in classrooms teaching children about fire prevention and safety. Three years ago, after seeing a magazine advertisement about a Fire Safety House and how it encouraged hands-on teaching with children about fire safety, Latimer became excited about the idea of getting a unit.

After taking a trip to Grande Prairie to see their unit, Latimer resolved to obtain a unit for Westlock. He formed the non-profit F.I.R.E. (Fire, Instruction, Rescue, Education) Society and started a fundraising campaign for the unit's \$31,000 U.S. cost.

Within eight months, the society acquired enough money to put a down payment on the unit. Once the community realized the educational value of the trailer, several businesses also got involved. For example, one restaurant sold fire hats for \$1.00 each, and at the end of the campaign doubled the money raised. When the waitress who sold the most hats donated back to the society the \$150 she won for her efforts, Latimer promised that her two children would be the first to try out the unit. As well, the new McDonald's restaurant got involved in fundraising by selling paper banners for \$1 each to contribute to the campaign.



Westlock's new fire Safety House will enhance fire prevention education in the Pembina Hills Regional Division

"Support from the community has been phenomenal," said Latimer, "and it's still continuing. Just the other day, another citizen gave me post-dated cheques. That will really help with the operating costs of the unit."

One of the most amazing aspects of the campaign, though, is that all of Latimer's contributions are made during his spare time. His campaigning and his time in the classroom were all outside of his regular full-time job. When he drove to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to pick up the unit, he used some of his holidays. But, as Latimer says, "if I can prevent one death from this it is worth it."

With the acquisition of the unit, Latimer is also getting support from his work colleagues. "They've already offered to help out with the classroom presentations," said Latimer. "I've already spoken with the schools and am busy organizing

presentation dates. With the help of my colleagues, that will really help in reaching our goal of teaching all the students from Kindergarten to Grade 5 about fire prevention and safety."

In addition to students, Latimer is also reaching out to adults. "I took the unit to the local fair, and it really drew the interest of both children and adults. And while I've often told adults about how smoke and fire behave, it wasn't until they could see for themselves in the Fire Safety House that they really understood what I had been saying." Latimer says he's also planning to set the unit up at the IGA and McDonald's parking lots to draw more interest in fire safety education.

Latimer states that the success of the project is really a result of the tremendous support from residents, businesses and associations. And, while he's pleased that they were able to purchase the Fire Safety House, he's already planning for the next step—a table-top model that can be used during the winter months. 🔥

Creating a Fire Prevention Week family event

Utilizing a past Fire Prevention Week (FPW) theme of "Team Up for Fire Safety," Annelise Batty, a nine-year member of the Weberville Fire Department, has helped develop a very interesting and interactive fire safety promotion in the Peace River area.

"It all began through a conversation with Norm Brownlee, Executive Assistant, Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, Northwest Region—Peace River," said Batty. "I'm always scrounging for materials to share with children during Fire Prevention Week, and Norm mentioned their Fire Smart Program that we could use. From there, we included Ross Bennett, Fire Safety Officer with the Alberta Fire Commissioner's Office and Vic McLean, the former fire chief for the Peace River Fire Department. Working together over

the past three years, we've been able to expand the event to include a wide variety of activities and displays."

The FPW event, billed as the Fire Smart and Home Fire Safety Show, is held at the River Drive Mall in Peace River, and includes a variety of safety partners. Participants receive a passport to be used at each of the fire safety activity centres located around the mall. After answering an age-appropriate question or participating in a specific activity, the passport is stamped. Completed passports are then entered for a draw of prizes donated by local area businesses.



Left-Right: Peace River Fire Department's 1927 antique fire truck with Graham Smyth, Kelly the Dalmatian and friends

Some of the other featured activities at the 2003 event included:

- Peace Region Emergency Services setting up a display where children could make a 911 call and answer the questions asked by the responder

- Peace River Hospital joined in with a Barbie crash test dummy to showcase the importance of seat belt safety
- Peace River Fire Department used their antique fire truck and Graham Smyth, a firefighter with the Peace River Fire Department, and his Dalmatian, Kelly, as the backdrop for family photos
- \$2 hot dog and drink, with proceeds going towards fire relief efforts in British Columbia
- Water games, both indoors and outside
- Grande Prairie and District Burn Society brought their Fire Safety House
- Colouring books, stickers, tattoos and activity sheets were distributed to children
- Weberville Fire Department closed the week's events with a Sunday morning pancake breakfast for the public

"The event is really geared to families," said Batty. "This year we tried to incorporate as many community partners in the area as possible, which enabled us to expand the range of activities and displays. Our focus is on getting children interested, and from there, you automatically get their parents hooked too." 🔥

Medal presentation in Edmonton and Calgary

Recognizing exemplary service

The federal Fire Services Exemplary Services Medal is awarded to full time members of the fire service upon completion of 20 years of exemplary service. The medal is signed by the Governor General of Canada and in Alberta is administered by Alberta Municipal Affairs.



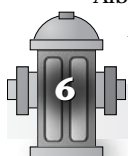
Those eligible for the medal include:

- members of fire departments
- fire marshal office personnel
- fire commissioner's office personnel

This year's event saw 85 recipients receiving their medal in Edmonton on August 20th at the Provincial Museum of Alberta and 18 recipients at the McDougall Centre in Calgary on September 23rd. 🔥



Lieutenant Governor Lois Hole and Alberta Municipal Affairs Minister Guy Boutilier share a laugh during the recent Federal Fire Service Exemplary Service Medal presentation in Edmonton



Fire Prevention Week 2003

This year's Fire Prevention Week (FPW) was a success judging by the various events held throughout the province by the fire service. The Fire Commissioner's Office (FCO) supported FPW in a number of ways:

- Produced a comprehensive campaign kit containing fire prevention and safety information articles supporting this year's theme: "When Fire Strikes: Get Out! Stay Out!" The kit was posted on the FCO website and on the Alberta Weekly Newspaper Association (AWNA) Bulletin Board, and also distributed as hard copies to all fire departments. A paid advertisement from the FCO was supplied to all AWNA member newspapers and First Nations newspapers.
- Partnered with McDonald's Restaurants of Canada in cooperation with Fire Commissioner's Offices in B.C. and Manitoba. A total of 192 Alberta fire departments volunteered to promote FPW using children's activity booklets

produced by McDonald's under the technical guidance of the Fire Commissioner's Offices in the three provinces. This year's grand prize was a trip for four to Disneyland. The winner of the Disneyland trip is five-year-old Tia Gronlund of Kamloops, B.C.

- Kicked off FPW at the Ben Calf Robe-St. Clare Catholic Elementary/Junior High School in Edmonton on October 9. This was a joint effort by the departments of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development (AAND) and



Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Minister Pearl Calahasen joins Fire Commissioner Pat Graham and the FCO's Te-Jay Smart at the Ben Calf Robe-St. Clare School to kick off Fire Prevention Week 2003.

Alberta Municipal Affairs. Honourable Pearl Calahasen, Minister of AAND and Alberta Fire Commissioner Pat Graham (representing Alberta Municipal



Affairs) addressed the children and staff members at the school. The highlight of the event was the Hazard House demonstration to teach students in Kindergarten and Grades 3, 4 and 6 about common fire hazards in the home,

the value of smoke alarms and how to respond to fire emergencies. Hazard House demonstrations were done by Te-Jay Smart of the FCO. Having AAND and Alberta Municipal Affairs coordinate their resources on an event such as this was a welcome opportunity. Both departments were able to coordinate their expertise to provide the children with a meaningful presentation. Both departments were honoured to conduct these presentations and received a warm welcome from the school. "The school set up fire displays on our behalf and presented a colourful native dance, traditional native songs and a delicious lunch," said Graham. In addition, the Fire Commissioner's Office had the opportunity to introduce the *Risk Watch* and *Wisdom of the Fire* programs. The school plans to institute these programs into their curriculum. 🔥



Sparky the Fire Dog (Sarah Barter) and Municipal Affairs' Alison Gates-Kristen with Ben Calf Robe-St. Clare students

Response to Michener Services fire shows value of disaster planning

The value of a Business Resumption Plan (BRP) became evident on June 18, 2003 for Michener Services. Michener is a government facility which consists of 318 acres, 62 buildings and is the home for 380 individuals with developmental disabilities. It is also the employer for 800 staff members. The responsibility of ensuring the safety of residents and staff falls to the Michener Loss Prevention Department. Michener Services maintains the last provincial fire brigade in Alberta with 36 paid/volunteer firefighters.

Lightning struck the peak of the 90 year-old South Administration building at 5:44 p.m., opening a four-foot section on the west spire. The duty crew; Crew Chief Jim Bullee, Captain Joy Spicer, Lieutenant Rob Resler and Pump Operator Bernice Green were able to extinguish the spire fire by using the truck mount monitor. Chief Steve Gailloux ordered a primary search of the fourth floor, where extension in the attic was located.

Due to the rapid spread of fire in the confined area, mutual aid was requested through 911, to which the City of Red Deer and County of Red Deer Fire departments responded. Sixty additional firefighters joined Michener's 30 on scene, along with 18 various apparatus. Crews fought the flames for 11 hours with the last of the hot spots being extinguished at 5:30 a.m.

Although the fire was spectacular, only 20 per cent of the building was lost. The Information Technology (IT) department began transferring data from main servers located in the fire building to the backup servers located in the North Administration building. During preplanned salvage operations, 11,000 historical photographs and documents, vital quick alert systems and main frame servers were removed. Once removed and inspected for damage, the main frame servers were placed in IT's classroom and were put back in service by 12:00 p.m.

Michener Services, like all government departments, has had a disaster plan in place for several years. The plan which included a recovery component has been exercised, reviewed and updated on a regular basis. It was this familiarity with their BRPs that allowed staff members to problem solve efficiently. One noteworthy item is that all BRPs identified that their ability to resume business was directly related to IT's ability to provide computer service. Executive members met to plan strategies, relocate affected staff and prepare media releases.

What went well

Disaster/BRP plan – We had a plan and it was used. People were familiar with the plan, having recently worked on the BRPs and with the experience gained from the table top exercise, the ability for people to problem solve was evident.

Information technology – Preplanning identified priority salvage operations and was instrumental in helping IT get back on line and reduce the impact on the site. Surplus supplies, such as an inventory of computers and desks awaiting delivery to other areas on site were reassigned. We have a dedicated IT training room which has eight work stations that were able to be transformed into our IT department.

Mutual aid – Having our own fire department helped with mutual aid by the simple fact that we train with the other departments on a regular basis. However, it should be noted that any agreements you want to be in effect need to be in writing to avoid any unexpected costs.

Vacant buildings – The fact that we had a couple of large buildings that were vacant and the ability to move people and items in immediately was beneficial.

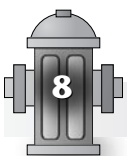
Executive team – Executive members worked well, effectively relocating staff and implementing strategies that minimized organizational impact.

What could have gone better

Emergency Operations Center (EOC) – Although our executive team met and planned, our official EOC was not activated, therefore details such as phone numbers, contact lists, available resources and extra plans were not readily available. If the EOC had been opened, all kits would have been issued. Both the chief and myself were involved in direct operations from the onset, which may have delayed that decision. This would be the only time fire officers may not be the best choice for EOC coordinators.



The value of a Business Resumption Plan (BRP) became evident on June 18, 2003 following this fire at Michener Services in Red Deer.





Deputy Chief Derrick Richards is a 13 year member of the Michener Loss Prevention Department. He also is a Staff Development Consultant and speaks on Business Resumption Planning.

Communications – Accurate and timely information needs to be released to officials, guardians, media and employees. Though we were able to give information to the media, there were erroneous reports that the entire facility had been lost. We received calls from parents and guardians from all over Canada looking for accurate information.

Who is in charge – As with any incident that involves multiple departments, jurisdiction becomes an issue. The issues can be as small as who pays for the zoom boom to remove filing cabinets located on the second floor to the fate of the entire building. Due to the fact that decisions on renovations had not been made quickly, furniture and equipment purchases for offices had to be delayed and the strain is showing in some employees. The longer it takes for any decisions to be made, the less confidence employees and the general public has in the organization.

Who pays for what – Normally this is not a big concern during the first few days but after eight weeks we still had buildings that needed to be renovated for office space and direction was unclear. It has to be determined who pays for these costs.

Contracts – Companies arriving on scene before being requested, such as restoration, may start operations without contracts in place. Agreements should be documented prior to incidents.

Personal Items – Frustration was evident when staff received baskets from their work areas, and found that in many cases personal items were not among the contents. Unfortunately, operational items must be removed first. Staff should also be encouraged to avoid bringing “one only copies” of items to work as personal items are not normally covered by Risk Management or Insurance.

Lessons learned

Plans – Once you have a plan in place, try it out. Tabletop exercises have minimal costs and huge benefits. Try to keep it as real as possible; tell people what you expect from them and then have the exercise. Make a visit to your alternate site, look at your plan and decide if its suitable. Once you have learned from the mistakes, rewrite your plan and exercise it again. Then try a mock drill.

Public Information Officers – PIOs should be used and easily identified to the media. EOC kits should include incident command vests.

Emergency Operations Centers – EOCs should be activated early. Make sure your EOC kits are current and lists are up to date. If you have a dedicated EOC, make sure that your plans include alternate sites. We have three alternate sites off grounds, two located at either end of the city and one 30 minutes away.


Paper/electronic data backups – The importance of offsite or at least off building backups for both paper and electronic data files can not be stressed enough. Hard drives should be backed up regularly to network drives.

Risk management – Having prior contact with anyone that will be giving you direction at the time of your incident is essential. A specialized team should be available for consultation. These should include financial advisors, document restoration and renovation experts. Talk to Risk Management about who pays for items such as; new walls in old buildings that will house displaced office workers, security systems for accounting areas that handle cash, or extra security guards to comply with working alone legislation during renovations.

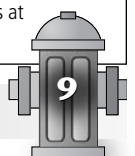
Housekeeping – Employees should be encouraged to clean their desks at the end of the day. We found that even items that were placed in stacked trays were pretty safe but papers left on desk tops were destroyed.

What to grab – We are implementing a system where file cabinets and contents will be marked with priority salvage stickers and this will be identified as part of our pre-plan. We also plan to video tape the entire complex to aid in resumption and insurance claims. With proper inventory tracking we will be able to generate a report that tells us exactly what replacement items are needed in each area. Acid free/water resistant archive boxes should be used, especially when dealing with “one copy only” files.

The bottom line...

Because we had a plan in place, exercised it and revised it, we were able to have 38 people relocated seven and a half hours before the fire had been extinguished. We were able to have critical computer service on line five and a half hours before the fire was out and no departments lost time because they didn't have a place to work in the morning. I would hate to think where we would be if we didn't have a plan in place. 

For more information on Business Resumption Planning, please contact Derrick Richards at (403) 340-5740.



Fire electronic reporting

In previous issues of Alberta Fire News we introduced you to the implementation of the Fire Electronic Reporting System (FERS), which is administered by the Fire Commissioner's Office (FCO). The following provides the history of this electronic reporting process and outlines its progress to date.

Background

Between 1991 and 1993, the FCO replaced an aging mainframe fire incident data entry system with a PC based system using Statistical Analysis System (SAS) software for both data entry and data analysis. This improved system was called the Fire Statistics Information System (FSIS). The new system's advanced features included an automatic data validation capability that checked and notified data entry personnel of data entry errors or incompatible codes. The data entry of hard copy fire incident reports submitted mainly by fire departments and insurance companies was done manually. A drawback to this system was that data entry personnel still had to deal with about 20,000 reports each year. This resulted in a lag period of at least two years in data availability for the most recent year.

Current

In an attempt to produce more current statistics and enable reporting agencies to use existing technologies such as the Internet, the Fire Commissioner's Office contracted with Fujitsu Consulting in 2000 to build a new fire incident reporting system with an Oracle database and a user interface built with Cold Fusion Software. This signified the launch of the new Fire Electronic Reporting System (FERS) in October 2002. FERS enables fire departments to submit their fire incident

reports electronically in a more effective and efficient manner. Additionally, this new system also provides a built in validation capability that automatically notifies the fire departments of coding errors on submitted reports. This process allows fire departments to correct their own coding errors before their final reports are accepted into FERS. A designated Safety Codes Officer in the fire discipline must approve the final version of each fire report before it is submitted to FERS.

...we are achieving what we have set out to achieve: a system that can be used to quickly and efficiently transfer fire incident reports from fire departments to the Fire Commissioner's Office.

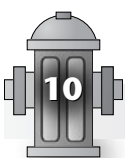
How do you gain access to FERS?

Driven by the desire to be more efficient and effective, the *milenet* Internet gateway was introduced by Alberta Municipal Affairs. This secure extranet website allows the fire departments access to the newly developed internal FERS application

used by the FCO, through which fire departments can report fire incident information to the FCO. It is now easier to fulfill the reporting responsibilities to provide fire incident details. A package containing a *milenet* introduction letter, the *milenet* Master Agreement, stakeholder administrator guides and user guides was sent to the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) of each municipality in September 2002. In order to gain access to *milenet* and the FERS application, the *milenet* Master Agreement must be executed by the municipality and Alberta Municipal Affairs. The *milenet* gateway is ensconced behind the Government of Alberta's security firewalls. In addition to this security, *milenet* has its own firewalls and a Secure Socket Layer (SSL), which has a 128-bit encryption on the line. As of October 6, 2003, 238 of the 365 municipalities had signed the *milenet* Master Agreement. The FCO encourages all fire departments in the province to report their fire incident reports electronically into FERS. In the future, the FCO plans to enlist the participation of insurance companies to also report fires directly into the FERS application.

Currently fire reports are submitted by fire departments to FERS in various ways as summarized in the table below:

Type of Reporting Agency	Reporting Mechanism	FCO Functions
FERS users	Submit reports on-line via <i>milenet</i> /FERS data entry screens	Monitor FERS; trouble shoot problems of users
Fire departments serviced by private software vendors	Each fire department submits batch files via e-mail to FCO	FCO uploads batch files to FERS, and e-mails validation error reports to reporting sources
Fire departments without access to <i>milenet</i> /FERS	Submit hard copies of fire reports	Manual data entry by FCO data entry staff



As with all new databases that are created, the present implementation stage of FERS is one of trouble shooting, reprogramming and testing. The FCO staff meet weekly to discuss problems encountered both internally and externally to determine solutions. It appears that the functionality of the electronic reporting system is now near completion. A Fire Safety Officer (Programs) at the FCO has been assigned to keep track of the concerns and their resolution status. The Fire Commissioner's Office thanks all FERS users for their patience and input during this developmental stage. "This is a learning curve for all users involved and we are making progress," said Alberta Fire Commissioner Pat Graham.

There are several areas currently being addressed to make FERS 100 per cent operational. They include:

- Concerns with the *milenet* Master Agreement. A number of municipalities and the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA) have raised some concerns regarding the *milenet* Master Agreement. The Ministry is working

with the municipalities and the AUMA to address the concerns. If you require additional information regarding the status of your municipalities' agreement you should contact your CAO.

- A File Interface Specification Document that spells out the process, the data fields and the formats required when fire departments, serviced by private software vendors, submit fire reports electronically. This document has undergone several revisions based on vendor and FCO data entry staff input. A number of test submissions from vendors were successfully uploaded to FERS in September 2003. The FCO assumes that batch electronic files of fire incidents will be accepted by FERS for live uploads by October 2003.
- Data validation has presented some challenges. Program code that contains validation checks is nearly complete, having undergone many revisions. However, there are still some validation rules missing that are being added to the system, and also some faulty validation error messages that are being addressed by Fujitsu.

- Changes to Fire Reports and the Fire Statistics Reporting Manual are also expected by the beginning of 2004 to conform with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP) guidelines.
- Additional changes being implemented include enhancing the speed of data entry and user-friendly navigation features to assist FERS users.

"The challenges we are currently facing are expected as a normal part of the development process when implementing a newer, more efficient data base system," said Graham. "We can be pleased that these problems are being worked out quickly and efficiently. Overall, we are achieving what we have set out to achieve: a system that can be used to quickly and efficiently transfer fire incident reports from fire departments to the Fire Commissioner's Office. We are optimistic that the electronic reporting system will be well under way in a short period of time." 

New digs for Hinton firefighters

Hall fired up

by Jim Gates

During the winter, when temperatures reach below -25° C, Hinton firefighters will no longer have to sleep at the fire hall on couches or on the floor in a sleeping bag. This winter, when the department cannot risk having firefighters stranded at their homes because their cars may not start, they will be tucked away in bunk beds at the new Hinton fire hall. The Hinton Fire Department is now settled in its new home alongside Hinton Emergency Medical Services in the new energy-efficient building on Civic Drive.

On the second floor of the station there is a large open room designed for training and conferences. Beside the room is a similarly sized room belonging to emergency services, and if either agency wants to host a large meeting, a set of double doors joins the rooms together. To the left of the




Hinton Fire Chief Ken Brands in the department's new fire hall.

conference room are dorms that will soon house 10 beds for firefighters. Dominating the ground floor is a massive garage with eight bay doors that houses all their trucks.

The new station is in the perfect location for emergency services, says Fire Chief Ken Brands. It is in the middle of town, and when the large, heavy fire trucks start cold, it's downhill in nearly every direction to a fire. In the south corner of the bay a set of double doors leads to the hose drying and training room. The small rectangular room is two storeys high, and a metal grate staircase winds up to the second floor.

"Everything here is multi-purpose," said Brands, who helped design the room. Brands says that he can fill the room with smoke using a smoke machine and firefighters can practice hauling hoses upstairs similar to what they would encounter in an apartment.

Brands says there is ample space in the new facility, which was custom-designed to not only suit the needs of the current fire department, but also to account for future expansion. "If Hinton ever goes to a full-time crew, we have the space to do it," said Brands. 



Holiday fire hazard alert

As we embark on the holiday season, our thoughts turn to organizing festivities and celebrations. While this is a time of fun and joyous activities, it is also a time of high fire risk and danger. The heightened excitement in our homes caused by the extra distractions of visiting relatives, children staying home on school holidays, shopping, decorating, cooking, and parties can place a heavy demand on everyone's time and attention and can often cause us to overlook and compromise on safety. Our hectic agendas and hurried pace along with the additional hazards that winter brings, such as home heating and the use of space heaters, expose us to a variety of unsafe situations, including fire.

The provincial fire statistics listed below pinpoint this increase in holiday fire danger by comparing fire losses and their major causes between the holiday season (December 15-31) and the rest of the year (January 1 to December 14). The comparisons have been calculated for these date ranges to adjust for the difference in the number of days in each period.¹

Home Fire Losses in Alberta during the Holiday Season and the Rest of the Year (1997-2001)

Time period	Fires	Deaths	Injuries	Property loss (\$)
Holiday Season (December 15-31)	515	8	78	\$20,062,576
Rest of the year (Jan. 1 to Dec. 14)	379	5	54	\$12,839,259

The chart above shows the most common causes of fires during the December holiday season.

The major cause of home fires in both time periods is cooking-related fires. Over the December holiday season the incidence of fires involving candles, home heating equipment, appliances/equipment and electrical sources increases significantly higher than these same categories for the rest of the year:

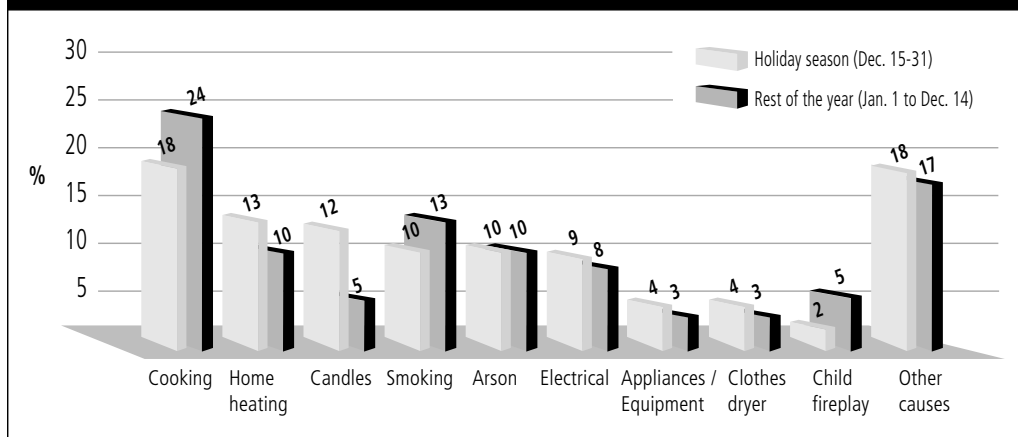
- Candle fires: up 140 per cent
- Home heating fires: up 30 per cent
- Appliance/equipment fires: up 33 per cent
- Electrical source fires: up 13 per cent

The alarming increase, not only in the number of fires, but also in deaths, injuries and property damage, reminds us to take more care in fire prevention and safety during the holiday season. In addition to keeping the continued hazards involved with cooking under control, extra precautions must be taken with candles, heating equipment, appliances and electricity during this holiday season. For a fire safe holiday season, follow these fire safety tips:

Fire safety tips for the holiday season

- Christmas tree light bulbs can generate enough heat to set fire to nearby combustibles. Keep decorations away from light bulbs.
- Ensure that candles are mounted firmly on metal or glass candleholders, or place them in non-combustible containers away from paper decorations, curtains, clothing and spray from aerosol cans. Remember that lit candles on Christmas trees, both natural and artificial, are fire hazards.
- Supervise children at all times and keep matches and lighters out of their reach.

Causes of home fires in Alberta (The December holiday season vs. rest of the year) 1997-2001



The calculations outlined in the chart above indicate that both the frequency and severity of fires increase during the December holiday season. The total number of fires, deaths, injuries and property losses are all intensified over this period compared to the rest of the year:

- Fires: up 36 per cent
- Fire deaths: up 60 per cent
- Fire injuries: up 44 per cent
- Property losses: up 56 per cent

¹ Only 17 days are included in the "Holiday Season" compared to 348 days in the "Rest of the Year." The statistics for the "Rest of the Year" were calculated for a 17-day average to enable comparison with the "Holiday Season" period.

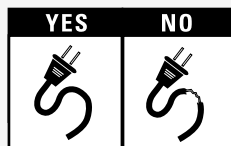


- Plan your kitchen activities and attend to what's heating on the stove. If distracted, turn off the heat and remove the pot or pan before doing anything else.
- Smoking while in bed or when tired, or under the influence of alcohol or medication, is the most common cause of fatal fires. Avoid smoking if you're not fully awake and alert. Check sofas and cushions before retiring to check for smouldering butts that can start a deadly inferno while you sleep.
- Heating appliances need at least one metre (three feet) of space around them. Avoid placing any combustibles within this space.
- Electrical and heating systems can fail and become fire hazards. Ensure they are regularly checked by a professional, especially prior to the holiday season when fireplaces, heaters, appliances and other electrical equipment are in maximum use.
- Most chimney fires happen in wood-burning fireplaces. Ensure that chimneys are cleaned and professionally inspected regularly. Burn only small quantities of wood at a time.
- Avoid wearing loose-fitting clothing, which can ignite when close to open flames or hot stove burners.
- Test your smoke alarms to ensure they are working properly.
- In the event of a fire, alert everyone in your household, get out quickly and call the fire department from a neighbour's phone.
- Albertans are reminded to ensure they have working smoke alarms and a well-rehearsed home fire escape plan in case a fire does break out in their home. 🔥

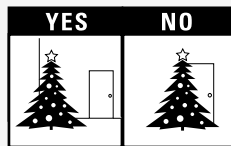
The Fire Commissioner's Office Holiday Fire Safety Campaign will run from December 15-31, 2003. A campaign kit to increase public awareness of the increased fire risk during the holiday season will be posted on the Fire Commissioner's office website: www.gov.ab.ca/ma/fco. For further details about the campaign please contact: Te-Jay Smart, Fire Safety Officer (Programs), Fire Commissioner's Office at (780) 644-4692.

The alarming increase in fires related deaths, injuries and property damage, reminds us to take more care in fire prevention and safety during the holiday season.

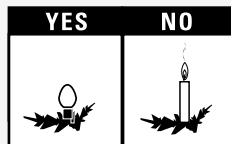
The night before Christmas for firefighters



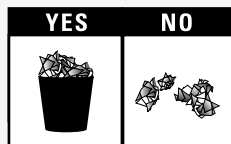
'Twas the night before Christmas when all through the house,
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse,
When down through the chimney all covered with soot,
Came the SPIRIT OF FIRE, an ugly galoot.



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.

TAPP-C Juvenile Firesetter Intervention workshops

The Fire Commissioner's Office of Alberta held two TAPP-C Juvenile Firesetter Intervention workshops in Alberta during the month of October. TAPP-C (The Arson Prevention Program for Children) is a widely recognized Canadian juvenile firesetter intervention program requiring integration and communication between fire and counselling professionals, including Children's Mental Health, Regional Health Authorities, Children's Services, hospitals, family services, correctional and probation services. TAPP-C is being used in more than 100 municipalities in the province of Ontario and has had much success. The program was introduced into Alberta by its founders, Dr. Sherri Mackay, Provincial Director at the Center for Addiction and Mental Health in Toronto, and Janice Johnstone, Program Specialist at the Ontario Fire Marshal's Office. State Farm Insurance funded the October workshops.

TAPP-C encourages integration between fire and counseling organizations by recommending a coordinated approach between the two groups. Both groups are to work together to design a pro-active intervention program in their local community. This requires the design of a delivery plan where the fire service provides fire safety education and the counselling service provides mental health assessments and treatment, where necessary. This ensures a comprehensive treatment strategy where all components of the issue are explored and resolved. The Fire Commissioner's Office encourages this collaboration as it will develop locally-based, structured intervention programs that will assist juvenile firesetters and their families in overcoming this potentially dangerous behaviour. The Fire Commissioner's Office will assist municipalities planning to set up local

juvenile firesetter intervention programs.



TAPP-C presenters, Janice Johnstone and Dr. Sherri Mackay at the Fire Commissioner's Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Workshop

About the two part coordinated Arson Prevention Program for Children...

Part 1 – Fire Service (Fire Education)

- Home Safety Check
- Pre-Planned Fire Education Lessons


Part 2 – Counseling Service (Assessment & Treatment)

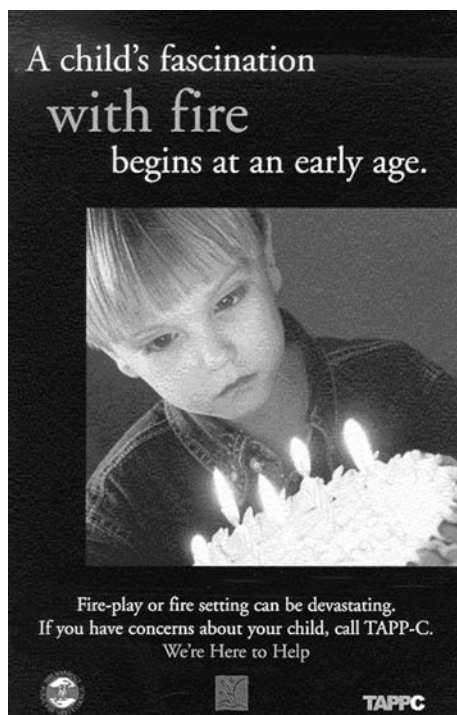
- Normal Fire Interest
- Behaviour Problem
- Mental Illness

“Having a dual system such as this one will ensure that children who start fires receive all the assistance they need,” said Fire Commissioner Pat Graham. “Juvenile firesetting is a complex condition and can involve both fire ignorance and mental health issues. Neither fire education nor therapy alone can attack this problem. Both components are needed for effective intervention. I am pleased to bring such a program to Alberta.”

Alberta's TAPP-C workshops received enormous interest and participation by both the fire service and counselling professionals. These workshops were held in both Edmonton and Calgary and were targeted towards members of both fire and counselling services across the province.

- 150 participants (74 fire service; 76 counselling professionals) enrolled in the Edmonton workshop
- 80 participants (56 fire service; 24 counselling professionals) enrolled in the Calgary workshop.

Feedback from both fire and counselling services after the workshop was also encouraging. All organizations involved were pleased with the training received and supported the concept of a coordinated involvement. 



For more information on the TAPP-C program or any other concerns regarding juvenile firesetters please contact Te-Jay Smart at the Alberta Fire Commissioner's Office (780) 644-4692.

Red Deer helmet safety program going strong

An independent safety program that has been gaining more and more interest since its creation in 1998 is "Cool Kids Wear Lids." Developed by the City of Red Deer Emergency Services prior to the Government of Alberta's legislation on bicycle helmets, the program was targeted to youth of bicycle age.

"Our original goal was to reduce the number and severity of child trauma associated with bicycle use in the Red Deer community," said Wes Van Bavel, Fire & Injury Prevention Specialist with the City of Red Deer Emergency Services.

"However, we've now expanded the program to address many sporting and

leisure activities that involve speed, risk of head injury and/or other injury as seen in our community."

The program consists of a stylized logo, t-shirts, pamphlets, stickers, "No Helmet. No Bike" reflectors, posters, a 12-minute video and a sample lesson plan geared to students in Grades 5 and 6.

Promotion of the program has been mostly through presentations to schools and through word of mouth.

"Based on feedback received from teachers

and students, we now use high school students to run the program because we've found that younger kids relate well to the high school students on these messages," added Van Bavel.

Although Cool Kids Wear Lids was developed as an independent program, Van Bavel says that it also works well as a supplement to the *Risk Watch* program.

Red Deer is currently in the process of implementing *Risk Watch* into the schools, so will continue to run the Cool Kids program until *Risk Watch* reaches the Grade 5 and 6 levels.

"Other communities have also become interested in our Cool Kids program, and we are more than pleased to share our information and materials with them," said Van Bavel. "Our only request is that they keep the original logo intact." 🔥

If you would like more information about the Cool Kids Wear Lids program, please contact Wes Van Bavel at (403) 346-5511.



How to be a Safe Rider

- Obey all traffic signs and signals
- Walk your bike across the street
- Cross the street at cross walks or corners
- Never ride after dark or in bad weather
- Stop and look left, right and left again before entering traffic (roadways, driveways, sidewalks, alleys or parking lots).
- Stay on the very right-hand side of the road and ride in the same direction as traffic
- Always ride in single file
- Never double your friends or hang onto moving vehicles.
- Wear bright-coloured clothing and reflective gear to help drivers see you better

- Make sure your bike is in the right working condition
- Always watch for pedestrians and vehicles
- A child under 9 years of age should be accompanied by an adult or older child when riding in traffic.

Tips For Parents

Check to see if your child's bike is safe

- Tires inflated properly
- Bike seat secure and adjusted properly
- Brakes work
- Chain is clean, oiled and tight
- Front, rear and pedal reflectors

Do we have a fit?

Bike

- Make sure your child can touch the ground while seated
- The handlebars should be within reach and easy to turn
- Your local bike shop can help ensure a proper fit.

Helmet

- If a helmet has been impacted or cracked, you must replace it, even if you can't see any damage.
- Straps must be adjusted and fastened properly
- Must be an approved helmet
- Let your child choose their helmet
- Be a role model: wear a helmet yourself.

Focus on Wainwright Fire Department—building a strong department together!



The enthusiasm of new Fire Chief David Zayonce is bringing a renewed emphasis on fire prevention and training to the Wainwright Fire Department. In addition to serving as fire chief for the Wainwright fire department (where he served as captain before becoming chief), Zayonce also works full time as a civilian firefighter for the Department of National Defence Fire Service at the Western Area Training Centre Fire Department (formerly CFB Wainwright). Zayonce has held this position for 10 and a half years and also serves as acting deputy Platoon Chief when required.

As the Wainwright fire chief, Zayonce is focused on renewing training activities and taking a bolder, more aggressive approach to fire prevention. "This innovation is nothing new," says Zayonce. "Rather, it is a push toward positive attitudes and working together as a cohesive team."

Situated in the heart of the agriculture and oil industries in east central Alberta, Wainwright is also a major partner with the large military base. The Wainwright Fire Department is responsible for fire protection services and vehicle extrication within a jurisdiction covering 1,010 square kilometres for a population of

5,200 in the town. As well, the Wainwright Fire Department also provides fire protection services and vehicle extrication to the surrounding area fire districts 4 & 5 for the Municipal District of Wainwright #61.

Since January 1, 2003, members of the department have completed a combined total of 1,504 training hours of formal *fire etc.* training courses, including courses held locally as well as attendance at the site in Vermilion. "The total hours dedicated to training is above and beyond the normal two hours of practice every Tuesday night," said Zayonce. Currently every member is certified in extrication, which is a first for the Wainwright department. "We conducted a local vehicle extrication course in June 2003, where our remaining 14 members that required this training took part, plus firefighters from the nearby villages of Edgerton and Irma. All participants passed the course, and the class average was 97 per cent. As chief, I'm extremely proud to see such dedication and willingness to learn new skills and refine old, known skills," added Zayonce.

With a goal of having each of the 26 volunteer firefighters 1001 trained within two years, Zayonce has adopted an aggressive approach to training. "Currently we have seven members trained to the 1001 level, and we're conducting further local *fire etc.* courses throughout the fall and winter. We also want to conduct a C5 strategy and tactics course here. We have received a donation of some school buses and will be training in extrication using these vehicles," said Zayonce.

Equipment inventory

While the Wainwright Fire Department is in the process of upgrading equipment and apparatus, their current equipment includes:

- 1997 Freightliner pumper 1050 gpm 5-man cab, 980 gallons of water with a Class A foam system
- 1981 GMC front mount 625 pump 3-man crew cab, carries 1000 gallons of water
- Heavy rescue unit on a GMC top-kick chassis
- 1991 GMC bush unit 4x4, carries 300 gallons of water
- 1977 GMC water truck, carries 1500 gallons of water
- ¾ ton 4x4 command/utility truck

The training doesn't stop with exercises and courses though. The fire department is currently on a major fundraising campaign towards the purchase of a thermal imaging camera and laptop computer. "The community support has been tremendous and we have received several thousand dollars from both businesses and private citizens," said Zayonce. "The purchase of this camera with video link capabilities will allow command officers to watch on a TV or laptop what the camera sees inside. The laptop computer will enable us to record what activities the camera sees and burn a CD of the incident to use as a training aid in the future."

The department responds to approximately 100 calls per year; so far this year, the calls have included 14 motor vehicle collisions, three grass brush fires, two technical rescues, two structure fires as well as false alarms and situations of a minor nature. Call volume averages 65 per cent wild land fires, both grass and bush; 20 per cent MVA; 5 per cent structure fires; 5 per cent false alarm and 5 per cent assistance calls.

"While some of our members are trained as Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) and Emergency Medical Responders



New Chief David Zayonce brings a renewed emphasis on preparedness and training to the Wainwright department.





Members of the Wainwright Fire Department conduct a vehicle extrication exercise.

(EMRs), medical services are provided by a separate ambulance service," said Zayonce. "But of course our members do assist on medical calls as requested."


One of Zayonce's goals as fire chief is to enhance fire safety awareness for the citizens of Wainwright. To that end, he has reviewed local media exposure to highlight the behind-the-scene activities that the fire

department is involved with. "Instead of pictures of raging flames and stories of the fire department responding to various emergencies, I wanted the public to see what we do to prepare for response to incidents. In addition to featuring our training, I wanted to pass on information about who is involved in the fire department and the fact that these people are friends and neighbours of the citizens of

the community," said Zayonce. "I want to show the community just how great this bunch of volunteers really are. I also want to acknowledge the community support for all who donated to our thermal imaging camera fund."

The Wainwright Fire Department is currently gearing up for its own fire prevention program of residences in the

community. "We want to conduct a fire safety review plus pass on relevant fire prevention tips as well as point out target hazards that may appear in a home," said Zayonce. "We will also conduct smoke detector testing at each residence."

When speaking of the importance of working together as a team, Zayonce quickly points out an example that truly reflects the enthusiasm and pride of his personnel. "After our firefighters responded to a mobile home fire in March, I told the renter that if there was anything else we could do for him not to hesitate to call. A few days later he did call, and asked if I could get some of my members to help him move all his family's belongings to another location because he was truly in a bind trying to find help. I phoned several members and the response was great—six trucks and 10 members answered the call and the renter and the family was moved in an hour and a half. That just shows how willingly our team works together!" 

Responding to potential threats

Update on counter-terrorism equipment

In the May 2003 issue of *Alberta Fire News*, we told you about a one-time grant from Alberta Municipal Affairs that enabled seven major municipalities in Alberta (Edmonton, Calgary, the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, Red Deer, Grande Prairie, Lethbridge and Medicine Hat) to obtain equipment that detects and protects against possible chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) threats. Provided below is a progress update about the equipment.

According to Rick Brown, Director of Community Programs at Emergency Management Alberta (EMA), all the equipment has now been delivered to the seven municipalities. "The next step is to provide the required training and the most important consideration with training is standardization," said Brown. "If we were to have a major event, we would have to be able to respond in multiple ways. As a

result, to ensure standardized training with the equipment, the training curriculum is being controlled at the federal government level. They have already conducted a few pilot courses and are currently amending the curriculum based on the feedback received."


There are four levels of training:

1. Basic (½ day electronic course)
2. Two-day introductory level for first responders
3. 10-day intensive theory training for teams
4. One week team-level live agent training

According to Brown, the current response capabilities vary within each of the seven municipalities, depending on the level of dangerous goods and hazardous materials background that personnel have. "There's a wide range of expertise out there, including some of our Calgary area responders

having G8 background because of the summit held in Kananaskis. We're currently waiting on our nomination of over 30 staff from the seven municipalities that received the equipment for a Level 2 Train the Trainer course to be sponsored by the Office of Critical Infrastructure Protection (OC�PEP). These responders can then go back and train others in their own municipality," said Brown.

"Level 3 training is only available in Ottawa, and we're hoping to be able to send an Alberta team for training this fall," added Brown.

At the provincial level, EMA recently conducted a table-top exercise in Calgary in July that included 30 representatives from Alberta municipalities. They've also been working to establish protocols that will be distributed to all municipalities once the training is completed. 


AFCA update

The 2003 annual general meeting of the Alberta Fire Chiefs Association (AFCA) was held June 22-26 in Grande Prairie. The Deputy Minister and the Assistant Deputy Minister of Alberta Municipal Affairs joined fire service personnel to discuss pressing issues facing the fire service in Alberta.

Election results for the AFCA executive saw Laird Burton remain on as president, Ted Dillon as First Vice President, Brian McEvoy as Second Vice President and Kevin Weinberger as Secretary Treasurer. Bill McKay also reported a change in his position to financial manager.

This year's winner of the attendance draw was Bart Clark, Fire Chief of Sturgeon

County, who donated his \$500 cheque to the Grande Prairie Burn Unit.

Mark your calendars now for next year's conference, which takes place June 13-16, 2004 at the Capri Hotel and Convention Centre in Red Deer. The theme for next year's conference is "Future Managers/ Future Clients." 

2003 AFCA annual general meeting

Four resolutions received approval at the 2003 Alberta Fire Chiefs Association (AFCA) annual general meeting.

Response to emergency fire incidents by electrical utility personnel

The Alberta Fire Chiefs Association Board of Directors will draft a letter to the Chief Executive Officer and the Chairman of the Board of each electrical utility company operating in the Province of Alberta indicating the importance of a timely response by electrical company personnel to all fire and other emergency incidents within the province, whether urban or rural. The Board will also take whatever other action is necessary to improve the response times of electrical utility personnel throughout the Province of Alberta.

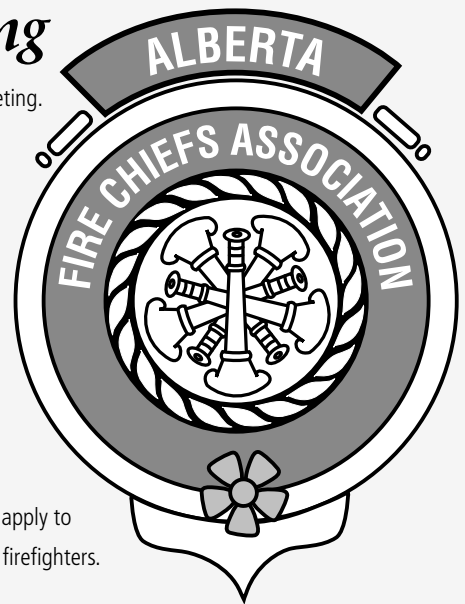
Lightweight construction materials

The Alberta Fire Chiefs Association Board of Directors will strike a committee to review all research done on the safety of lightweight building materials and firefighter safety and will file a submission to the National Research Council and Alberta Safety Codes Council requesting a change to the building code should the Board feel this is warranted by the research.

Workers' Compensation Amendment Act

The Alberta Fire Chiefs Association will indicate to the Premier of Alberta their support for the occupational presumption now contained within the *Workers' Compensation Act*. The Alberta Fire Chiefs Association will also offer their support and any resource they may have available to the

Workers' Compensation Board or to the Province of Alberta that may assist that Board or the Province of Alberta in conducting the research required by Bill 202 to determine whether the presumption should also apply to volunteers and part-time firefighters.



Cost recovery for response to motor vehicle collisions on Alberta highways

The Alberta Fire Chiefs Association Board of Directors will study the feasibility of establishing a business unit or office with one or more industry partners, which may include the Government of Alberta, the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association or the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties, to consistently administer the invoicing of expenses for motor vehicle collisions on behalf of fire service agencies within the province.

The Alberta Fire Chiefs Association Board of Directors will also strike a committee with the necessary expertise to develop a costing formula for universal use by the Alberta fire service.

Keeping you up to date...

Ministerial visit

On August 25, 2003, Pearl Calahasen, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development visited *fire etc.* Her visit was especially timely, given that Les Brinkworth, Vice President of Business Development at *fire etc.* gave an informative presentation about *fire etc.* at the First Nations Conference that took place on July 10, 2003 in Edmonton. In addition to information about *fire etc.*, Brinkworth also discussed career paths in the industry and the elements of both a risk management strategy and an emergency management system.

Joining staff for the Minister's visit to the Vermilion location were Lloyd Snelgrove, MLA, Vermilion-Lloydminster; Wendy Fayant, Manager, Legal Issues, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development; Irv Pineau, Chair, Lakeland College Board of Governors; Karen Collins, Region 2 Metis Nations President; Annette O'Zirney, Region 2 Metis Nations Manager; Lillian Ruptash, *fire etc.* Board of Directors and Al Kennedy, Director, Plan A (consulting unit of *fire etc.*).

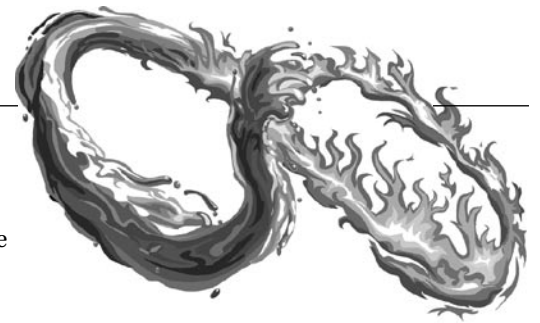
NFPA modules reach pilot stage

The NFPA (National Fire Protection Association) 1021 modules will be

piloted for distance delivery in 2004. The charts in the 1021 section of the 2004 Training Calendar show how the new modules align with the Job Performance Requirements set out by the NFPA. Individuals or departments interested in taking part in a pilot and providing feedback can contact the Quality Management and Accreditation Office at *fire etc.* for more information.

Christmas schedule

fire etc. will be closed from December 24, 2003 – January 2, 2004. As well, *fire etc.* personnel will be attending annual team meetings scheduled for January 12 -16, 2004, which means that most of the staff will be away from their phones during these dates. However, callers are encouraged to leave a voice mail message during these times, so that calls can be returned.



fire etc.



Left to right: Don Gnatiuk, CEO, *fire etc.*; Jim Kiss, Executive Assistant to the Minister; Lloyd Snelgrove, MLA, Vermilion-Lloydminster; Hon. Pearl Calahasen, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development; Wendy Fayant, Manager, Legal Issues, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development; Irv Pineau, Chair, Lakeland College Board of Governors; Karen Collins, Region 2 Metis Nations President; Annette O'Zirney, Region 2 Metis Nations Manager; Lillian Ruptash, *fire etc.* Board of Directors; behind Lillian is Al Kennedy, Director, Plan A (consulting unit of *fire etc.*); Les Brinkworth, VP Business Development, *fire etc.*; Judy Harvie, Business Development Coordinator, *fire etc.*

After hours helpline reminder

The After Hours Helpline at *fire etc.* is staffed Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 5-10 p.m. The line is currently being used to assist municipal fire departments when they are conducting client-hosted training and have questions regarding the modular format. 🔥

For all other queries to *fire etc.*, please call 1-888-863-2387 weekdays between 8:15 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., or by email to info@fire-etc.ca

Did you know *fire etc.* is also focused on the aboriginal community?

Leading this initiative is Judy Harvie, Business Development Coordinator with *fire etc.* "Unfortunately, the aboriginal community is at a high risk for fires, and we want to change that," said Harvie. "For about two years now, much of my day-to-day responsibilities include working with different First Nations communities and helping them set up effective programs and training opportunities."

Harvie graduated from the first Emergency Services Technology diploma program at

fire etc. in 1996. She then worked as an EMT-A in an ambulance service before joining the instructional team at *fire etc.* in 1998, when she began teaching safety and loss prevention training. In her current position as Business Development Coordinator, she facilitates loss prevention training and the development and delivery of *fire etc.*'s highly-regarded risk management seminars. In addition to her teaching role, Harvie also works with clients in the design of customized training and consulting solutions.



Putting the spotlight on the FCO staff

Two recent additions to the staff at the Fire Commissioner's Office are Te-Jay Smart, Fire Safety Officer (Programs), and Neshali Weera, Data Entry Assistant.



Data entry assistant Neshali Weera

Neshali Weera

Neshali was a summer student with the FCO and, although she is full-time student at the University of Alberta, she has organized her course load to work for

the FCO on Tuesdays. Her ultimate goal is to obtain a degree from the Faculty of Education at the U of A, but enjoys her current part-time position of fire statistics data entry. "I value being a part of the Fire Commissioner's Office because it allows me to work in a fast-paced environment with a dynamic group of people," said Neshali.

Te-Jay Smart

As a Fire Safety Officer (Programs) with the FCO, Te-Jay has a diverse range of responsibilities focused on research, statistics and fire safety/prevention/intervention projects and programs for Alberta. After graduating with a Bachelor of Arts Degree from the University of Calgary, Te-Jay worked as the Safety Coordinator for a small service well oil company, where she gained hands-on experience in the set up, design, implementation and maintenance of a safety program. Since joining the FCO, Te-Jay has been working with the fire service to expand provincial fire safety and prevention programs with the ultimate



Fire Safety Officer Te-Jay Smart

goal of reducing the number of fire injuries and fatalities in Alberta. "I love working for the Fire Commissioner's Office," said Te-Jay. "We are in the business of selling ideas, not products, a challenge that I am really excited about. Working in a very organized and prioritized office, we have set goals, projects and delivery plans. I can see exactly where we're going, and I'm given all the support needed to create the programs and projects that will complement these plans." 🔥

Fire Commissioner's Office regional update

Changing the way of doing business...

The Alberta Emergency Resource Inventory System (AERIS) is coming along very well. The web application is being built and will be receiving testing by user groups in early November. The system will be live on *milenet* by the end of 2003.

The system is being designed to satisfy a wide range of information and statistical needs. It will be able to furnish answers to requests for the location of a multitude of specific pieces of equipment or trained personnel complete with access telephone numbers. Users will be able to view their own local or regional response capacity for planning purposes and emergency planning. The AERIS System is also a comparative analysis tool, allowing users to compare their capacity, operations and training

levels with other similar jurisdictions around the province. As well, in the event of a large scale provincial or national emergency as was seen in British Columbia this year, the system will furnish provincial emergency resource capacities and the contact methodologies to request them.

As a result of construction of the web application, some significant changes have been made to the questionnaire (e.g., the screens are being modified to a more user friendly format and layout). The FCO is also currently reviewing technology that will allow wireless web access to the database, which will make it a truly portable tool for the fire professional.



The FCO is collecting the data in whatever format is easiest for the fire department, and will also be doing all of the initial data entry. Fire departments will be encouraged to maintain their own data as changes occur.

Fire Safety Officers will be visiting various locations to ensure that all departments are represented in the inventory. This system will only be effective if all fire departments are represented in it. Please ensure that you have submitted your inventory.

Business continues as usual with our Field Offices, where staff are busy with course evaluations, assisting with investigations and inspections and working closely with fire departments and municipalities around the province. 🔥



An injury control strategy for Alberta

Despite the fact that injuries are predictable and preventable, Alberta has one of the highest rates of injury in Canada. Injury remains the leading cause of death for people between one and 44 years of age and accounts for more premature deaths than any disease in the province.

Given these concerns, a broad range of stakeholders involved in the field of injury control came together to develop a coordinated and collaborative strategy to address injury control in Alberta. This took place from mid 2002 to June 2003.

The word “injury” includes both unintentional and intentional injuries. Unintentional injuries result from incidents such as motor vehicle collisions, falls, fires/burns, drowning and poisonings. Intentional injuries—actions taken that are intended to injure oneself or others—result from incidents such as suicide, personal assault, family violence and homicide. Unintentional injuries alone are estimated to cost Albertans \$1.8 billion annually or \$662 for every citizen.

Injury control is an all-encompassing term that includes injury prevention, emergency response, acute care and rehabilitation. The strategy addresses the full continuum of injury control with a focus on injury prevention.

Supported by Alberta Health and Wellness, the Alberta Injury Control Strategy (AICS) was developed with the assistance of an Advisory Steering Committee and was reviewed and validated by stakeholders across the province through regional and provincial consultation sessions. Assistant Fire Commissioner Mahendra Wijayasinghe represented the Fire Commissioner’s Office on the Advisory Steering Committee.

The Alberta Injury Control Strategy provides a framework to guide effective planning and implementation of injury control initiatives among all stakeholders in the injury control field in Alberta. The strategy is intended as a guide for all stakeholders in the development of their individual organizational and business plans, as well as to enable stakeholders to collaborate on broader initiatives related to their mandate.

The Alberta Injury Control Strategy provides a framework to guide effective planning and implementation of injury control initiatives among all stakeholders in the injury control field in Alberta.


The following key events took place to allow stakeholders from across the province to provide a broad range of input to assist with the development of the strategy: from stakeholders across the province:

- Six Alberta Injury Control Strategy community consultations (Lethbridge, Calgary, Edmonton, St. Paul, Grande Prairie and Fort McMurray) were held in September and October 2002 involving more than 200 participants. These sessions were open to anyone interested in injury control.
- A two-day invitational meeting was held in November 2002 to consider input from community consultations and to further develop the foundation for the strategy.
- A smaller group of stakeholders came together in February 2003 to review the initial draft of the strategy.
- In June 2003, the Advisory Committee accepted the final Alberta Injury Control Strategy document, which was presented

to the Alberta Government’s Standing Policy Committee for Health and Community Living on October 7, 2003 to November 12, 2003. The presentation was focused on obtaining Government commitment to the strategy and funding support to develop and carry out an implementation plan. The Alberta Injury Control Strategy was presented to the Alberta Government through a presentation to Standing Policy Committee on Health and Community Living on November 12, 2003.

The Alberta Injury Control Strategy provides a framework to guide effective planning and implementation of injury control initiatives among all stakeholders in the injury control field in Alberta. The strategy is intended as a guide for all stakeholders in the development of their individual organizational

and business plans, as well as to enable stakeholders to collaborate on broader initiatives related to their mandate.

“Everyone has a responsibility for making Alberta the safest place to live,” said Kathy Belton, Co-Director of the Alberta Centre for Injury Control & Research, which coordinated the development of the Strategy with the assistance of Bearing Point consulting services. “This includes individual Albertans and their families, communities, community-based and not-for-profit organizations, regional health authorities, professional groups, education system, business and industry, and the municipal, provincial and federal governments.” 

For more information about the strategy please check out the Alberta Centre for Injury Control & Research website at www.med.ualberta.ca/acicr or call Kathy Belton at (780) 492-9762.



You were asking...

Q&A's about Alberta's Safety Codes

Q. During a recent trip to the United States, I was refused a refill on my trailer propane cylinder because it was not fitted with an overfill protection device (OPD)—what is an OPD?

A. An overfill protection device (OPD) ensures that propane cylinders cannot be overfilled. At the present time they are not required in Alberta, but a number of recreation vehicle manufacturers are providing propane tanks fitted with this device. A cylinder fitted with an OPD can be recognised by the triangular shaped shut-off. RV owners contemplating travel to the US should be aware there are a number of states that will not fill cylinders without OPD's.



Ray Cox, Edmonton and Ray Ligenza, Calgary

Questions about Alberta's Safety Codes?

Contact Ray Cox in Edmonton at (780) 415-0508 or Ray Ligenza in Calgary at (403) 297-579. Ray and Ray are technical advisors for Technical Services, Building and Fire Safety in the Public Safety Division of Alberta Municipal Affairs.

Q. During a recent visit to Calgary, I pulled into a gas station where the dispensing of fuel was completed with the use of my credit card with no attendant at the facility. I thought this was only permitted at card or keylock installations?

A. Unattended self-service gas stations have been permitted in Alberta since 1992. These facilities have strict requirements regarding video surveillance, tamper proof dispensers, emergency shut-offs, etc. To our knowledge, there are only two of these facilities in Alberta, as the trend for major fuel companies is more towards the sale of convenience items in manned facilities.

Q. Is it true that all homes are required to have smoke alarms?

A. All new construction has required the installation of hard wired smoke alarms since July 1977. The 1992 Alberta Fire Code introduced requirements that all homes required smoke alarms and permitted them to be battery operated. There are a number of requirements in both the Alberta Building and Fire Codes relating to smoke alarm installation and maintenance and these documents should be reviewed to determine numbers and locations. 🔥

First ever conference a success

Inaugural Alberta Indigenous Fire Conference takes place

The first Alberta Annual Indigenous Fire Service Conference, held July 10 and 11, 2003 in Edmonton, was an overwhelming success. According to conference organizer Leon Smallboy from the First Nations (Alberta) Technical Services Advisory Group, the conference was planned for 30 participants, but the final turnout exceeded expectations.

“The conference was organized to discuss a wide range of issues relevant to the aboriginal community,” said Smallboy. “While we had anticipated that we'd have about 30 people, we were quite happy to have an enrollment that totaled 50 participants.”

The two day conference showcased several guest speakers from across Alberta including the Edmonton Fire Department, the Alberta Fire Commissioner's Office, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, *fire etc.*, Alberta Sustainable Resource Development and Alberta Human Resource Development. As well, there were a number of speakers sharing what was taking place in their communities, such as Wilson Bear Head from the Assembly of First Nations; Mark Andrews with the North Peace Tribal Council; Don Padlesky, Tribal Chiefs Venture Inc.; Dan Kootney, Yellowhead Tribal Council; Randy Badger,

Lesser Slave Lake Indian Regional Council; Bud Jobin, Native Inspectors Association; Dennis Chiefcalf, Integrated Services-Blood Tribe; Don Crane, Fire Chief Officer; and Floyd Provost, Public Works-Fire Piikani Nation.

Tied to the conference was a trade show that featured several fire trucks and equipment.

“It was a really good conference, and the attendance indicates that we will continue this joining of like-minded people on a yearly basis,” said Smallboy. 🔥



Digest



Alberta
Municipal
Affairs Minister
Guy Boutilier

EMA sets up shop

The new Emergency Management Alberta (EMA) Operations Centre is now up and running. With help from Alberta Infrastructure, our EMA team was able to locate, renovate, and open the new, state-of-the-art facility in less than 11 months. This is an outstanding achievement and further enhances Alberta's position as a world leader in emergency management.



"The safety and security of all Albertans is a top priority for this government," said Boutilier. "This new facility will allow us to better coordinate with partners from the private and public sectors and all orders of government to deal with all types of emergencies."

Celebrating 10th anniversary of fire safety program

Ten years after implementation, the Rocky Mountain House Fire Department's Safe House for Kids is continuing to provide successful fire safety and prevention programs for children. To date, the Safe House for Kids has seen about 15,000 children. Much of the credit for the program's ongoing success is the result of one man—Lieutenant Glen Holmes of the Rocky Mountain House Volunteer Fire Department. Holmes has gladly volunteered hundreds of hours of his free time to build and run the Safe House, making teaching school kids fire safety one of his top priorities. In addition to audiences in Rocky Mountain House, Holmes has also taken the Safe House to schools in the county and to shows in Stettler, Olds and Red Deer, as well as to the Klondike Days Parade in Edmonton, the World Police and Fire Games in Calgary and a fire chief's convention.

*Kudos for a job well done—
and keep up the great work!*

EPWS expands to Wood Buffalo

Alberta's Emergency Public Warning System has expanded to the Fort McMurray/Wood Buffalo region, allowing residents to hear warning messages about life-threatening emergencies or child abductions. Emergency Management Alberta authorizes and trains officials from municipalities, First Nations, the police, Environment Canada and Alberta Environment on how to use the system to issue warnings and AMBER ALERTS. The warning system is already available in the Edmonton, Calgary, Red Deer and Lethbridge regions, and it will be expanded province-wide by the spring of 2004.

The system was launched in the Fort McMurray region at an event held September 5 in the CJOK Building for municipal officials, First Nations, broadcasters, police and emergency management personnel. The Emergency Public Warning System uses radio, television and cable broadcasts to transmit life-saving warnings.

CKUA manages the technical aspects of the system while Alberta Municipal Affairs administers its operation and provides financial support. Municipal Affairs provided CKUA with a grant of \$100,000 to upgrade its transmitter in Fort McMurray to strengthen the signal and improve its coverage.

The Alberta government has invested more than \$1.2 million to expand the system province-wide. Next to receive service are the Grande Prairie, Lloydminster, Medicine Hat and Peace River regions. When fully expanded, the Emergency Public Warning System will cost about \$600,000 to operate annually.

Fort McMurray fire hall expanded

After a year of renovations, the new Hawkins Fire Hall officially re-opened September 3, 2003. The \$1.9 million renovation project added new space for accommodations and administrative offices, as well as upgrading of several major systems. "The new hall is greatly needed, especially since we're going through a major expansion of the fire service to keep response times low for our department, said Jeff Carlisle, fire chief for the Fort McMurray Fire Department.



Fort McMurray fire services staff mark the re-opening of the new Hawkins Fire Hall on September 3, 2003 following a year of renovations.

New Fire Chief for Rocky Mountain House

Rocky Mountain House has appointed its new Regional Fire Chief. Cammie Laird, formerly the Fire Chief for the M.D. of Rockyview Fire Service, assumed the position September 29, 2003. While Laird will work out of the Clearwater County building, she is also a representative of the Regional Fire Committee, which includes Clearwater, the Town of Rocky Mountain House and the Village of Caroline.

Strathcona fallen fire fighters' memorial march successful

More than 200 people attended the memorial march held on September 13, 2003 in Sherwood Park, Alberta. Firefighters, RCMP and other Emergency Service personnel walked from Festival Place to the memorial to show their support for those who have been killed in the line of duty.

Mark your calendar

The 6th Annual Saskatchewan Fire and Life Safety Educators' Conference takes place February 6-8, 2004. The theme is "Public Education: The Power of Partnerships!" For more information about the conference or to obtain a registration form, go to: www.cps.gov.sk.ca/Safety/fire/pdf/OOPRegPackage.pdf

Firefighters share cleaning tips

In the first "Cleanest Volunteer Fire Firehouse Contest" sponsored by Scotch Brand and the National Volunteer Fire Council, fire departments from across the U.S. submitted their best tips for keeping the kitchen clean. Some of these tips include:

- To quickly clean grills, take a newly opened can of soda pop and pour on to the hot grill. Carefully run residue off with a scrub pad and then wipe off all remaining soda.
- Scrub your kitchen sink with plain table salt and a dry sponge. This will clean grime that has gathered in the sink. Rinse with cold water for a nice shine.
- Before cooking foods that splatter, spray the stovetop with cooking spray and then easily wipe away with a sponge.

World Police and Fire Games coming to Canada

While the competitions are over for the 2003 World Police and Fire Games that were held in Barcelona, Spain in July 2003 (with 571 athletes from across Canada competing), you might want to mark your calendar for the 2009 games in Burnaby-Vancouver, B.C. Regardless of your current condition, you have six years to get toned and ready for the competition. For more information about the World Police and Fire Games and to obtain results about the 2003 competition, visit www.wpfg.org



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Turning a dream into a fire training centre reality

Thanks to the vision and commitment of volunteers and local businesses, Leduc County Fire Services has a first-class Fire Training Centre at their Station #1 in Nisku. Officially opened a year ago, the training centre provides a place for firefighters from all over the region to practice and enhance their skills.



Leduc firefighters are put through the paces at the County's new fire training facility in Nisku.

The centre evolved from volunteers

at Leduc County Fire Services who envisioned a providing a first-class training centre specifically for local and regional volunteer firefighters in the Leduc County region. In the past, volunteer firefighters from Leduc County Fire Services and surrounding communities and counties traveled long distances to attend week-long courses at special training facilities to learn about and practice new firefighting techniques. With the opening of the Leduc County facility, firefighters now have the opportunity to test their firefighting skills in a hazardous yet controlled environment that is much closer to home. This reduces both financial and time constraints imposed on the volunteers, enabling them to train more often, closer to home and for less money.

Most importantly, though, is the opportunity to practice as a team. "Our firefighters are more familiar and confident with each other's skills and we have a stronger team because of our new facility," said Bob Galloway, Leduc County Fire Chief.

The training site consists of almost everything a firefighter needs to enhance skills and training. There are five fire-simulating props; the fires are all simulated

using a mixture of clean burning, no-residue liquid and gaseous propane. Each prop is designed to test the firefighters in a variety of situations. All of the props are fully equipped with safety precautions and are carefully controlled by experts. One of the most important aspects of the training site is that it is flexible and can be changed to prevent repetition. As well, all of the exercises emphasize teamwork in both small and large teams.

The training centre also provides firefighters with other avenues to challenge their skills. For example, the smoke building creates search and rescue training and the burn building creates opportunities for firefighters to locate and extinguish a fire in a hot, smoke-filled room. There is also a designated site for vehicle extrication, with lots of room for high volume water flows. 🔥

If you are interested in learning more about the Leduc County Fire Training Centre, please call Darrell Fleming, Leduc County Fire Services, at (780) 955-7099.



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