

Westlock County Fire Chief wins Injury Control Champion Award

Rewarding excellence

Glenn Latimer, Fire Chief of Westlock County, was recognized with the *Injury Control Champion Award (ICC Award)* at the Injury in Alberta XI conference, held October 3 - 5, 2004 at the Mayfield Inn & Suites in Edmonton.

The ICC Award is presented annually by the Alberta Centre for Injury Control and Research (ACICR) to recognize the action and excellence of individuals and organizations in the area of injury control. It acknowledges a passion, dedication to quality, and commitment to injury control demonstrated in everyday work. Glenn, a long time fire and injury prevention advocate in the Westlock area, was recognized for spearheading a number of safety initiatives.

One of Glenn's foremost achievements was doing the necessary fundraising to purchase a fire safety house, which he takes to schools in the area to teach students about fire safety. Housed in a mobile trailer set up to simulate a house (including a kitchen, living room and bedrooms), each room has potential fire hazards that students try to identify. The fire safety house also has the necessary equipment to simulate smoke. More than 2,000 children have visited the house thanks to Glenn's efforts.

At the same conference, Glenn was also a member of a team from Westlock that won the *Community Action for Safety Award* for the production of a video titled "Stayin' Alive." Glenn assisted students from R.F. Staples School as they wrote, filmed and edited



Glenn Latimer receiving the Injury Control Champion Award from ACICR Director Dr. Louis Francescutti

the video, which focuses on the need for drivers to wear seat belts.

Being on the receiving end of two of only six province-wide awards, Glenn stands as an excellent example of the difference a dedicated individual can make when it comes to spreading injury prevention and control messages to the community. Residents of Westlock County can be proud of his achievements and his commitment.

Other than his position as Fire Chief in Westlock County, Glenn's other working titles include Deputy Fire Chief, Town of Westlock; Emergency Medical Responder, Westlock Regional Ambulance Authority; and Instructor, F.I.R.E. (Fire, Instruction, Rescue and Escape) Society. 🔥



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

In this issue

- Fire safety activities in Beaumont2
- Profiling the Beaumont Fire Department4
- Fire Prevention Week 2004.....5
- Alberta's Holiday Fire Safety Campaign.....6
- Fire smarts save lives.....7
- Leading cause of firefighter deaths surprising7
- TERC's Alberta Vehicle Extraction Challenge.....8
- The Safety Codes Council – who are we?.....9
- Aboriginal news update 10
- Fire Electronic Reporting System..... 11
- Highway Traffic Act 12
- AFCAs update.....12
- FCO regional update 13
- Summer's rain created busy time for EMA 14
- Intro to the Incident Command System 15
- New water heaters will prevent fires..... 16
- Calgary's Firesetting Intervention Program..... 18
- Culture's influence on risk and injury..... 19
- Safe fueling minimizes risks at the gas pump ...20
- Q&A's about Alberta's Safety Codes 21
- Fire etc. update22
- Digest.....23
- New fire chief..... 23
- FCO's new display... 24
- Fire safety picnic 24

Fire safety activities in Beaumont

We've all heard the phrase 'one person can make a difference.' However, seeing exactly what it is that individuals do to change the world around them is rather enlightening. In this issue of *Alberta Fire News*, we feature the various activities that have gotten underway thanks to the vision, commitment and energy of Ginette Traversy-Ens, volunteer firefighter with the Beaumont Fire Department.

As a volunteer firefighter with the Beaumont Fire Department, Ginette saw first hand many of the concerns now being addressed through a wide variety of programs that have been implemented in her community. "I first joined the fire department as a way to contribute to my community," said Ginette. "But then I started seeing many opportunities where we could increase the interaction with the community. With the help of the fire chief and our firefighters, I started one thing which led to another and another."



The bi-annual Great Safety Fair, where more than 50 participants set up displays to pass on their safety messages

“The intention was to organize an event in one location that would encompass every aspect of safety that could impact on our community.”

"Ginette's roles as community activist, volunteer firefighter, auxiliary member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and a safety educator consultant all blend together beautifully in helping build a better, safer community," said John Atherton, Beaumont's fire chief.

One of Ginette's first activities was Fire Prevention Week (FPW). Using the FPW kit distributed by the Fire Commissioner's Office, she approached the local newspaper, *La Nouvelle de Beaumont/Beaumont News*, to help

create awareness about fire safety and prevention. Other activities included safety talks in schools, involvement with the school's fire drills, and presentations at school assemblies and during tours of the fire hall. She also approached Canadian Tire for a contribution, resulting in the Beaumont fire department offering a free smoke alarm and battery

replacement program during FPW. "It's a great opportunity to talk with residents about safety," added Ginette. "You usually have to walk through the house so you're able to gently point out any other potential hazards that you see. It's a win-win situation for the fire department and the residents."

For the 2004 campaign, Ginette also purchased 2,500 fridge magnets with a message reminding residents to check their smoke alarms, which were distributed as an insert in the local newspaper. "The newspaper provided an easy way to distribute the magnets and include fire-related safety messages," noted Ginette.

Another significant program now underway is the Juvenile Firesetter Program. "We were having a problem with some of our youth playing with fire. I was able to work with the RCMP to set up an educational program that would give these kids a second chance to get out of the system and become involved with the community. The Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Program wasn't yet in place, so we created our own variation, based on discussions and consultations with other fire and police departments and psychologists," said Ginette. "When I hear about a student who may need assistance from the program, I go directly to that student's principal and ask to meet with the student. I am sometimes a little bit pushy, but it's only because I know how

much the program will help the student and the community. So far it has worked out really well."

The success of the Juvenile Firesetter Program resulted in related school assembly presentations. Through guest speakers that include Ginette, the RCMP and the Alberta Burn Rehabilitation Centre, students are made aware of the consequences of playing with fire. In addition to showing pictures of the consequences, the presentation includes a fire victim relating his or her own story. "It is actually a very powerful presentation," added Ginette.

Another idea that is finally coming to fruition this fall is the Junior Volunteer Firefighter Program. Designed for young people who would not normally have exposure to emergency services to learn about roles and responsibilities, the program can lead to future opportunities within the community. As ambassadors for the Beaumont Fire Department, participants promote fire, safety and injury prevention among their families and peers. "The idea's been in my head for four years, and for the last two years I focused on researching and writing the program," said Ginette. The Scouts Canada Venture Program learned about the initiative and are now running the program. "Their involvement is a tremendous help in getting the program up and running," added Ginette. "They run the recruitment drive for new members and will work with the Beaumont Fire Program on the program's various aspects."

Another very positive initiative is the Great Safety Fair. "The intention was to organize an event in one location that would encompass every aspect of safety that could impact on our community. We included everything from fire, fire extinguisher and police safety to awareness about trampolines, drug disposal, car seats and blood pressure plus over 40 booths of other organizations to pass their safety message, including the Alberta Centre for Injury Control and Research. We also included the Westlock Fire Departments' Safe House and a program on being lost in the woods. It was an incredible amount of work,



Left to right: Mrs. Montemore, Ginette Traversy-Ens, John Atherton and Mr. Boychuk during an annual senior safety presentation and fire drill at Place Beausejour, home to more than 50 seniors

but well worth it in terms of the great attendance. As a result, it has become an event that is now being organized on a bi-yearly basis," added Ginette.

Safety signage is another new addition in the community, including a permanent community safety board located in front of Sobeys grocery store and portable signage at both entrances to the town during Fire Prevention Week and Burn Awareness Week. Magnetic 9" x 60" signs have also been purchased to go on the back of all town trucks.

It is hard to believe that these activities and many more are available through a very small fire prevention budget. Thanks, however, to contributions from

firefighters, volunteers, local businesses and the Town Office, as well as Ginette's determination and willingness to put in countless hours, the Town of Beaumont has substantially increased its safety awareness activities. "When we look around the Town of Beaumont, it is awesome to see what has been achieved by dedicated individuals in this community," added Atherton. "There are many events where we are called upon to help out, raise funds or work towards a common goal and every one of our firefighters enthusiastically rises to the challenge. However, in such situations one person always stands out and goes the extra mile, and we are very fortunate to have such a person in Beaumont." 🔥

How to promote fire prevention in your community on a shoestring budget!

- Appoint a community champion (e.g. an interested fire department volunteer, firefighter's spouse, retired teacher – someone who has the passion to help the community through safety education).
- Get the blessing and approval of your fire chief and the co-operation of other members of the fire department.
- Plan carefully to identify key areas/target audiences (e.g. children, seniors, teenagers, farmers, etc.).
- Do the research or get helpful information and resources from the Fire Commissioner's Office.
- Apply for a grant.
- Promote your initiatives through the local media.
- Approach local businesses for funding, donations or in-kind services. Ensure that they receive recognition in the community.

Profiling the Beaumont Fire Department

Known for its picturesque church on the hill, the Town of Beaumont began as a French Colony in 1895. Situated only three-and-a-half kilometres south of the City of Edmonton, the town has experienced phenomenal growth since the 1970s and now boasts a growing population that exceeds 7,400.

This growing population created the demand for a fire service that continues to grow along with the young families that have moved into the community. In operation for 29 years, the Beaumont Volunteer Fire Department is focused on promoting safety in the community. Currently housed in the Protective Services Building, the fire department is comprised of a fire chief and 35 volunteer firefighters. The day crew consists of 12 - 13 town employees who, by virtue of their employment with the Town of Beaumont, are available for calls during the day. The night crew is comprised of volunteers who work beyond the town boundaries, and are available from 4 p.m. to 7:30 a.m. seven days a week.

The fire department averages about 150 calls a year. Of that, 75 per cent are medical calls, 20 per cent are fire calls and the remaining five per cent relate to other calls. "We are fortunate that there have been no major losses in the recent past," said John Atherton, Fire Chief for the Beaumont Fire Department. "Much of that, I believe, can be attributed to our very quick response time."

The fire department's jurisdiction runs from the City of Edmonton boundary on 50th Street south, and nine kilometres east of the Edmonton International Airport. Emergency calls first go through the City of Edmonton 911 dispatch centre, and are then directed to the Beaumont Fire Department. Agreements for additional resources are maintained with Edmonton, Strathcona and Leduc County. The Town of Beaumont also has a contractual agreement with the City of Edmonton to provide basic and advanced




The Fire Chief for a Day contest winner learns CPR at the Beaumont Fire Department's Open House 2003

life support ambulance services, with the fire department serving as the first point of contact.

In addition to promoting safety within the community (see next article – "Making a Difference in the Community"), the fire department also places considerable emphasis on training. "We are very fortunate to have such a highly qualified group of individuals," said Atherton. "Currently we have eight Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs), one paramedic and 13 Emergency Medical Responders (EMRs). All of our firefighters have gone through or are currently going through the 1001 series from **fire etc.** To date, about 75 per cent have already

completed that training." To assist firefighters in responding to calls, the Beaumont Fire Department has two pump trucks, one aerial truck and one rescue vehicle.

Many of the firefighters also take part in fire safety and education awareness initiatives in the community, including school visits and fire hall tours. As well, they take part in activities related to Fire Prevention Week, the *Risk Watch* program, Burn Awareness Week and the Junior Firesetter Intervention Program. "As members of the community, each of our firefighters has a vested interest in ensuring that our community remains safe," added Atherton. "We all take part in activities as time allows throughout the year." 

Fire Prevention Week 2004

This year's Fire Prevention Week (FPW) was a huge success, judging by the various events held throughout the province by Alberta's fire service. During FPW, municipalities across Alberta were buzzing with fun fire safety activities and events such as open houses, safety fairs, media advertising, fire safety displays, contests, fire drills, school presentations and smoke alarm give-aways. Many fire departments were able to gather

support from the Fire Commissioner's Office (FCO) and local community partners in the promotion of their events. "I'm glad to see such enthusiastic participation from the fire service in this important fire prevention event," said Fire Commissioner Pat Graham. "The purpose of the fire service is to save lives and property. Prevention should



Sparky (centre) poses with Métis Nation of Alberta President Audrey Poitras, Fire Commissioner Pat Graham, Les Brinkworth of fire etc., members of the Calgary Fire Department, and visitors to the Métis Nation Labour Market Division in Calgary

be the first means of achieving this goal. Fire Prevention Week provides an excellent opportunity to reach this goal by educating our communities about fire prevention."

As the provincial leader of the fire service, the FCO promoted FPW across Alberta in many ways.

- Produced a comprehensive campaign kit containing ready-to-use support materials for local activities and events.
- Supplied a paid advertisement for all members of the Alberta Weekly Newspapers Association.
- Offered an FPW media contest for Alberta Weekly Newspapers Association members, encouraging the papers to deliver fire prevention messages in co-ordination with their local fire departments.
- Partnered with McDonald's Restaurants of Canada, in co-operation with the Fire Commissioner's Offices of B.C. and Manitoba, to produce and deliver the McDonald's Program, containing free Children's Fire Safety Activity Booklets, a contest to win a family trip for four to Disneyland, and Fire Chief for a Day contest materials for FPW. Five-year-old Jessica Navratil of Jenny Emery Elementary School in Coaldale was the Alberta winner of the Disneyland family trip. A total of 273 Alberta fire departments used the McDonald's Program to promote FPW this year.
- Held provincial kick-off events at the Métis Nation of Alberta Labour Market Development Centres in Calgary and Edmonton on October 4 and 6, 2004. The events included a smoke alarm give-away, compliments of Wal-Mart Edmonton and **fire etc.**, and a children's fire safety demonstration delivered by the FCO's Te-Jay Smart. This event was a joint effort with the department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development and Alberta Municipal Affairs. Fire Commissioner Pat Graham, Les Brinkworth of **fire etc.** and Métis Nation of Alberta President Audrey Poitras addressed the attendees at the event. 🔥



Sparky poses with students of the Mother Earth & Me head start program at the Edmonton FPW kick-off event, held at the Métis Regional Council Zone 4 offices

Alberta's Holiday Fire Safety Campaign – December 2004


The December holiday season is a time of high fire risk and danger. In Alberta, the number of fires, fire deaths, fire injuries and fire-related property losses significantly increase during this time of year. Along with the additional hazards that winter brings, such as colder temperatures and the use of heating equipment, the December holiday season further increases our fire risk and danger by adding the excitement and distraction of visiting relatives, children on school holidays, shopping, decorating, cooking and festivities, which often cause us to overlook or compromise on safety.

In an attempt to lower the frequency and severity of fires in Alberta during this time of year, the Fire Commissioner's Office (FCO) promotes an annual Holiday Fire Safety Campaign from December 15 - 31. The campaign targets fire departments, schools, work places, the media and other individuals and organizations and encourages them to promote fire prevention and safety within their communities and homes. A Holiday Fire Safety Campaign Kit is available from the FCO to guide fire prevention and safety efforts during the holiday season.

The Fire Commissioner's Office Holiday Fire Safety Campaign Kit

A package of support materials to encourage and aid the promotion of holiday fire prevention and safety within Alberta communities and homes, which includes:

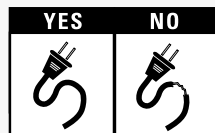
- ✓ message from the Fire Commissioner of Alberta
- ✓ Alberta holiday fire statistics
- ✓ holiday fire hazards and corresponding fire prevention and safety tips
- ✓ sample PSAs **New**
- ✓ sample advertisement **New**
- ✓ event planning guide **New**
- ✓ colourful graphics, cartoons and children's games and activities **New**

Fire departments, schools, work places, the media and other individuals and organizations are encouraged to use, copy and distribute all or portions of the material in the campaign kit. Materials used from the kit must include an attribution line. 

The FCO's Holiday Fire Safety Campaign Kit is available at www.municipalaffairs.gov.ab.ca/fco under "Campaigns."

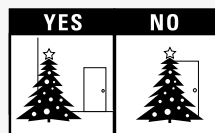
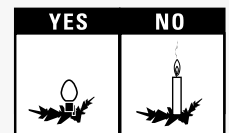
For more information regarding holiday fire safety or the Holiday Fire Safety Campaign, contact Te-Jay Smart at the FCO at (780) 644-4692 (dial 310-0000 for toll free access outside Edmonton) or via e-mail at te-jay.smart@gov.ab.ca.

The Night Before Christmas for Firefighters



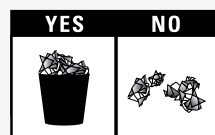
'Twas the night before Christmas when all through the house,
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse,
When down through the chimney all covered with soot,
Came the SPIRIT OF FIRE, an ugly galoot.

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.

Alberta Fire News is often asked about the origin of the *The Night Before Christmas for Firefighters* poem. We're pleased to offer the following explanation from Joan Armstrong, Manager, Policy and Strategic Services at Alberta Municipal Affairs: "When I was a little girl in the 1950s, my dad brought home the poem, which had been published in the Maritime Telegraph and Telephone Company Ltd. newsletter, "The Bulletin." Technology being what it was, to share the poem it was necessary to type it. (No photocopiers, word processing or e-mail). I still have this yellowed, typewritten copy at home. I pulled it out and dusted it off a few years ago to share with the FCO. It had to be tuned up a bit for currency so that people could relate to it today, but those of us who have been around for a while can still relate to the original version and I enjoy the memories it evokes."

Fire smarts save lives

The smell of smoke was the first clue that something was wrong. After seeing smoke in the kitchen and realizing that their house might be on fire, the three boys knew just what to do. Leaving everything behind, including their shoes, they got out.

The above scenario played out this past June in Wayne, Alberta, located just south of Drumheller. The brothers – Jamie, 13; Ajsa, 11; and Marcel, 8 – had gathered in front of the TV to play video games after school. After first smelling and then seeing smoke, the boys, who had learned about fire safety through discussions at home and at school, knew that they had to get out of the house and find an adult to help.

A neighbour ran back to the house with a fire extinguisher, but the thick smoke indicated that fire was already progressing. After calling the Drumheller

Fire Department, all they could do was watch as the house burned down. Although the family lost everything, Sharon Cooke is still glad that her boys made it out okay. “We lost everything,” says Cooke. “But stuff is just stuff – my kids are okay.”

It was eventually determined that it was an electrical fire that destroyed the early 1900s house. The timing of the fire concerned Cooke.

“It would have been better if it was a few hours earlier when no one was home, so they didn’t have to get out, but at least it wasn’t during the night.”



From left: Ajsa, Marcel and Jamie pose with Drumheller Fire Chief Bill Bachynski. The boys were presented with special certificates on behalf of the Fire Commissioner's Office recognizing their actions during the fire in their home

The family is in the process of rebuilding their home, and are grateful for the help they received from people in the area. “I was really blown away by the support we got from the community. I just want to say thank you,” added Sharon. 🔥

Focus on firefighter safety

Leading cause of firefighter deaths surprising

Firefighting is a dangerous profession, one that sometimes results in the death of a firefighter at the scene. However, according to a news release by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), the leading cause of death among firefighters has little to do with the actual fire. A recent NFPA study determined that U.S. firefighters are more likely to die traveling to or from a fire than fighting one.

The U.S. study found that in 2003, 37 firefighters died while responding to or returning from alarms, while 29 died on the “fire ground” – the land or building where a fire occurred. That was the lowest number of fire deaths on the fire ground since NFPA began collecting the data in 1977, and the first time fire ground deaths accounted for less than 30 per cent of the total.

In the most catastrophic incident, eight firefighters returning from a wildland fire were killed when their van crossed

the centre line while passing another vehicle and collided head-on with a tractor-trailer truck, bursting into flames. A news release issued by the NFPA about their study indicated that alcohol was a factor in this collision.

Other examples cited in the news release included a firefighter driving to the fire station to respond to a flooding emergency. The firefighter was driving too fast for the weather conditions, was not wearing a seat belt and struck a signpost. In another incident, the driver of a tanker lost control on a downhill curve, was thrown from the truck and died when the truck rolled over him. Brake failure was cited as a likely factor in the crash and there were no seat belts in the vehicle.



“These data tell us that many firefighters’ deaths are preventable,” said Rita F. Fahy, manager of fire databases and systems for NFPA. “Proper training and equipment, adhering to standards, obeying traffic laws, using seat belts, driving sober and controlling speeds would also dramatically reduce the toll.”

During the 10-year period from 1993 - 2002, no firefighter deaths were recorded in Alberta. Unfortunately, this trend was broken in September 2003, when volunteer firefighter Brent Dempsey of the Youngstown fire department died while operating a tanker truck. The incident involved livestock on the road on which he was traveling in response to a call for mutual aid to put out a grass fire southeast of Jenner, Alberta. 🔥

TERC Canada holds Alberta Vehicle Extraction Challenge

Under the auspices of the Transportation Emergency Rescue Committee (TERC) Canada, the first vehicle extrication challenge in Alberta in four years was held

September 3 - 5, 2004 in Nisku.

TERC Canada is an organization that deals with transportation rescue issues. Their membership includes firefighters, paramedics, police, auto manufacturers

and rescue equipment manufacturers. Along with TERC USA, the organization is recognized by the International Association of Fire Chiefs.

The event was hosted by Leduc County Fire Services and the Nisku Volunteer Firefighters' Association, and according to Assistant Fire Chief Darrell Fleming, everyone wins in such an event. "The Challenge provides us with an excellent opportunity to participate in a friendly yet competitive environment that promotes the sharing and learning of new rescue skills and techniques," said Fleming, who is the Provincial Chair for TERC Canada.

Nine Alberta teams entered the challenge: Calgary; Camrose; Cold Lake; Fox Creek; Lacombe; Leduc County; Parkland County; Pembina; and Sundre.

A team from Mississauga Fire and Emergency Services, who recently won the Canadian National Challenge in Wasaga Beach, Ontario, made the trip west to join their Alberta colleagues. Each team competed

twice, once using limited hand tools and the second time using heavy hydraulic tools in addition to hand tools.



Under the watchful eye of a judge, the team from Mississauga prepares to rescue a victim



Cold Lake firefighters utilize hydraulic equipment to gain entry into a vehicle

The team from Mississauga won first prize, with Cold Lake second and Leduc County third. Judges came from all over western Canada to assess each team's performance and provide valuable comments to improve their skills. 

For more information on TERC Canada, visit www.terccanada.org



A foot lying outside a crumpled car door provides a realistic challenge for rescuers



The team from Leduc County makes initial contact with a trapped car occupant

The Safety Codes Council – who are we?

It's not easy to explain the many roles and responsibilities that the Safety Codes Council has assumed since its creation more than 10 years ago. A lot has changed since the introduction of the *Safety Codes Act* in 1991, and the Council has grown from four staff in shared office space in the Alberta Labour building to 17 staff in offices at the University of Lethbridge Building. But who are we and what do we do?

Who are we?

The Safety Codes Council is a not-for-profit corporate body created by the *Safety Codes Act*, reporting to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Although the Council employs 17 staff to run its day-to-day operations, the Safety Codes Council itself is made up of more than 110 volunteers from around the province who are experts in fire protection; buildings; electrical, gas, plumbing or private sewage disposal systems; and elevating devices, amusement rides, passenger ropeways or pressure equipment. Members are nominated from labour, businesses, professional and technical organizations, municipalities, educational institutions and the general public. While members are not paid for their service, they are reimbursed for their expenses.

Experts in each of the nine disciplines (Amusement Rides, Boilers & Pressure Vessels, Buildings, Electrical, Elevators, Fire, Gas, Passenger Ropeways and Plumbing) meet several times a year as Technical Councils to discuss code and safety issues. A Coordinating Committee, consisting of the chair of each Technical Council plus representatives of municipalities, educational institutions, labour and the general public, meets frequently to oversee the activities of the Technical Councils and to discuss policy and code related issues.

How are we funded?

The safety system is based on a user-pay philosophy. The Council is self-sustaining, receiving the majority of its funding through levies on permits, registrations and certificates. While the Council reports directly to the Minister

of Municipal Affairs and works closely with ministry staff, it is not part of government and receives no funding from the department.

What do we do?

The Council has five areas of responsibility:

- 1. Accreditation** – Municipalities, corporations and agencies that wish to carry out activities under the *Act* must be accredited. The Council requires each organization wishing to be accredited to submit a Quality Management Plan, or QMP. The QMP sets out the detail of how the organization plans to deliver safety services, allowing the Council to monitor their success and provide guidance as necessary.
- 2. Certification** – Safety Codes Officers must be certified and designated powers to carry out their duties for accredited organizations. The Council assesses the qualifications of potential Safety Codes Officers, recommending and providing training and direction as necessary. Safety Codes Officer certification must be renewed every five years. Council staff are responsible for processing these applications.
- 3. Education and Training** – Safety Codes Officers need training, both to become certified and to maintain their certification. The Council has taken on a number of new activities associated with this important task – existing courses need to be updated, new courses and code update training developed, a course calendar published, exams developed

and testing arranged and supervised. The training area also handles information requests and questions about Safety Codes Officer training and qualifications.

- 4. Orders and Appeals** – Orders are issued when inspections find deficiencies. If someone disagrees with an Order they have the right to appeal to the Council. The Council maintains a record of all Orders, co-ordinates any appeals and appeal hearings, and publishes the results of the hearings. Technical Council Members from the discipline concerned hear the appeal and provide a decision with administrative support from Council staff. The number of appeals has increased over the last few years.

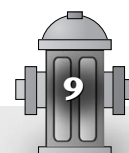
- 5. Electronic Permit System (EPS)** – Council staff oversee the EPS, and provide training and technical support to the many municipalities and agencies that make use of this service. Alberta Municipal Affairs initially provided funding to operate this program, but since EPS supports the safety system, the Council has agreed to take over the program's complete administration.

As with all organizations, support staff is needed to provide assistance for training, certification, accreditation, accounting, policy development, computing systems and communications.

There you have it: the Council's key areas of responsibilities. 

Additional information can be found on the Council web site at www.safetycodes.ab.ca, or by telephone at (780) 413-0099, or toll free in Alberta at 1-888-413-0099.

This article was provided by Wayne Telfer, Communications Coordinator with the Safety Codes Council of Alberta.



Aboriginal news update

One of the goals of the Fire Commissioner's Office (FCO) is to reach out to the Aboriginal community and develop enhanced working relationships with them. With that in mind, it was a busy summer and fall for Judy Harvie, Aboriginal Advisor to the FCO. Provided below are some of the activities that Judy and FCO staff have been involved in with Aboriginal communities across the province.

The First Nations Fire Chiefs Conference, co-ordinated by Leon Smallboy, Technical Services Advisory Group, was held August 25 - 26 in Edmonton. The conference provided the ideal opportunity to discuss fire issues with many of Alberta's First Nations fire chiefs.

First on the agenda, Fire Commissioner Pat Graham explained the fire prevention services available through his office, followed by a presentation on fire incident reporting and fire losses on First Nations reserves by Assistant Fire

Commissioner Mahendra Wijayasinghe. Next was a presentation by Spence Sample, consultant to the FCO, on First Nations fire service issues followed by a round table discussion. On day two, Fire Safety Officer Te-Jay Smart – with the assistance of Sparky, animated by Public Affairs Officer Kari-ann Kuperis – described the fire safety education resources available to First Nations fire departments. Don Gnatiuk, Vice

President Marketing and Corporate Development for **fire etc.**, made a presentation with Penny Reynolds on the topic of "Leadership in Changing Times," which focused on helping those currently in management positions and those aspiring to management

positions to understand the challenges and develop the skill sets required to successfully lead in today's complex environment. As well, the *First Nations Technical Advisory Group* was given a one-hour presentation on the Incident Command System (ICS) by **fire etc.**

By meeting with community leaders and finding effective ways of working together, we can make a difference.



Métis Nations of Alberta President Audrey Poitras speaks to the crowd at the Calgary Fire Prevention Week kick-off event

Participants learned about the ICS organization, basic terminology and common responsibilities associated with assignments. This course is a prerequisite for further ICS training.

The two hour, information-packed "Fires in Construction" seminar presented by Les Brinkworth, **fire etc.** Lakeland College Vice-President of Business Development, and the FCO's Judy Harvie heightened awareness of the need for greater emphasis on fire safety and emergency response planning for construction sites. The seminar covered key topics such as the risk of fire on a construction site, the impacts and consequences to people, our economy and the environment when a fire occurs, the different types of building construction methods and how fire and its byproducts impact a structure during the different phases of construction, as well as what's causing the problem and what can we do about it.

Given the grim statistic that Aboriginal communities have a 4-to-10 times higher rate of fire deaths than rural and urban communities, the FCO and Alberta Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development have begun working together on fire prevention on First Nations lands. One such initiative was the Métis Nations of Alberta hosting Fire Prevention Week kick-off events in Calgary and Edmonton on October 4th and 6th, 2004. Fire Commissioner Pat Graham and Métis Nations of Alberta President Audrey Poitras kicked off the events, and a total of 350 smoke alarms were distributed thanks to donations from Wal-Mart and **fire etc.** A few other initiatives are provided on the next page.




Judy acting as the MC at the 2004 Fire Prevention Week kick-off event in Calgary

Judy Harvie, Alan Jones from **fire etc.** and Ernie Palsom, Assistant Fire Commissioner, Operations, of the FCO attended the Fishing Lake Métis Settlement Youth Conference and spoke to youths on fire issues and possible career opportunities within the fire service. "Fire Chief Leon Cardinal and Community Development Director Bonnie Lehr have been working hard within their community to build emergency response capabilities with fire and medical services, so it was a pleasure to be able to assist them in this manner," said Judy. Leon and Bonnie recently ran an Emergency Medical Responder program, expanded the fire hall and have taken more training at **fire etc.**

The Assiniwuchi Winewak Nation in Grande Cache welcomed Judy to their community in September 2004. Working with Michelle DeLorme, Aboriginal Liaison Worker, and the Grande Cache Fire Department, Judy took part in fire prevention activities at the Aboriginal school and at Kokums House daycare in the Assiniwuchi Winewak Nation in Grande Cache.

Hats off to the Municipal District of Opportunity, who have been working with **fire etc.** in developing a Health and Safety Plan for the MD. Manager Dwayne Calliou has hired a safety person to promote health and safety among the primarily Aboriginal population of 3,570 in the community.

Assistant Fire Commissioner Ernie Palsom and Judy Harvie also visited with Council members from the Kikino Settlement in September to assist with fire prevention and training issues. Another meeting for ongoing work is planned for the near future.

"In an effort to reduce the high rate of fire related injury and death within our Aboriginal communities, we plan to visit each of these communities in the near future," said Judy Harvie. "By meeting with community leaders and finding effective ways of working together, we can make a difference." 

An update...

Fire Electronic Reporting System

In previous issues of *Alberta Fire News*, we introduced you to the Fire Commissioner's Office (FCO) Fire Electronic Reporting System (FERS), and have been keeping you up-to-date on its progress. The following outlines progress since the last update.

Fire Statistics Information System

Future Requirements for Reporting

It has come to the attention of the FCO that two important 'optional' fields on the fire report form (MAFP 1244) are being consistently missed by fire department personnel. These fields, identified below, provide valuable information and will become mandatory in the future. Please have your fire department personnel explore how these fields can be included in future fire reports sent to the FCO .

1. "Person(s) Starting Fire Incident"

Some fire departments have incorrectly concluded that this field exists to record the age and gender of arsonists and vandals alone, and have been leaving the field blank for all other fire incidents. However, this is NOT the purpose of this field. This field is provided to record information on the age and gender of all persons involved in fire incidents started either unintentionally or intentionally.

2. "Fire Department Incident Number"

This field will become mandatory in order to meet the requirements of the *Freedom of Information and Privacy Act*.

FERS users (via *milenet* on-line)


- Validation of data is continually being monitored and improved to further reduce invalid data checks.
- FERS enhancements are being continually implemented to meet the requests and needs of fire departments using FERS.

Electronic fire reporting (via private software vendors)

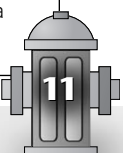
- Upgrades to the file interface specifications document are scheduled for December 2004.
- Reports submitted via e-mail from private software vendors, including the cities of Edmonton and Calgary, are successfully being uploaded into FERS by FCO staff.

milenet

As of October 8, 2004:

- 337 of the approximately 346 municipalities have signed the *milenet* agreement (revised or original).
- 120 of the approximately 346 municipalities have been assigned access to FERS for their fire departments. 

If you have any further questions, please contact Te-Jay Smart at (780) 644-4692 (dial 310-0000 for toll free access outside of Edmonton) or via email at te-jay.smart@gov.ab.ca



Highway Traffic Act – Commercial Vehicle Designation

The Fire Commissioner's Office (FCO) and Municipal Affairs are currently working with Alberta Transportation to develop short- and long-term solutions to the issues raised by the Commercial Vehicle designation as it pertains to fire apparatus. The weight requirement determining which vehicles are covered by the designation has been lowered to 11,794 kgs, which would apply to many pieces of fire apparatus that were previously exempt. The impact of this change in designation would include significant administrative requirements including monitoring of driver abstracts, employment histories and vehicle inspection records. Municipal Affairs has begun a consultation process which includes a request to grant a temporary exemption to the fire service until a proper dialogue can be completed that will recognize the issues of the fire service

and the need for increased road safety. Apparently, some fire service leaders are under the impression they should be applying to Alberta Transportation for an exemption to the above regulation. The FCO does not believe an application of this nature is necessary at this time. One of the issues being assessed is whether municipal vehicles should be considered commercial in nature and therefore bound by the regulation. A flurry of exemption applications might not be in the best interests of that argument and might even serve to reinforce the belief that fire apparatus is bound. Deputy Minister Brad Pickering has written to Deputy Minister Jay Ramotar at Alberta Transportation asking for an "assurance" that the regulation will not be enforced against municipalities. He has also indicated that Municipal Affairs will assess the regulation's impact and that we may ask for a change

in the "commercial carrier" definition to exclude municipal vehicles. Given the above, the Fire Commissioner's position is that exemption applications should not be made at this time. Fire departments are asked to wait until we have a response from Alberta Transportation. All staff will be advised of the response as soon as it is received. In the interim, please notify Ernie Polsom, Assistant Fire Commissioner, Operations, of any difficulties or issues with Alberta Transportation experienced by fire departments that you may become aware of. The Alberta Fire Chiefs Association (AFCA) is aware of this issue and we are working with them on the impact assessment. We will keep everyone informed on the progress of the AFCA committee. This issue affects all municipal fleets, including garbage trucks, parks vehicles and public works. 🔥

Keeping you informed...

Alberta Fire Chiefs Association update

Further to the brief overview provided in the August 2004 issue of *Alberta Fire News* about the 2004 Alberta Fire Chiefs Association (AFCA) Conference, we'd like to extend thanks to the hard work of our conference hosts, who together with the following made the conference a great success:

- Blackfalds Fire & Rescue
- Michener Centre Fire Services
- Innisfail Fire Department
- Sylvan Lake Fire Department
- Red Deer Emergency Services

- Red Deer County Fire Services
- Kneehill County Fire Services
- New Horizons Concepts Inc.
- Capri Centre staff
- AFCA Board of Directors

Arrangements are now underway for the 2005 AFCA Conference and Trade Show, to be held at the Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge May 1 - 4, 2005. Now is the time to plan ahead and balance work and pleasure by planning a little vacation around

the conference. Bring your partner and all the little helpers. Special room rates will be honoured for three days before and after the conference for those wishing to take a little R&R. Every effort will be made to attract a larger number of municipal elected officials to the conference, so now is the time to make your arrangements and to start talking with your council members and administrator.


The AFCA has also been busy with a number of fire-related issues. For example, director Stu Raven has been hard at work for your Association reviewing and updating the member benefits brochure. This item may help you bring



new members into the Association and broaden the support that is already enjoyed. The content of the new brochure is on the AFCA website and in due course may be printed for further distribution.

The Electrical Safety Training Program continues to operate successfully, delivering training to interested people in the fire, EMS and police services, industrial emergency responders and anyone else who may respond to emergencies that could involve electrical distribution lines and present a possible electrocution hazard. This program has been strongly supported both technically and financially by the electrical industry, the members of the Alberta Fire Service Instructors Association and the regional directors of the AFCA. If you require training in your area please contact your regional director.

Discussions have been ongoing with officials of the Transportation Safety Services Division of Alberta Transportation regarding regulatory changes that would affect fire departments with vehicles having a registered weight over 11,794 kilograms (approximately 25, 950 lbs.). These vehicles would be subject to the same safety rules as other commercial vehicles in the same weight category. While larger fire departments typically have programs in place that meet or even exceed the requirements in some areas, it will be something new for many of the smaller fire departments. Members of the AFCA Board and other interested parties will be continuing discussions to determine just how the new requirements will affect the fire service and will assist in communicating the changes to fire departments. See the article on the previous page for more information.

Your regional directors will be announcing the time and location of the AFCA Regional Meetings well in advance, and we would encourage every fire chief or designate and also elected council members to attend whenever possible. These meetings are held at various locations to allow participation in AFCA even for those who are unable to attend the annual conference. These meetings provide the opportunity to be updated on what is new and what your Association is doing on your behalf. It is also an opportunity to bring non-members and encourage them to join and add their views and voices to strengthen and support the Association. Your regional directors work hard to make these meetings successful, but they need you to attend. 

Fire Commissioner's Office regional update

Changing the way of doing business...

The Operations section of the Fire Commissioner's Office (FCO) continues to be very active, both directly with fire departments and municipalities and in working on provincial and national committees. Routine functions such as course evaluations, assistance with investigations and inspections and maintenance of our working relationships with the fire service continue to be top priorities for the office. In addition to these duties, we are working closely with the fire service to ensure that the Fire Services Training Initiative for 2004 - 2005 proceeds in a manner that effectively addresses the fire service's training requirements. To this end, we are meeting with fire departments and training groups across Alberta to ensure that suggestions for improving the program for 2005 are heard and, wherever possible, implemented. This consultation process will continue for the life of the training initiative program.


The Clandestine Lab Awareness package developed by the Calgary Fire Department and the FCO has been shared with the province of Quebec, who will in turn be translating it into French and sharing it back with us. The French language version will be available on our website later in the winter. We will continue to update the information to ensure that it is current and accurate and offers first response organizations the best possible information to protect their staff.

In the upcoming months, our Fire Safety Officers will be asking for your assistance in updating the Alberta Emergency Resource Inventory System. Major improvements in the system have been implemented in response to recommendations from our pilot groups. This includes a wider set of equipment and apparatus descriptions, an improved training section and the

ability to update contacts more easily. Municipal access to the system is being worked on and should be available to municipal users early in 2005.

Members of the FCO have been attending various fire service functions including medal ceremonies, awards banquets, grand openings, memorial services and funerals. Please let us know about

your upcoming events and we will make every attempt to be there. We can also assist in communicating your announcements to a wider audience, particularly where notice times are short, as is the case with funerals.

The key function of the FCO's Operations Section is to provide assistance, guidance and support to the Alberta Fire Service. We encourage you to call upon us any time. 



Contact the FCO at (780) 427-8392 (dial 310-0000 for toll free access outside of Edmonton).

Summer's rain created busy time for EMA

Summer 2004 was a busy time for EMA (Emergency Management Alberta). In addition to announcing its new Executive Director (see Sidebar), the branch was also very busy dealing with the consequences of major flooding in Alberta by launching one of the largest disaster recovery programs in Alberta's history.

Disaster recovery programs provide financial assistance for those municipalities and their citizens who incur uninsurable loss and damage as a result of a disastrous event. A state of local emergency does not have to be declared in order to receive financial assistance under a disaster recovery program. Alberta Regulation 51/94 of the *Alberta Disaster Services Act* allows the province to provide disaster recovery assistance to residents, small business, agriculture operations and provincial and municipal governments if the event meets the criteria as outlined in the regulation:

- The event is considered extraordinary;
- Insurance is not reasonably or readily available; and
- There is evidence that the event is widespread.

For rainfall, the 1 - 50 year return period (i.e., rainfall of this magnitude is likely only once every 50 years) is used in determining extraordinary criteria for rainfall in rural areas. In urban areas, the 1 - 25 year return period is used to determine extraordinary criteria.


Compensation is based on 100 per cent of eligible loss or damage with no deductible. Payment is based on property being restored to pre-flood condition only, and only the principle residence is covered. Community services, non-profit clubs and organizations are eligible as are small businesses where the owner/operator is the day-to-day manager of the business and derives the majority of his/her income from the business operation. There is a maximum payment of \$100,000 per residence or small business.

still being processed at press time, the projected cost of the program was \$74 million. Claim registration centres were opened from noon to 9:00 p.m.

in three locations in Edmonton and another centre was opened from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. in Sherwood Park.

Kneehill County had a similar program to deal with flooding in their area. The 11 applications received under this program included 10 for residential

and one for municipal (for emergency operations and infrastructure damage). The projected cost of this program was \$1.4 million.

"The Disaster Recovery Program is intended to assist people, businesses and municipalities that have suffered significant losses," said Dave Redman, Executive Director of EMA. "When this summer's rains resulted in considerable flooding, the Government of Alberta quickly put into place a program with a minimum of bureaucracy so that those who needed the help received it as soon as possible." 



The Greater Edmonton Disaster Recovery Program received 5,092 applications, which consisted of 4,675 residential, 415 small business and two municipal applications (for emergency operations and infrastructure damage). While applications were

New Executive Director Appointed



Dave Redman was recently appointed as the Executive Director of EMA. Formerly with the Canadian Armed Forces, Dave joined EMA in 2000, and was quickly seconded to the Joint

Anti-Terrorism Committee. He then served as Acting Director when Ron Wolsey retired.

For more details about the disaster recovery program, please visit EMA's website at www.municipalaffairs.gov.ab.ca/ema/index.cfm

Introduction to the Incident Command System

Emergency response requires a flexible organizational structure that enables smooth emergency operations and efficient interaction of responders. The incident command system (ICS) supplies that structure. Equally applicable to all organizations and agencies that provide rescue, fire suppression, emergency medical care, special operations or law enforcement services, within business, industry and all government levels, the system provides procedures to deal with natural disasters and technical complications, danger and resource requirements of emergency response operations.

On August 26, 2004, the *First Nations Technical Advisory Group* was given a one-hour presentation on the Incident Command System by **fire etc.** Participants learned about the ICS organization, basic terminology and common responsibilities associated with assignments. This course is a pre-requisite for further ICS training. Further levels of ICS training can be customized to meet the needs of police, fire, EMS, healthcare, government and businesses. Attendees were given a course guide and take-home exam to complete. Upon successful completion of the exam, participants are sent a certificate of completion.

The incident command system is designed for every incident, every day. It functions in any type or size of emergency to guide management activities, logically and sequentially, from the beginning of the incident through to the end. The system uses common language, operational methods, functions and responsibilities to enable efficient and effective operations and provide each worker a role. This methodical approach provides a stable framework for emergency response that avoids oversights and mistakes.

The system uses common language, operational methods, functions and responsibilities to enable efficient and effective operations and provide each worker a role.



The ICS is designed to enable smooth emergency operations and efficient interaction of responders

ICS can be used for a variety of incidents and pre-planned events including:

- fires and hazardous materials incidents
- hostage-taking and terrorism incidents
- multi-casualty incidents
- oil spill response and recovery incidents
- air, rail, marine or ground transportation accidents
- local and provincial natural disaster management
- industrial emergency management programs
- healthcare emergency management programs
- planned events, e.g. political summits, parades, concerts, sporting events

A key element of the incident command system is its ability to expand or contract to meet the needs of every incident. Depending on the size and complexity of the incident, the incident commander may add additional functions and delegate responsibilities to qualified personnel or retain responsibility for all five areas of command, operations, planning, logistics and finance and administration. A basic operating guideline is that the incident commander retains responsibility for an area until it is delegated to another person. 🔥

For more information on Incident Command System courses, contact the Business Development office at **fire etc.** at 1-888-863-2387.

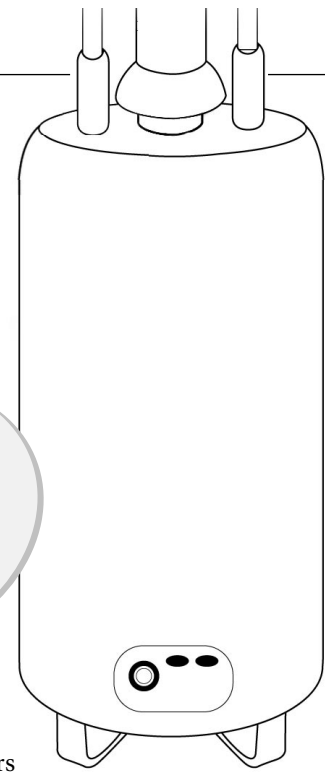
New water heaters will prevent fires from flammable vapours

Fires related to water heaters typically occur when consumers use flammable liquids, usually gasoline, for cleaning purposes, or when a flammable liquid leaks or is spilled near a water heater. Traditionally designed gas water heaters, which draw combustion air through vents at the bottom of the appliance, will ignite these flammable vapours when they come in contact with the appliance's burner flames or pilot light, causing a severe flashback fire. In the United States, many homes have their water heater installed in the garage, resulting in an ongoing problem with spilled gasoline. In Alberta, during the 10-year period from 1993 to 2002 (Table 1), a total of 199 fires occurred where the source of ignition was the gas-fired water heater. These fires resulted in two deaths, 66 injuries, and \$5.4 million in property damage. Further analysis of these fires revealed that the materials first ignited in at least 25 per cent of water heater-related fires were flammable liquids, mainly gasoline (Table 2).

A new, safer era in gas water heater technology began in July 2003, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission and Gas Appliance Manufacturers Association, the national trade association of the manufacturers of water heating and space heating equipment and components in the U.S. A voluntary standard developed by industry, in co-operation with the commission, calls for conventional 30, 40 and 50 gallon tank-type gas water heaters manufactured after July 1, 2003 (July 1, 2004 effective date for Canada), to be equipped with new safety technology. This technology, often referred to as a flame arrestor, prevents flashback fires by trapping and burning dangerous gas vapours inside of the heater, while preventing ignition of vapours in the room.

Developed by members of the Gas Appliance Manufacturers Association, in conjunction with the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), the technology carries American National Standard Institute (ANSI) performance, construction and safety standards developed by Canadian Standards Association (CSA) International. The new American National Standard Institute standard (ANSI Z21.10.1a) was approved in two parts: the first requirement, for flammable vapours ignition resistance (FVIR), was approved in February 2000; and the second requirement, for the heater to be resistant to lint, dust and oil accumulation, was approved in November 2002. The final standard, incorporating both parts, became effective on July 1, 2003. All 30, 40 and 50-gallon gas storage type

What was once considered an unsolvable safety hazard has now been solved.



water heaters manufactured after this date are expected to comply with the national safety standard. In essence, any gas-fired water heater made after this date must be designed to meet the above standard for FVIR so that vapours created by spilled gasoline near the heater will not ignite outside of the water heater.

Table 1. Fires related to gas-fired home water heaters by year, Alberta (1993 - 2002)

Year	Fires	Deaths	Injuries	Losses (\$)
1993	28	1	6	682,454
1994	23	0	6	320,886
1995	22	1	6	494,873
1996	17	0	7	778,655
1997	23	0	6	616,357
1998	19	0	16	472,902
1999	23	0	4	675,135
2000	15	0	3	325,677
2001	15	0	8	675,563
2002	14	0	4	326,044
Total	199	2	66	5,368,546

The new FVIR design, although shrouded in trade secrecy, basically calls for a sealed combustion chamber with an air inlet, where air flows through the arrestor plate, which is a perforated piece of steel. If any flammable vapours enter the combustion chamber, the arrestor plate, or flame arrestor, controls the burning of the vapours and prevents the flames from escaping the unit into the room, thus avoiding a fire or explosion. These heaters have built-in sensors that detect the

Table 2. Fires related to gas-fired home water heaters by material first ignited, Alberta (1993 - 2002)

Material First Ignited	Fires	%	Deaths	Injuries	Losses (\$)
Gasoline	27	14	1	18	511,463
Clothing	25	13	0	11	829,098
Flammable Liquid (Flash Pt. <37°C):Solvent	21	11	0	11	750,332
Contact Cement	17	9	0	5	502,629
Cardboard/Paper/Wooden Items	16	8	0	2	295,115
Floor Covering – Wood/Lino/Carpet	11	6	0	0	135,022
Natural Gas	11	6	1	4	227,709
Flammable/Combustible Liquid-Unclassified	11	6	0	1	236,672
Flammable Gas-Unclassified	9	4	0	1	120,762
Material First Ignited – Unknown/Unclassified	9	4	0	1	549,858
Propane	8	4	0	3	279,811
Building Component – Floor/Ceiling/Roof	8	4	0	0	352,213
Paint/Varnish	7	3	0	1	43,454
Flammable Liquid (Flash Pt. >37°C):Lubric. Oil	7	3	0	2	112,241
All Other Materials	6	3	0	0	227,438
Fuel Oil: Grades 1 - 6/Kerosene	3	1	0	0	104,230
Bedding/Mattress, etc.	3	1	0	6	90,499
Total	199	100	2	66	5,368,546

burning vapours and are designed such that the supply of gas to the heater and pilot light is shut down. While some type of arrestor will be common to every new FVIR unit, there still will be many design differences in the products that come to market. In addition, a bench standard that calls for protection of the water heater from lint, dust and oil, or LDO, was attached to the flammable vapour standard after it was determined in test studies that LDO contamination could be a problem. The new heaters built with this advanced safety technology will work best when they are kept free of as much lint, dust and oil contamination as possible.

Flame arrestor barriers represent an enormous technological safety advancement for traditional storage water heaters. What was once considered an unsolvable safety hazard has now been solved. Manufacturers shared research and patents while they individually developed separate new gas water

heater products that stop the ignition of flammable vapours outside of the water heater. All manufacturers are now required to change over their production according to these standards; however, everyone throughout the distribution

chain of water heaters will be permitted to sell any remaining inventory of non-FVIR products after the mandated implementation date. The effective date for conventional 30, 40 and 50-gallon water heaters with resistance to flammable vapour ignition and lint, dust and oil accumulation in Canada is July 1, 2004. Effective dates for power vented 30, 40 and 50-gallon water heaters and all other water heaters have been suspended. New dates are to be announced by CSA at a future date.

Consumers are advised not to be lulled into a sense of security with these new, safer water heaters. One cannot assume that one can now store or work with flammable liquids and be immune to danger. Gas water heaters are by no means the only thing that can ignite invisible and deadly flammable vapours. In Canadian homes, gas water heaters are usually situated next to gas-fired furnaces or boilers, which can also ignite flammable liquid vapours, thus negating any advantage of having the new, safer FVIR water heaters. Consumers need to continue their safety practices even after the addition of a newer, safer water heater under these circumstances. 🔥

Visit the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's web site and view the video clip demonstration of FVIR technology: www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/prerel/prhtml03/03158.html

To reduce the chances of fires caused by flammable vapours, consumers should:

1. Make sure gas-fired water heaters are installed according to code requirements.
2. Never use gasoline to clean equipment or tools.
3. Store gasoline only in tightly sealed, approved containers intended for gasoline.
4. Store all other flammables in sealed containers.
5. Keep all flammable materials and liquids away from gas-fired water heaters.

Flammable materials and liquids include the following:

- propane gas
- kerosene
- lighting liquids
- cleaning liquids
- oil-based paints
- fertilizers
- mineral spirits
- nail polish remover
- furniture polish
- disinfectants
- pesticides
- weed killers
- adhesives (glues)



New firesetting intervention program underway

Statistics have shown that playing with fire is the leading cause of death in pre-schoolers, and that one-third of children who die in fires set the fires themselves. These statistics, combined with current research, indicate that 81 per cent of children who set fires will re-offend if not involved in an intervention of some kind. This startling reality provided the impetus for the Calgary Fire Department (CFD) to review and revise their existing Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Program.

Community Services Deputy Chief Steve Dongworth, Acting Fire Marshal Wayne Brown and Community Safety Coordinator Garth Rabel supported fire personnel as they worked together to develop a youth initiative aimed at altering firesetting behavior through education and referral.

Appropriately titled Y-F.I.R.E.S. (Youth Firesetter Intervention, Referral and Education Services), this program focuses on youth aged 3 - 17 years. "As a group, we decided to change the format of the program from a single school visit to a multiple "in home" visit process," said John Cherweniuk, Y-F.I.R.E.S. Practitioner with the CFD, Community Services. "During these visits (up to three, each possibly two hours in duration), a

specially trained firefighter (practitioner) talks with the parent and child focusing on home fire safety, building the child's self esteem while instilling confidence through education."

Cherweniuk added, "To reach our ultimate goal in creating a successful, viable program, there were many things that we had to put into place, all of which had to be completed in a specific order."

The order of developing this program is as follows:

1. Deciding on a program format.

A multiple home visit format involving parental consent and participation was implemented.

2. Redesigning of the interview/ mental health screening forms in order to better:

- understand the firesetting issues surrounding the child, then help create an appropriate educational strategy based on the information collected;
- conduct a pre-screening interview which allows the practitioner to recognize the need for referral to mental health professionals; and
- gather statistical information on juvenile firesetters in the hope

3. Referred), referral agency, smokers in home, smoke alarms in home, smoke alarms installed, home inspection completed/not required, home exit plan in place, program status (e.g. 1. Closed, 2. Active, 3. Pending), six-month follow-up completed.

Firesetting incident

CFD incident number, dollar loss, ignition device, fuel source, fire set inside/outside, where fire was set (e.g. home, school, another's home, park, other), group involvement.



Calgary's new Y-F.I.R.E.S. program focuses on youth at risk of becoming firesetters.

of better addressing the issues of firesetting and, in the future, create a more proactive means of dealing with these issues.

The revised forms were reviewed and approved by the City of Calgary legal division as well as by Dr. Philip Eaton (Program Director with Child and Adolescent Mental Health and Psychiatry Program, Calgary Health Region) and Dr. David Cawthorpe (Research Coordinator with Child and Adolescent Mental Health and Psychiatry Program, Calgary Health Region). The forms were also reviewed by Dr. Ken Fineman, PhD, a Juvenile Firesetter research pioneer in California.

3. **Creating a new database to capture vital information on the firesetter, the incident and the intervention.** To date, more than 130 visits (conducted since February 1, 2004) have been included in the database. (see Sidebar for a listing of the type of information currently collected in the database).

4. **Building a referral network.** "To be effective, we knew that the network had to consist of related professionals in various fields. They needed to be aware of the existence of the program, and how our interventions were being conducted," said Cherweniuk. To accomplish this, referral process meetings were set with the joint Fire/Police Arson unit, Calgary Police Services, and the Youth Criminal Defense office. Plans are also underway to present at local

Statistics currently collected on Y-F.I.R.E.S. database include the following:

Personal information

File number, names (parent/guardian and child), address, phone, age/date of birth, school, medical conditions, previous JFS program participation and client fire education.

Intervention

Call taker, intervener, practitioner, source of program awareness, dates (total, duration of interventions), disposition category, referral agency status (1. Involved, 2. Not involved,

teacher's conferences. Dr. Eaton and Dr. Cawthorpe assisted in helping the team to understand the proper utilization of the mental health intake process in order to immediately refer children of concern for counselling.

5. Generating awareness about the program. To accomplish this, the team developed both internal and external communications materials.


To meet internal communications needs, a PowerPoint presentation was developed to provide an overview of the program. To date, it has been delivered to Chief Wayne Morris and all Deputy, Battalion and District Chiefs. The presentation is also available

to firefighters on the department's Intranet site. As well, an information handout and Y-F.I.R.E.S. business cards were developed for the fire crews. Information posters and brochures are in the developmental stage and will be distributed to all fire stations in the Calgary area within the next two months.

To reach the general public, the team developed awareness brochures and posters and created a direct link to the City of Calgary Corporate Contact Centre (a one-stop telephone service with direct access to various city departments). The Y-F.I.R.E.S. telephone number (403-268-2000),

has also been listed in the blue pages of the Calgary telephone book and is referenced in various "youth outreach program" brochures.

6. The final piece of the program will be the creation of a 40-hour practitioner training course designed to train firefighters to conduct interventions based on the Y-F.I.R.E.S. format.

"So far we are meeting all of our developmental goals on schedule and are looking to being complete by January 2005," says Cherweniuk. 

For more information about the Y-F.I.R.E.S. program, contact John Cherweniuk at (403) 863-6884 or john.cherweniuk@calgary.ca

ACICR teleconference provides interesting perspective

Culture's influence on risk and injury

A recent Alberta Centre for Injury Control and Research (ACICR) teleconference on a "Culture of Safety" provided a dramatically different way of looking at the cause of injuries. Conducted by Dr. J. Peter Rothe, senior researcher at the ACICR and Assistant Professor with the Public Health Sciences Faculty at the University of Alberta, the presentation focused on how culture influences risk and injury in our society. After first outlining typical injury approaches and interventions, Dr. Rothe focused on the elements of risk, competition and conflicting interests that are prevalent in Alberta and beyond. For example, within our province there are many economic risks, from gambling to oil production. Even our economic substance – from the oil patch to farmers – reflects a machismo, hard work, hard money and hard-playing lifestyle.

"Injury is a reflection of our culture," said Rothe. "Underlying our culture are behaviours and shared values, beliefs and ways of life that lead to injuries. What we need to look at is not just the characteristics of a person but the fact that they are a product of the culture in which they live. Risk is a way of life for many in today's society. We drive fast, work too hard and eat too much fast food. While these patterns are the norm in our

society, we need to ask ourselves, are they the right patterns?"


Changing the incidence of injuries and risk is more than just a mind set, added Dr. Rothe. We need to look at all aspects, from childrearing, where children learn from their parent's example to yell at coaches and referees and drive too fast or with distraction, to the games our children play (for example video games where death is a good thing) and even our "normal" patterns in society, where market principles encourage cheap, quick and convenient. Another factor to consider is who models safety in our society. For example, some society leaders in North America have been in the media for traffic violations and some superstar athletes are under police investigation or before the courts.

In order to change our current culture to one that reflects a culture of safety, Dr. Rothe stated that several key components need to be looked at. For example:

- Establish provincial co-ordination to help define and organize actions dealing with the development and sustainability of a culture of safety.
- Help individuals become integrated and live better in our society, which will help build peace and solidarity on a much larger scale among whole groups.

- Take care of the environment in our houses, towns and regions, which contributes to the protection of the whole planet and the recognition that the environment is a global issue.
- Make consumer choices based on the source and type of products we buy. (Currently, we contribute to the fight against child labour and the exploitation and abuse of workers by buying SUVs, eating fast foods, buying certain clothing, etc.)

Rothe also pointed out that trying to prevent injury by dealing with one isolated characteristic is doomed to failure. "Peoples' lives are intersected with many different interests, ideologies and patterns of expectations. They have to negotiate them in order to survive, and the negotiation of the various influences in order to maintain economic survival requires that they take risks. It has become a norm in many industries/businesses, and in fact, our economy demands that people take health risks – risk of injury and/or death," he added.

Hopefully, as more people start to look at the underlying framework of injury and risk, they will start to work together on solutions that will make a difference. 

Safe fueling minimizes risks at the gas pump

Most motorists do it at least once a week and some every few days. However, did you know that there is a risk of fire when refueling your vehicle?

According to the American Petroleum Institute, static electricity-related incidents at retail gasoline outlets are extremely unusual; however, there is a potential for these fires to occur, particularly during cool or cold and dry climate conditions. In rare circumstances, such incidents have resulted in a brief flash fire occurring at the fill point (see Sidebar for an Alberta incident).

Fall and winter bring cool and dry air, which are the typical climatic conditions when static electricity build-up is mostly likely to occur. Static electricity build-up can be caused by a motorist returning to the vehicle while it is being refueled. When the motorist then returns to the vehicle fill pipe during or at the end of refueling, the static may discharge at the fill point, potentially causing a flash fire or a small sustained fire with gasoline refueling vapours.

The primary way consumers can avoid static electricity problems at the gas pump is to stay outside the vehicle while refueling. While it may be tempting to return to the vehicle during very cold weather, an average fill-up takes only two minutes. Staying outside of the vehicle will greatly minimize the likelihood of any build-up of static electricity that could be discharged at the nozzle.

Motorists who cannot avoid getting back into the vehicle during refueling should discharge any static away from the fill point upon exiting the car, before going back to the pump nozzle. Static may safely be discharged by touching a metal part of the vehicle, such as the vehicle door, or some other metal surface, with a bare hand.

Provided below are consumer refueling and fuel safety guidelines to follow when refueling your vehicle:

- Turn off your vehicle engine while refueling. Put the vehicle in park and/or set the emergency brake.
- Do not smoke or light matches or lighters while refueling at the pump or when using gasoline anywhere.
- Use the refueling latch provided on the gasoline dispenser nozzle – never jam open the refueling latch on the nozzle.
- Do not re-enter the vehicle during

refueling.

- If you cannot avoid re-entering the vehicle, discharge any static build-up BEFORE reaching for the nozzle by touching something metal with a bare hand – e.g. the vehicle door – away from the nozzle.

In the unlikely event a static-caused fire occurs when refueling, leave the nozzle in the fill pipe and back away from the vehicle. Notify the station attendant immediately.



An Alberta Perspective

When the St. Albert Fire Department responded to a report of a vehicle fire at a gas station in May 2004, it was their first encounter with a static electricity fire. On arrival, no fire was observed, but a car stopped on the boulevard still had its engine running and soot and some burning was noted on the passenger side. A half-ton truck parked in Bay 6 at the gas station also had slight soot and burning around the fuel intake. The gas hose for this bay was lying on the pump island facing Bay 5, with the nozzle hold open device engaged.

The driver of the car fuelled his vehicle at Bay 5, went into the gas bar, paid for the fuel and returned to his vehicle. He then started the vehicle in preparation to leave. At the same time, the driver of the half-ton was fuelling his vehicle in Bay 6. After starting the refueling procedure, the truck driver returned to his vehicle to keep warm. Deciding to not completely fill-up the vehicle due to the price of the gas, he got out of the truck to shut off the fuel. At that point, he noticed a small flame at the nozzle, pulled the nozzle from the truck and dropped it on the pump island; the nozzle did not shut off, and a fireball ensued.

At the same time, the driver of the other vehicle started his car to leave. As the car was starting to move, he observed large flames shooting up the right side of his vehicle. Thinking his vehicle was on fire, he opened the driver's door to get out and flames started coming into the vehicle. He half jumped out of the vehicle while it was still moving. As the car came to a stop on the grass boulevard, he ran away from the vehicle. Both drivers suffered minor burns as a result of the fire.

The truck was not running at the time of the fire. The driver was not smoking, nor was he operating any electrical equipment at the time of the fire. The cause of the fire was determined to be a static electricity spark caused by the driver of the half-ton truck getting into and leaving the cab of the truck without grounding himself to the truck.

"This was an accidental fire, caused by a static spark," said Dave Martin, Deputy Fire Chief, Fire Prevention and Public Education, St. Albert Fire Department. "The severity of this incident was mitigated, in large part, due to the quick response of the gas bar staff who called 911 and hit the kill switch to turn off the pumps. The staff should be commended for their quick and effective actions."



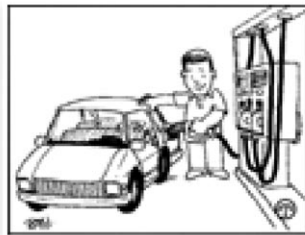
Container Refueling Guidelines

Winter also creates a need for many Albertans to fill gasoline containers for winter apparatus such as snowblowers and snowmobiles. Listed below are tips for safely filling portable fuel containers:

- When dispensing gasoline into a container, use only a federally or provincially approved portable container and **place it on the ground** to avoid a possible static electricity ignition of fuel vapours.

NOTE: Containers should never be filled while inside a vehicle or a trunk, or in the bed of a pickup truck or on the floor of a trailer.

- When filling a portable container, manually control the nozzle valve throughout the filling process. Fill a



Avoid potential static electricity problems at the gas pump by staying outside your vehicle while refueling.

Image from www.api.org

portable container slowly to decrease the chance of static electricity buildup and minimize spilling or splattering. Keep the nozzle in contact with the rim of the container opening while refueling.

- Fill container no more than 95 per cent full to allow for expansion.
- Place the cap tightly on the container after filling – do not use containers that do not seal properly.

- If gasoline spills on the container, make sure that it has evaporated before you place the container in your vehicle. Report spills to the attendant.
- When transporting gasoline in a portable container, make sure it is secured against tipping and sliding, and never leave it in direct sunlight or in the trunk of a car.
- Never store gasoline in glass or any other unapproved container. 🔥

The information provided in this article is courtesy of the American Petroleum Institute and the Petroleum Equipment Institute. For more information about this topic, please visit their websites at www.api.org or www.pei.org.

You were asking...?

Q&A's about Alberta's Safety Codes



Ray Ligenza, Calgary and Ray Cox, Edmonton

Questions about Alberta's Safety Codes?

Contact Ray Cox in Edmonton or Ray Ligenza in Calgary at 1-866-421-6929. Ray and Ray are technical advisors for Technical Services, Building and Fire Safety in the Public Safety Division of Alberta Municipal Affairs.

Q. I saw an aerosol-type portable fire extinguisher for sale in a store in the United States. The extinguisher had no certification label or rating information. Would these types of extinguishers be approved for use in Alberta?

A. No. Under the Alberta Fire Code, portable fire extinguishers must be listed and labeled in accordance with the Canadian Standards system. This means the extinguishers must bear the label of Underwriters' Laboratories of Canada (ULC). Extinguishers may also be seen in Alberta that are tested by Underwriters' Laboratories Inc. (UL) in the United States. UL are accredited to test to the Canadian standards and products that undergo this test by UL have a UL small c [ULc] label affixed to the extinguisher.

Q. Is there a plan to amalgamate the Canadian and American standards for portable fire extinguishers?

A. Yes. ULC and UL are developing bi-national harmonized standards for portable fire extinguishers. It is expected that by the end of 2004 the testing agencies will have harmonized standards in place for all types of portable fire extinguishers. By August 2007, the UL laboratory will be testing all portable fire extinguishers to the new harmonized standard. Manufacturers submitting extinguishers for testing will be able to use both laboratories and the extinguishers will meet the standards in both countries. We anticipate that

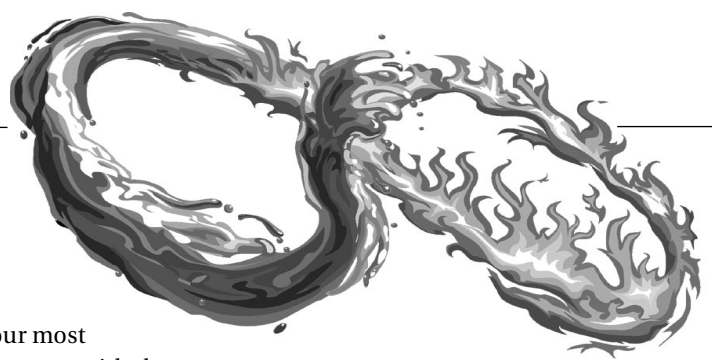
after August 2007, the Alberta Fire Code will be in a position to be able to recognize both the ULC and UL labels on extinguishers.

Q. If the contents of a portable fire extinguisher meets ULC or ULc criteria as an extinguishing agent does it meet the requirements of the Alberta Fire Code?

A. No. A portable fire extinguisher must meet the ULC or ULc testing criteria as a complete unit. This provides the public with some assurance that the cylinder, gages, expellant, extinguishing agent, etc., will work properly in accordance with the ULC or ULc rating system. 🔥

Note: Please forward any questions you may have for "You Were Asking...?" to te-jay.smart@gov.ab.ca

Degree expanding across Canada



fire etc.

Lakeland College is raising the bar in training for emergency services personnel with its **Bachelor of Applied Business: Emergency Services** degree. The program is designed to meet the administrative training needs of people currently employed in emergency services, including fire and medical services, policing and municipal emergency response. The majority of the students continue to work full-time while taking the program.

Quite simply, this program is more than expected. The online learning allows students to take a campus course and at the same time balance family, career and social activities. The dedication of the staff to the enhancement and development of the program is to be commended and the long-term realization will be the achievement of the standard for emergency services in Canada.

In January 2004, the Program Advisory Committee recommended the program name change from Bachelor of Applied Emergency Services Administration to Bachelor of Applied Business: Emergency Services to better reflect the nature of the program.

September 2004 saw our most diverse group of students yet with the third cohort, which included students from B.C. to Nova Scotia registered in the Emergency Services Personnel program. The second cohort of students started this program in January 2004. Seventeen students from British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Ontario entered the part-time study program, which is offered primarily via distance delivery. The first cohort started in September 2003 and those students are doing extremely well. They have all overcome any technological hurdles associated with online learning and are now flourishing in the program.

So far, the students have been impressed with the quality of the program. "This is a degree program that emergency services workers should be watching very closely," said Gary Creasser, a sergeant with the Calgary Police Service. Doug Odney, Superintendent of the City of Calgary EMS Department, agrees. "I am privileged to be enrolled in such a valuable program that is sure to become a standard for our industry," said Odney.

People in emergency services are often trained as front line workers but as their careers progress, they are asked to look after aspects such as budgeting, managing employees and making presentations. This applied degree offers courses that enhance the business, communication and supervisory skills of the students, said Program Chair Mark Butler. "It provides students with a holistic view of emergency services administration."

Applications have already been received for another western cohort, which starts in January 2005. With the dramatic increase in interest in this program

from Emergency Services workers in eastern Canada, Lakeland College is proposing an eastern cohort to run in January, simultaneous with the western cohort. One of the primary goals of this program is to provide superior student contact and support through highly dynamic, relatively small cohorts of 15 to a maximum of 20 students.

Besides completing approximately 30 modules, each estimated at about 15 hours, students must also complete an eight-month practicum. It's expected that students will take about two-and-a-half years to receive their degree.

Entry into the program

Direct – graduates of the following two-year diploma programs may be eligible for direct entry:

- Emergency Services Technology
- Emergency Medical Technologist EMT(P)
- Correctional Service Diploma
- Policing Program Diploma
- Corrections Program Diploma
- NFPA Certification to 1,200 hours

Indirect – candidates will be assessed on the basis of transfer credits and official transcripts, totaling 1,200 hours of emergency services training. Up to 600 hours of approved in-service training may be considered. Students presenting in-service training for consideration will be required to supply proof of completion, including the number of hours of training and a detailed description of training. A course syllabus may be required for evaluation. 🔥

For more information, contact Mark Butler, Program Chair, at 1-800-661-6490 or visit www.lakelandc.ab.ca

"We can now embrace a degree program that opens the window of the emergency services spectrum in our nation. It is a privilege to be participating in this program."

*Les Karpluk, Deputy Fire Chief,
City of Prince Albert, Fire & Emergency Services*



Digest

Oops!

In the August 2004 issue of *Alberta Fire News*, we mistakenly reported that Lorne Thompson was the new Fire Chief for the Town of Drumheller. His position is the Fire Chief for the Town of Olds. We apologize for any confusion that this may have caused.

Tax treatment of supplied emergency response vehicles

Further to a change in the tax treatment of supplied emergency response vehicles as identified in the February 2003 federal budget, the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs received the following statement from the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency detailing what is meant by the words "clearly marked:"

"It is our general position that a fire or police emergency response vehicle is considered 'clearly marked' when such a vehicle can be readily identified by the general public as a police or fire vehicle because of the symbols and/or

lettering on the exterior of the vehicle. A police or fire vehicle that is only equipped with radios, computers and lights on the inside of the vehicle does not satisfy the requirement that the vehicle be 'clearly marked'."

Occupational Health and Safety Code

The Fire Commissioner's Office (FCO) is currently working with Alberta Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) to determine how an emergency scene fits into the Occupational Health and Safety Code. While it is relatively clear that the code applies to the fire service and its non-emergency work, it is less clear how it applies to emergency scenes. We are meeting with OH&S to discuss this matter and are requesting formal interpretations on several sections of the code. Of particular interest is how hazard assessments are conducted and documented, which ties in with the development of a workplace health and safety plan for fire departments. The first

meeting has already occurred and more meetings are planned. We have provided OH&S with a series of questions and clarifications that we have deemed necessary. We anticipate being able to bring this information to the fire service later this year.

Check it out...

Looking for the latest information about fire safety? Check out the FCO's website. In addition to FAQs and a FERS hint sheet, the website also includes the Holiday Fire Safety Campaign Kit, new fire facts and fire safety tips. And, of course, it continues to provide information about safety alerts, fire statistics, publications, back issues of *Alberta Fire News*, and more. Check it all out at: www.municipalaffairs.gov.ab.ca/fco

We need your badge!

The FCO needs your help to complete their fire department badge display. Designed to include a badge from every fire department across Alberta, the finished display will provide a visual and informative overview. Please remember to send in a badge from your department to the FCO.

Sample grant proposals

Need to write a proposal or looking for ideas or inspiration? The Idea Bank has written proposals from its grant writing course posted on its website. If you'd like to review these U.S.-based grant proposals written by fire departments, they are available at: www.theideabank.com/onlinecourse/samplegrant.html 

EVENT	DATE	LOCATION
Fire & Ice Hockey Tournament	December 3 - 5	Jasper
Holiday Fire Safety Campaign	December 15 - 31	FCO website
Burn Awareness Week	2 nd week in February 2005	FCO website
Teachers' Conventions	February to March 2005	Various
Hot Wheels 2005 (hosted by the Fire Investigation Association of Alberta, Chapter #38)	April 7 - 9, 2005	Peace River
AFCFA Annual Convention	May 1 - 4, 2005 (tentitive date)	Jasper

Alberta bound

Announcing Westlock's new fire chief




Terry Stauffer, Westlock's new fire chief, officially came on board July 5, 2004. Known to many in the Alberta fire service community, Terry was part of the Banff Fire Service for 17 years before moving to Nunavut two years ago to accept a position in the Office of the Fire Marshal. While

with the Banff Fire Service, he also taught courses part-time at the Alberta Fire Training School before it became **fire etc.**

"Nunavut was a really great place to work. The Office of the Fire Marshal had a very broad scope of responsibility, which included investigations, inspections, public education and fire department training. However, my ties to Alberta

drew me closer to home, and I'm looking forward to my years with the Westlock Fire Department," said Terry.

As the only full-time paid position with the Westlock Fire Department, Terry works with approximately 17 volunteers and has already started a recruitment campaign to encourage more volunteers to join the department. 

Alberta Fire News is published three times a year, by the Fire Commissioner's Office of Alberta Municipal Affairs, for the information of the fire service and others with an interest in fire protection. Opinions expressed in this publication are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of Alberta Municipal Affairs or the Government of Alberta. Your comments and suggestions are encouraged. The contents of *Alberta Fire News* may be reproduced with the appropriate credit to the source. The editorial office of *Alberta Fire News* is located at:

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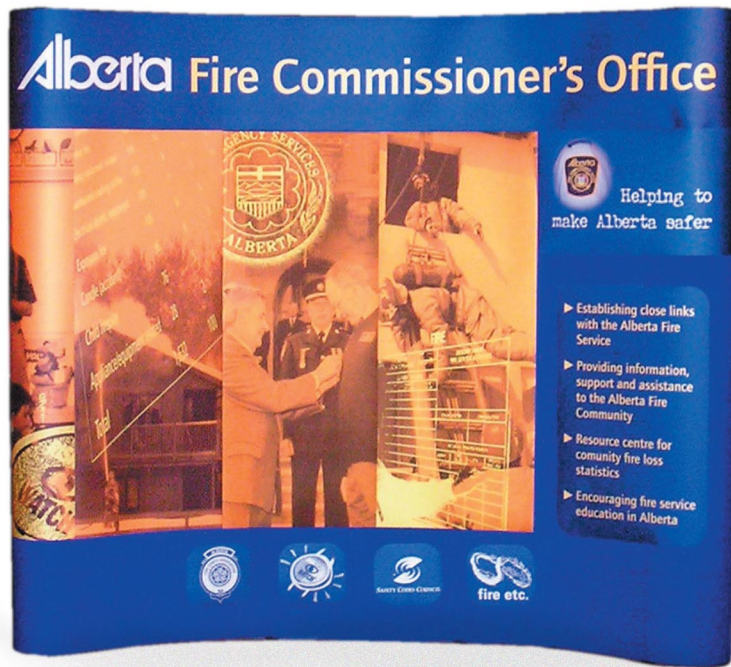
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New display making the rounds

Raising the FCO's profile

The Fire Commissioner's Office (FCO) has been making a splash across the province with the help of their new display, created by Design Quarry in Edmonton. The display comes with interchangeable panels, allowing FCO staff to tailor the display to meet the needs of their audience. For example, at the Fort McMurray Fall Trade Show, the display contained general information on the

FCO and the role it plays in providing fire prevention and safety messages in the province. At a Teachers' Convention, the display will be set up with panels relating to the *Risk Watch* Program. 🔥



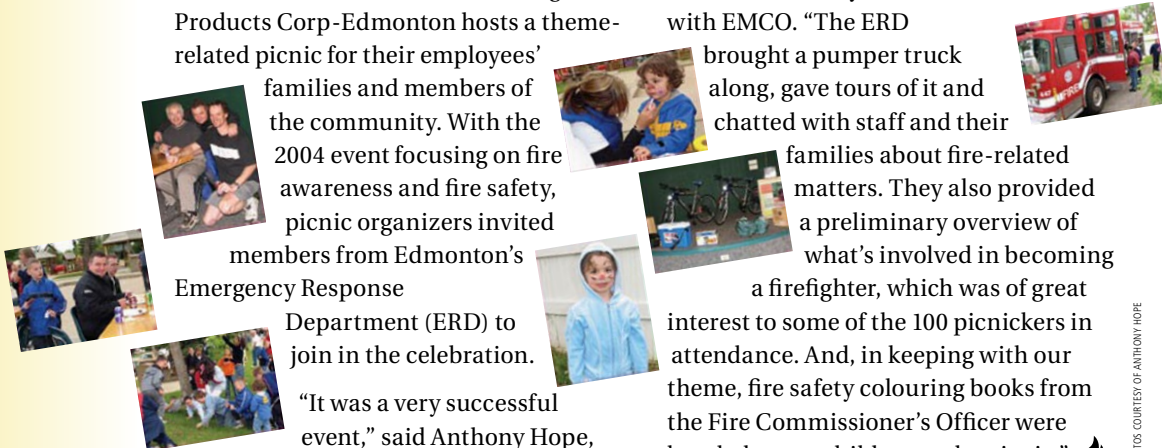
Making fire safety a family affair

Edmonton company combines fire safety with fun



As an annual event, EMCO Building Products Corp-Edmonton hosts a theme-related picnic for their employees' families and members of the community. With the 2004 event focusing on fire awareness and fire safety, picnic organizers invited members from Edmonton's Emergency Response

Health and Safety Coordinator with EMCO. "The ERD brought a pumper truck along, gave tours of it and chatted with staff and their families about fire-related matters. They also provided a preliminary overview of what's involved in becoming a firefighter, which was of great interest to some of the 100 picnickers in attendance. And, in keeping with our theme, fire safety colouring books from the Fire Commissioner's Office were handed out to children at the picnic." 🔥



PHOTOS COURTESY OF ANTHONY HOPE

