

Alberta Fire Commissioner's farewell

Saying goodbye...

As I retire from the position of Fire Commissioner for the Province of Alberta, I wish to say farewell to all of my fire service colleagues.

I have enjoyed my journey with the fire service, a journey that began in 1956. During that time, I have witnessed many changes – mostly for the better. I am under no illusion about ‘the good old days.’

One important thing I have learned through my experience is the concept of leadership and what it really means. Each of you, whether you realize it or not, is called upon to demonstrate leadership in some aspect of your role within the fire service. Those leaders whom I consider to be the most effective are unafraid of change or of allowing their staff to act with relative independence. Those who either resisted or openly feared change and/or those who felt it necessary to keep a tight rein on their staff are, in my estimation, ineffective leaders.

I am thrilled by some of the progressive factors that are currently in play or on the horizon. The calibre of younger people starting their journey demonstrates the effect of better education and a much greater readiness to adapt to change. On the horizon, I see a unified fire service that has a totally co-operative spirit and can effectively meet each challenge as it arises. Perceived loss of autonomy is a fear that has plagued us for too long. Real effectiveness of effort comes not from individual control but from co-operation and combined collective knowledge, which results in a realization of the strength and value that each individual brings to meet the challenge.

Some time ago, I learned that no one person can possibly acquire all the knowledge and expertise required for real success. Real leaders inspire others to excel. If there is any secret to success, I believe this is it.

I will miss all of the activities related to the fire service, but I know that those activities are in good hands and that the future looks bright.

There is no doubt in my mind that I have been privileged to work with the best service and with some of the greatest people in Canada. Service to others, given without any real concern for gain or your own comfort, is not something everyone has the privilege to witness. A special thank you to those colleagues, past and present, who have shared the vision, provided support and encouragement as well as worked through the challenges we have faced together.

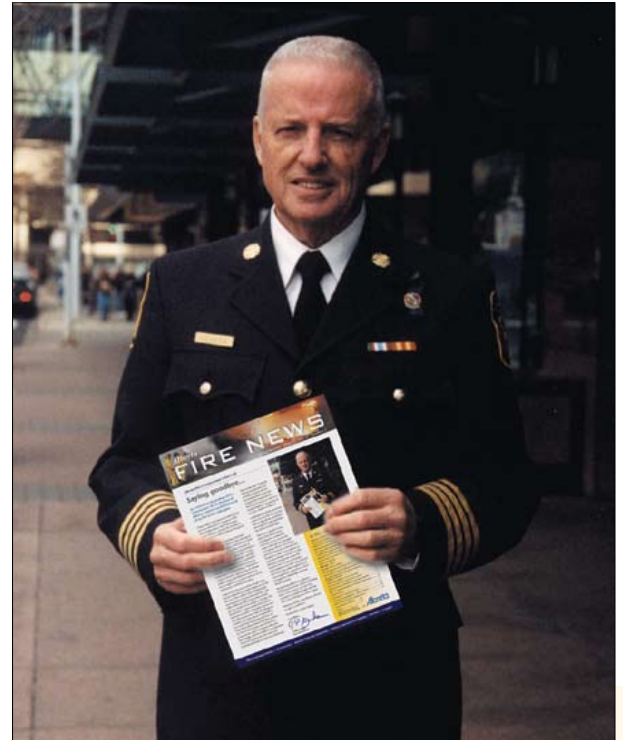
My parting advice is to always endeavour to serve, without holding back. I can assure you that the rewards to you personally will far exceed anything you can imagine.

Always strive for excellence; do not accept second best.

Work safely and be happy.
God Bless.



J (Pat) Graham
Fire Commissioner



In this issue

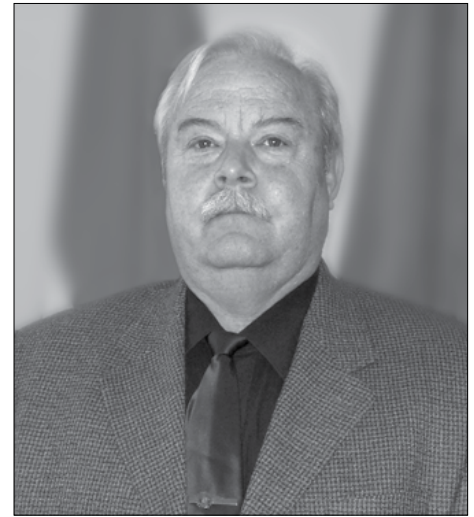
- Acting Fire Commissioner named2
- Emergency Preparedness Week 20062
- Southern Alberta Regional Fire Chiefs Committee3
- Encouraging safety for secondary suites3
- First Nations “Remembering When” project4
- Newest editorial board member5
- Community fire prevention in Medicine Hat5
- The new Canadian Risk Watch Program6
- Risk Watch Champion Conference 20056
- Getting to know Fire7
- Regional/AERIS update8
- New course offerings from fire etc.8
- St. Paul Fire Department9
- Environmental Protection Commission report10
- FireSmart: promoting prevention12
- BC-Alberta working group update13
- Alberta fire deaths – a five-year review14
- Launching the Summer Fire Safety Campaign14
- AFCA update15
- Aboriginal update16
- OH&S code of practice for firefighters17
- Digest18
- Anatomy of a dust explosion20



Acting Fire Commissioner named

With the retirement of Pat Graham, Spence Sample has been named Acting Fire Commissioner. Spence began his fire service career with the Bon Accord volunteer fire department in 1979 and joined the City of Edmonton Fire Department in 1980. After becoming a lawyer, Spence continued as a Deputy Chief for the Edmonton Emergency Response Department until 1997.

Spence practised emergency services law with the legal firm Sharek Reay LLP until 2004 when he joined the Government of Alberta. Spence served as an Advisor to the Alberta Fire Commissioner's Office and is working with the Fire Services Advisory Committee on the development of fire service standards, a risk – management protocol and a committee of stakeholders to oversee and maintain them. 🔥



Acting Fire Commissioner Spence Sample

Disaster may strike in our own backyard

Emergency Preparedness Week 2006

From Hurricane Katrina to tsunamis, mudslides and ice storms, the increasing incidence of emergencies and disasters around the world has heightened awareness of the possibility of disaster striking in our own backyard. In recent years, Alberta has dealt with its own significant disasters, including tornados, forest fires and floods. Emergency Management Alberta (EMA) and Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada are teaming up to provide Albertans with the information they need to stay safe in times of emergency.



Working together, the federal and provincial governments have produced a comprehensive guide to emergency preparedness including the following five key steps:

- Prepare a list of the most common risks in your community and learn about the possible consequences of those risks. Walk around your house to identify dangers (e.g. heavy pictures hung loosely, toxic products) and take any necessary steps to secure your possessions and your home.

- Prepare a family emergency plan, which includes choosing someone that each member of the family can contact via phone or e-mail, deciding on a temporary accommodation and preparing a family emergency plan (template available at www.emergencypreparednessweek.ca) that is shared with family members.
- Assemble your emergency kit(s). While many stores have emergency kits available for purchase, you can easily make your own by following the list of items suggested at www.emergencypreparednessweek.ca
- Check emergency plans, including finding out about emergency plans at your child's school or daycare as well as at your place of work.
- Practise your family emergency plan at least once a year. Show each family member how to turn off the water, electricity and gas in your home; where to find and how to use the fire extinguisher; and how to escape from each room in your house.

Twelve years ago, the Government of Canada designated Emergency Preparedness Week as the first full week in May. This year, Emergency Preparedness Week took place May 7-13,



The disastrous consequences of being unprepared



1987 tornado, Edmonton

but any time of the year is a good time to take action to ensure that your family is prepared to deal with emergencies. 🔥

For more information about Emergency Preparedness Week or details about making sure you are prepared for potential emergencies, visit the following websites:
www.emergencypreparednessweek.ca and
www.municipalaffairs.gov.ab.ca/ema_fs_faqs.htm



Fine tuning communication opportunities

While seeking a new method to improve communications among the 65 fire departments in southern Alberta, Fire Safety Officer Kevan Jess wound up looking to the past for inspiration.

Jess adopted a model based on the now-defunct Foothills Firefighter Association, a group that was formed in the 1970s.

“It was an effective group that lasted into the early 1990s,” said Jess. “Rather than resurrect it as an association, I used that model to develop a regional group for meeting and communicating with firefighters in the area.”

Success with the model has resulted in the formation of four regional groups in the southern Alberta region.

“We’re finding that the meetings are working out very well,” said Jess.

“Firefighters are realizing that many of their problems are not unique to them or their geographical location. Rather, they’re able to discuss and share viewpoints with other departments facing similar issues.”


Another benefit of the group discussions is a more co-ordinated approach for training. Firefighters are now more aware of training that is available within their area. This helps in developing courses that are of interest to the larger group, which also helps in terms of securing funding for the courses. “We’re also starting to see discussion taking place around larger issues, such as standardized practices,” said Jess.

Meetings are held every three months, with an informal agenda that always includes updates on what is new at the

Fire Commissioner’s Office and around the province.

Meetings and regional groups

“We change the location for each meeting to provide the opportunity for firefighters to see different set-ups and equipment,” said Jess. “In addition to the fire department meetings, I also try to tie the visits in with scheduled meetings for mayors, reeves, local government authorities and the Alberta Rural Administration Association.”

While reaching out to a broad range of people in numerous cities, towns and villages is a tall order, Jess says that the formation of the four regional groups has greatly assisted his efforts in serving as a resource person for fire departments and municipal authorities. 

Making amendments to the Alberta Fire Code and the Alberta Building Code

Encouraging safety for secondary suites

While Alberta’s booming economy is envied across the country, the rapid growth of many communities has increased the demand for affordable housing. Recognizing that many homes were being renovated to accommodate the influx of people, an MLA Committee was established to review the need for safety standards related to secondary suites.

Secondary suites are self-contained living units in single-family homes and include a kitchen and bathroom. While the provincial government recognizes the need for secondary suites, it is conscious of the need for safety standards regulating their development. The government also recognizes the importance of striking a balance between

affordable housing and an appropriate level of building and fire safety.

In addition to holding a series of province-wide town hall meetings with the public and one-on-one stakeholder meetings in 2003 and 2004, the MLA Committee met with city councils and their officials, safety and professional associations, fire services, apartment owners, homeowners, affordable housing groups and many other stakeholder associations and members of the public.

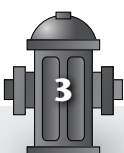
The report includes 12 recommendations for proposed standards for secondary suites. Some of the highlights include:

- interconnected smoke alarms
- separate access for basement suites
- more accommodating standards for existing homes while still maintaining acceptable safety levels.

The complete report can be found on the web at www.municipalaffairs.gov.ab.ca/ss/pdf/MLA_Final_Report_Secondary_Suites.pdf.

Release of the report and expectations of Albertans

With this report, Alberta and Ontario are the only two provinces that have proposed requirements for both existing and new homes. If the proposed standards are approved, Alberta Municipal Affairs will assist municipalities with technical advice and effective means for adopting the standards in their communities. 



Helping older adults live safely at home

A new program aimed at reducing fires, burns and injuries from falls among older adults in Aboriginal communities is being implemented in five reserves under the Yellowhead Tribal Council (YTC).

“Remembering When: A Fire and Fall Prevention Program for Older Adults,” was developed by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to help older adults live safely at home for as long as possible. Subsequently, the First Nations Remembering When Program was developed with the help of various First Nation tribes in the U.S., who advised on the program.

In general, adults 65 years old and older are twice as likely to be killed in a fire, compared to the population at large. By age 75, that risk increases to three times that of the general population – four times at age 85. The numbers are worse for Native American older adults. The CDC reports that Native Americans 65 and older are almost twice as likely to die in a fire as the general population the same age.

Fires and burns are not the only hazards that threaten older adults. CDC statistics show that falls are the leading cause of death from unintentional injury in the home. Thirty per cent of people age 65 and older are involved in falls each year – some are fatal, while others permanently disable victims and may cause loss of mobility or independence.

The “Remembering When” program is centred on 16 key safety messages – eight fire prevention and eight fall prevention – developed by experts and practitioners from national and local safety



(l to r) Assistant Fire Commissioner Mahendra Wijayasinghe, Dan Kootenay, Fire & Safety Advisor at the Yellowhead Tribal Council, Fire Safety Officer Judy Harvie and “Remembering When” project co-ordinator Cynthia Clarke.

organizations as well as through focus group testing in the high-fire-risk states and input from various First Nations tribes in the United States.

The goals of the Yellowhead pilot program are to install 500 10-year lithium battery smoke alarms in the homes of older adults (over 60) on the Enoch, Alexis, Alexander, O’Chiese and Sunchild reserves, as well as to deliver “Remembering When” group presentations in those communities. Where appropriate, the smoke alarms will also be installed in the homes of families with very young children and the disabled. The project is being provided at no cost by the NFPA to the YTC. Two similar projects will be implemented in First Nations reserves in Ontario.

Dan Kootenay, Fire & Safety Advisor at the YTC, will provide technical

expertise in the installation of smoke alarms, while Cynthia Clarke will serve as the project coordinator. Fire Safety Officer Judy Harvie and Assistant Fire Commissioner Mahendra Wijayasinghe from the Fire Commissioner’s Office will provide logistical and other support. A hands-on training session offered by the NFPA and the Ontario Fire Marshal’s Office on smoke alarm installation and presentations on fire and falls prevention were held on April 10th and 11th, 2006, in Toronto, and was attended by Dan, Cynthia, Judy and Mahendra. The project will begin in mid-May and wrap up in November, 2006. 🔥

For more information, please contact Judy Harvie at (780) 644-5031 (dial toll free 310-0000).

Focusing on community fire prevention

Fire Chief Garry Mauch has one goal for Medicine Hat's Fire Prevention Program: "to get to where the problems occur." With that in mind, the Medicine Hat Fire Department has developed a safety program aimed at residences, businesses and young children. Medicine Hat's Fire Prevention Program is administrated by four members of the Fire Inspection Investigation Bureau. Chief Mauch believes that "if we have a fire response, somewhere within our prevention plan, something has failed. We are in reactionary mode."

Young children are a major focus of Medicine Hat's Fire Prevention Program. Using the Learn Not To Burn and the Risk Watch programs, the fire department reaches out to students in Kindergarten through to Grade 3. By using both programs, the fire department is able to provide specific information about fire prevention and safety issues as well as incorporating a wider range of issues pertinent to children, such as bicycle safety and poisoning.

"We provide teachers with an instruction package that they can use on their own,

or if they prefer, our firefighters will go to the classroom in turn-out gear, to give demonstrations and to take students on tours of the fire hall," said Mauch. In addition to teaching fire prevention as early as possible, Mauch believes that "the big red truck" makes a very decisive impression. More importantly, the positive results of these school programs are now beginning to be felt in Medicine Hat.

"Children exposed to the earlier training are now grown and have carried the lessons learned into adulthood. Such lessons appear to be paying dividends in that fire losses have been decreasing steadily."

Another aspect of the program is residential fire prevention, which is handled through the department's Home Visitation Program. On-duty personnel are invited into private residences to do a safety inspection and to identify problems. Existing smoke alarms are checked, and batteries are replaced if needed. If the unit itself needs to be replaced, it is done at no charge. The firefighter also sits down with the family and helps plan a method of quick

evacuation of their home and how to account for all family members in case of a fire. Mauch says that although the program is in its early stages, there was a significant drop in the number of calls to residences in 2005.

The third target of Medicine Hat's Fire Prevention Program is annual or semi-annual inspections by safety codes officers of commercial and business sites.

Mauch strongly feels that the strength of Medicine Hat's Fire Prevention Program is the commitment that members of the department have to its success. The city's fire department is composed of 70 full-time operations officers, three chief officers, four safety codes officers, as well as administration staff. Although the geographical area covered by the Medicine Hat Fire Department is large (160 square kilometres), members feel a responsibility for the businesses and residences in their local area. This duty also extends to Cypress County, where Medicine Hat's fire department provides response to fire emergencies, but is not responsible for any fire prevention program. 🔥

Alberta Fire News editorial board

Getting the scoop on our newest editorial board member

As mentioned in the December edition of *Alberta Fire News*, Dave Riddell has joined the editorial board for this publication. Dave is currently CGI Adjusters Inc.'s Branch Director for the Northern Alberta Region.



Dave Riddell

Born and raised in central Alberta, Dave attended the Business and General Insurance Program at Mount Royal College. After graduation, he worked for a large national insurer in Calgary then joined the Underwriters

Adjustment Bureau (UAB) in Edmonton as an adjuster. During this time, he was also actively involved in the investigation and handling of fire claims. In 1998, Dave was appointed the Branch Manager in Edmonton.

In January 2003, UAB Group was acquired by CGI, with the UAB Group of companies becoming known as CGI Insurance Business Services. That same year, Dave was promoted to his present position, which

involves overseeing branch operations in Red Deer, Edmonton and Grande Prairie

Dave has served on the Board of Directors of the Fire Investigation Association of Alberta, and he is a past member of the Education Committee. His other areas of expertise include Business Interruption, Product Liability, Commercial Property, Litigation Management, Professional Liability, General Liability, Industrial Losses and Exposures, as well as Inland Marine losses and Cargo Liability. 🔥



The new Canadian Risk Watch Program

The Fire Commissioner's Office is getting ready to roll out the new Canadian version of *Risk Watch* in English and French.

The Canadian version of the successful injury prevention program was finalized in November 2005 by SMARTRISK Foundation. The FCO plans to distribute a limited number of *Risk Watch* CDs across the province with the assistance of the Alberta *Risk Watch* Champion Management Team.

Risk Watch is a comprehensive program for students in pre-kindergarten through Grade 8. Developed by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) in the United States, *Risk Watch* covers eight injury prevention areas:

- ❶ Motor Vehicle Safety
- ❷ Fire & Burn Prevention
- ❸ Choking, Suffocation and Strangulation Prevention
- ❹ Poisoning Prevention
- ❺ Falls Prevention
- ❻ Firearms Injury Prevention
- ❼ Bike & Pedestrian Safety
- ❽ Water Safety

Risk Watch teaches children skills and strategies to make positive choices about personal injury prevention

behaviours. In 2003, the Ontario Fire Marshal's Office, the Alberta Fire Commissioner's Office, NFPA, and corporate partners partnered with SMARTRISK to revise the original *Risk Watch* program developed by NFPA to include Canadian statistics, legislation, information, resources and education content, and to produce a French language version.

What is different about the Canadian version?

- More challenging and varied activities including critical thinking and decision-making skills;
- More detailed lesson plans that include opportunities for reflection prior to and following lessons, related activities for split-grade classes, and in-class and wider school extensions;
- A focus on Canadian and regional issues (use of ATV's and snowmobiles, rural issues, ice safety, forest fires);
- Teaching of behaviours rather than rules and inclusion of positive language (Do instead of Don't);
- Links to a wide variety of curriculum areas (music, science, math, language, visual art, physical education);
- Resources related to each topic area;



- Canadian statistics, legislation, and terminology (e.g., hazard symbols);
- An assessment section designed to measure learning across schools and regions for larger scale evaluation purposes;
- Availability in both French and English.

Also central to the Canadian version is the "Look First, Think Twice, Choose Smart" decision-making process that promotes the use of critical thinking skills in all grade levels to encourage students to make educated decisions about injury prevention by assessing the risk in situations and using their knowledge to make decisions. 🔥

For more information, please contact Assistant Fire Commissioner Mahendra Wijayasinghe at (780) 415-0546 or Mahendra.Wijayasinghe@gov.ab.ca

Launching of the NFPA pilot-initiative

Risk Watch Champion Conference 2005

The 4th Annual *Risk Watch* Champion Conference was held November 17-20, 2005, in Boston, Massachusetts. Champion Management Teams (CMTs) representing *Risk Watch* in the United States and Canada attended the

injury prevention conference. Dave McKenna, Ken McMullen, Ken Fuhrmann and Jan deLeeuw from the Alberta CMT attended the conference with Western Canada's National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) *Risk Watch* Field Advisor and Mentor, Tim Vandenbrink.

Alberta's Risk Watch Champion Management Team at the 2005 Risk Watch Conference in Boston, MA. (l to r) Jan deLeeuw, Ken Fuhrmann, Ken McMullen and Dave McKenna.



The conference consisted of various presentations including Keynote Speaker Faith Roberts, BSN, RN. The presentation titled, "Generational Differences" outlined the thinking patterns of various age groups within our society.

This presentation provided valuable insight into the thought processes of the age groups that *Risk Watch* coalitions and advocates work with during the implementation and support of *Risk Watch*. Breakout sessions provided small group exploration of such topics playground safety; children and burns/choking; suffocation and strangulation; and trends in childhood injuries.

A highlight of the conference was the launching of the NFPA pilot-initiative called, "*Risk Watch Safe Communities*." The *Risk Watch Safe Communities* initiative provides collaborative opportunities to work with organizations in order to deliver the *Risk Watch* message in ways other than the classroom. This initiative encourages individuals, community groups and industry to participate in providing a safe and healthy environment. Local communities that enrol in the, "*Risk Watch Safe Communities*" program will be entered into a draw to attend the 2006 *Risk Watch Champion*

Conference in Boston, Mass. The draw will be held on May 22, 2006. The NFPA will fund airfare, three nights accommodation, and most meals for three lucky communities (up to two local champions per community).

The conference closed with the presentation of the *Risk Watch* "Teacher of the Year" award. This award recognizes teachers who have demonstrated excellence and innovation in the use of *Risk Watch*. This year's recipient was Tracy Sparks, a fourth grade teacher at the Marion Intermediate School in Shelby, North Carolina. Canadian teacher, Rae McMullen, a third and fourth

grade teacher at the Chris Akkerman Elementary School in Calgary received the award in 2003. If you know of an outstanding *Risk Watch* teacher, give them the recognition they deserve for playing a lead role in making children and their families safer by nominating them for the *Risk Watch* "Teacher of the Year Award." 🔥



“...provides collaborative opportunities to work with organizations in order to deliver the *Risk Watch* message in ways other than the classroom.”

Further information about the "*Risk Watch Safe Communities*" program can be found on the NFPA's website at www.riskwatch.org/champsafecommunities.html or by contacting *Risk Watch* Field Advisor Tim Vandenbrink email: tim.vandenbrink@edmonton.ca

Resources for the fire service

Getting to know fire

"Getting to Know Fire" is a fire and life safety education curriculum designed to assist fire service personnel in planning and delivering effective presentations by providing:

- ready made lesson plans
- supporting videos and other materials
- teaching tips
- motivation techniques

The lesson plans are for audiences ranging from pre-school children to seniors. They are age-appropriate and can be used in their entirety or modified to meet local needs. Lesson plans contain all materials required for instruction, including videos.

"Getting to Know Fire" was developed by a curriculum specialist in partnership with fire service public educators. The

program was designed to assist the fire service in meeting public fire and life safety education needs in their communities. The resources can be used to enhance existing public education programs or as the foundation for creating new ones. It is simple, easy to use and provides a source for consistent message delivery.

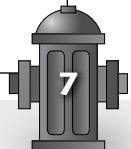
The "Getting to Know Fire" curriculum has already been proven successful in British Columbia, Manitoba and the Northwest Territories. Originally a B.C. concept and design, it has proven to be a valuable countrywide resource as it contains consistent, transferable prevention and safety lessons that target high-risk groups across the country. The Alberta Fire Commissioner's Office has

developed an Alberta insert that provides Alberta-based equivalents of the statistics and support materials listed throughout the binder.

Using the curriculum

The Fire Commissioner's Office is scheduling workshops across Alberta and fire service members are encouraged to attend a workshop in their region. Each workshop participant will receive a free copy of the "Getting to Know Fire" binder (\$100 value), including videos. Workshop locations will be advertised on a regional basis as they are scheduled or requested. 🔥

For more information, please contact Te-Jay Smart at 780-644-4692 or Judy Harvie at 780-644-5031 or e-mail at firecomm@gov.ab.ca



Regional training/AERIS update

The Fire Commissioner's Office (FCO) has begun a review of the Alberta Emergency Resources Inventory System (AERIS).

The FCO's Fire Safety Officers are working with local fire departments to conduct site inspections and assist locals with accessing and updating information on AERIS. The FCO is also conducting a current state survey of municipal fire

departments to answer specific questions around succession planning, staffing and public education programs. The survey is expected to be complete by the end of May 2006.

Training

The FCO is also working with the province's regional fire training centres

on the 2005-06 Fire Service Training Initiative to ensure training plans are updated and changes communicated to local fire departments, First Nations, Métis settlements and other stakeholders. New training grant information will be available by mid June 2006. 🔥

Fire etc. update

Two new courses available through Lakeland College

Two new NFPA 1006 courses are now available through **fire etc.**, Lakeland College and co-developer Firemaster Oilfield Services Inc. of Red Deer.

Rope Rescue Awareness

Rope Rescue Awareness, the prerequisite for all the 1006 technical disciplines, covers basic incident command, resource operations organization, scene safety, site operations, resource management, managing hazards, personal protection equipment and its care and maintenance, and ground support for helicopters.

Rope Rescue Technician

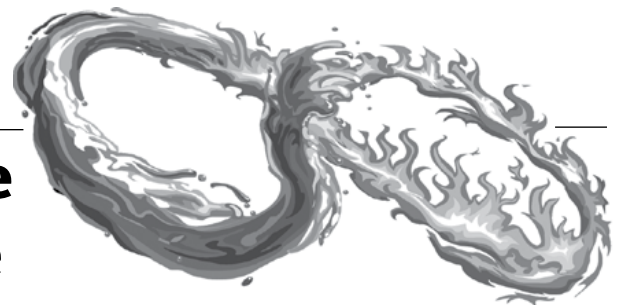
Rope Rescue Technician is the technical discipline being offered. The 40-hour course builds the skills necessary to take part in or lead a rope rescue operation. Steep-angle and high-angle rescue techniques are both included. Other material covered includes: multiple-point anchors, compound rope haul systems, ascending and descending a fixed rope, performing various tasks while

suspended from a rope rescue system, moving a victim in a high-angle or vertical environment, and highline systems.

Both 1006 offerings feature lecture and hands-on learning, so course participants will need their own leather-palmed gloves, laced steel-toed boots, coveralls and appropriate clothing for inclement weather. After the practical evaluation and written exam, participants receive a **fire etc.** certificate. A minimum of one technical discipline, such as rope rescue technician, is required before IFSAC or Pro Board certification.

These courses will appeal not just to municipal fire departments, emergency response teams and search and rescue personnel, but also to wilderness rescue teams, police departments, mine rescue teams, military personnel and recreational climbers and cavers.

The courses were piloted in February and will be offered as scheduled courses throughout the year at both locations. See sidebar for upcoming course dates. 🔥



fire etc.

fire etc. dates

July 10-14 – NFPA 1006 Rope Rescue Awareness

July 17-21 – NFPA 1006 Rope Rescue Technician

Firemaster dates

Sept 5-8 – NFPA 1006 Rope Rescue Awareness

Sept 11-15 – NFPA 1006 Rope Rescue Technician

Oct 30 to Nov 3 – NFPA 1006 Rope Rescue Awareness

Nov 6-10 – NFPA 1006 Rope Rescue Technician

For more information about these courses or other courses available to the fire service, visit www.fire-etc.ca or www.firemaster.ca.



Size isn't everything

By most reckonings, the St. Paul Fire Department is fairly small, with 32 volunteers and one full-time paid chief/administrator. However, size is not an obstacle to the department playing a leadership role in its area. Chief Terry Senecal, full-time paid fire chief and administrator of the St. Paul Fire Department, also assists with the administration of two smaller departments in the northern part of the county: Ashmont and Mallaig. In addition, Chief Senecal ensures that the department is well-equipped. There are three full-sized pumpers, one for the county and two for the town, a rapid-attack mini-pump, a rescue truck and two tankers for county support.

Chief Senecal's commitment to St. Paul's fire department includes a focus on training. All volunteers are given an in-house course that focuses primarily on fire and emergency response training. There is also regional training that the department participates in with the communities of Cold Lake, Bonnyville and Elk Point. There is also a 12-week course given at Lakeland College/**fire etc.** Some of the volunteers have taken this course and received their basic fire training NFPA 1001 certification. In addition, the department also takes advantage of courses available from Emergency Management Alberta and the federal government. As well, Senecal shares information gained through his role as the Director of Disaster Services for the Town of St. Paul.

Recently, Senecal was given the opportunity to broaden the scope of his training when Bill Bosswick, regional manager of Emergency Management Alberta put Senecal's name forward to attend a simulation course at the



Twenty-two of the Town of St. Paul Fire Department's 32 members.

College of Emergency Preparedness in Ottawa. Representatives from fire departments and cities across Canada attended the course in February. As an understudy, Senecal's role was to learn to be a simulator, a leader who is capable of coaching fire personnel through a disaster scenario. The training consisted of emergency site management and emergency operations patrols. Three simulations were conducted during the two days and coaches provided feedback to the participants.

The simulators ensured that the "event" unfolded properly and devised problems and obstacles for the participants to overcome. All the collected information went from the simulation room to the emergency site where the other course members were dealing with the area and working with the problems caused by the "disaster." Contact also took place with the

Emergency Operations Centre composed of the town administration and the heads of the departments that would supply needed materials and services in the case of a real disaster.

Simulation studies are not new territory for Terry Senecal. As the Director of Disaster Services in St. Paul, he has done simulations on a smaller scale with his district manager. He has also helped in the simulation room for other communities and has been in control of the speed at which events happen in the simulation and evaluating how the different participants handled the scenario. In addition to gaining more experience regarding disasters by participating in the course, Senecal plans to share what he learned with his own department. As well, the experience will assist him in providing greater contributions to district training. 🔥



Alberta's environmental and emergency response recommendations released

Alberta needs a senior agency to oversee the province's response to emergencies, disasters and security, says a recently-released government report.

The report, "Review of Alberta's Environmental Emergency Response Capacity," was released in November 2005, and set out a number of recommendations designed to enable Alberta to better manage, prepare for and respond to future environmental crises.

The report was the work of the Environmental Protection Commission (EPC), which was established by Environment Minister Guy Boutilier following the August 2005 train derailment and hazardous chemical spill at Lake Wabamun.

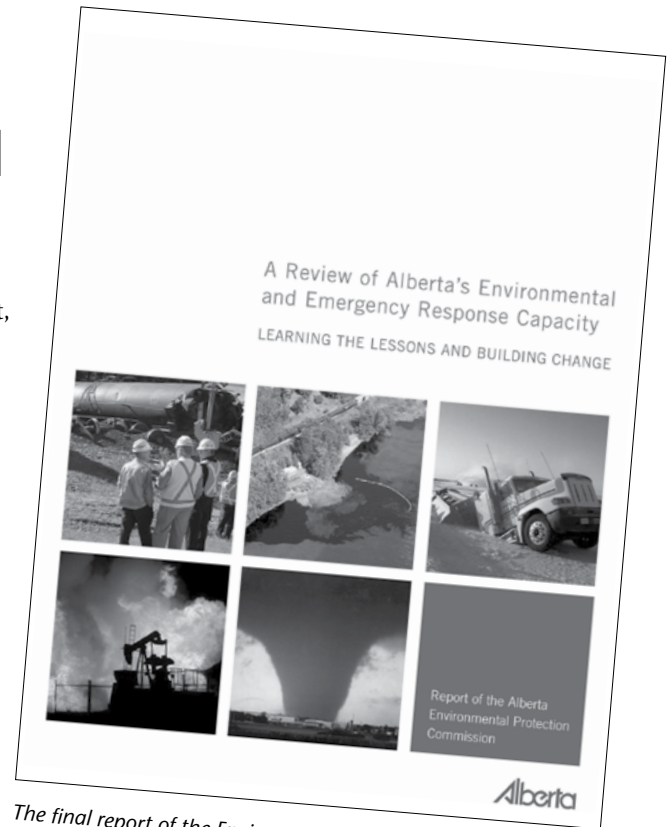
The Commission was chaired by University of Alberta Chancellor and former Syncrude CEO Dr. Eric Newell. The review included submissions from numerous organizations and associations, including the Alberta Fire Commissioner's Office and the Alberta Fire Chiefs Association.

Although the report was commissioned by Alberta Environment, the committee concluded that "the problems and solutions go beyond the mandate of Alberta Environment; they lie within the Government of Alberta's emergency

management and response system." As stated in the report, the "conclusions relate to the overall system and the five pillars that support it, including prevention and mitigation; preparedness, response, recovery; and research and knowledge."

The key recommendations of the EPC are:

- Creating a senior agency that is responsible for a comprehensive all-hazards approach to emergencies, disasters and security; reporting directly to Executive Council;
- Implementing a one-window emergency call centre within the new agency to ensure that the right

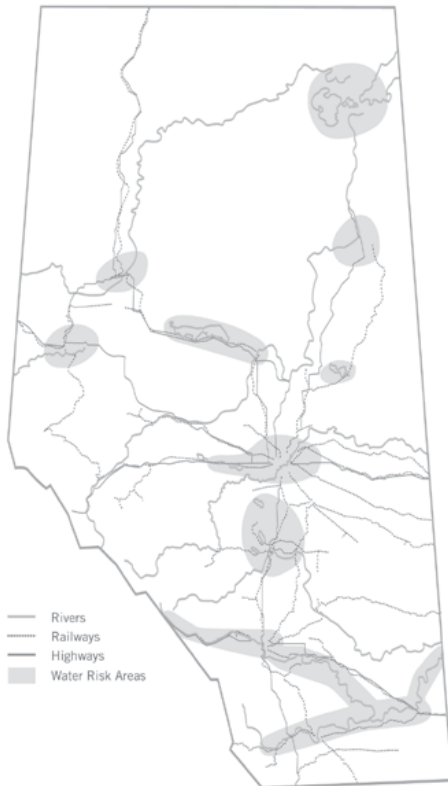


The final report of the Environmental Protection Commission

"...the problems and solutions go beyond the mandate of Alberta Environment; they lie within the Government of Alberta's emergency management and response system."



Alberta's Top-Tier Water Risk Areas



Aerial view of the August 2005 train derailment and hazardous chemical spill at Lake Wabamun.

response is triggered as quickly as possible when an incident occurs;

- Developing a safety, environmental and security institute to support the system. It should be a non-governmental organization led by a multi-disciplinary stakeholder group and given the mandate and resources to support world-class research and emergency management techniques;
- Adopting an all-hazards risk management decision-making process that includes the identification of top-tier “at risk” water bodies and other environmentally sensitive areas;
- Forming a dedicated emergency support team within Alberta Environment to enhance the technical expertise available during an incident. This team should be available to provide on-site environmental advice for major incidents.

- Adopting the Incident Command System (ICS) across Alberta to ensure effective co-ordination during emergencies and communication with affected public groups. The Commission is convinced that the ICS model provides a proven process for helping ensure the right people are in charge and the right resources are identified;
- Significantly enhancing the number and effectiveness of joint emergency response training and field simulations conducted by industry and government (federal, provincial and municipal) emergency response groups;
- Working through jurisdictional issues ahead of time, including those involving First Nations’ lands and people, to ensure that these issues don’t stand in the way of an effective emergency response; and



- Resolving rail transportation issues to ensure that risks to the environment and people are well managed.

Since the release of the final report, committees have been struck to look at the various recommendations. A copy of the full report is available on Alberta Environment’s website at www3.gov.ab.ca/env/dept/epc. 🔥

Promoting proactive prevention

Alberta's unusually warm and dry winter season has been a treat for most Albertans, but it could lead to very serious consequences during the spring and summer wildfire season. Although April 1 to October 31 is ordinarily designated as wildfire season, staff from Alberta Sustainable Resource Development have already responded to more than 50 wildfires since the wildfire season ended in 2005. As a result, fire departments across the province are encouraged to work closely with their communities in preventing wildfires. While prevention is the best tool, other resources being used in many communities are extended fire bans and the **FireSmart** program.

FireSmart is a nationally-recognized program developed by Sustainable Resource Development, (Alberta Forest Protection Division and Public Lands and Forest Division), to protect communities from the danger emanating from forest and grass fires. The Fire Commissioner's Office, Emergency Management Alberta and all municipal governments that have communities at risk participate in the program, as do other large stakeholders such as power transmission companies, the forest industry and oil and gas companies. Stakeholders such as towns, cities, villages, municipalities, counties and industry adopt the program voluntarily. Sustainable Resource Development provides participants

with a **FireSmart** manual that explains how to reduce the risk of forest or grass fires by controlling the amount of underbrush and forest growth around their communities. The manual also shows homeowners how to reduce fire hazard to their residences by cutting trees and clearing underbrush and woodlots around their houses.

The danger of grass fires this spring and summer is difficult to predict, according to Stew Walkinshaw with Sustainable Resource Development. Because of the increased grass load as a result of last year's rain, Walkinshaw says

municipalities, fire departments and residents should anticipate and prepare for an increase in grass fires this spring and summer. Fire Safety Officer Kevan Jess agrees. "Winds, dry weather, low humidity and high temperatures are the prime ingredients of a grass fire in Southern Alberta. If the land is not pasture or crop land, high snow fall brings the water table up, and more grass grows, increasing fire material. If crop-grazing or grass-cutting occurs, the risk is reduced," said Jess.

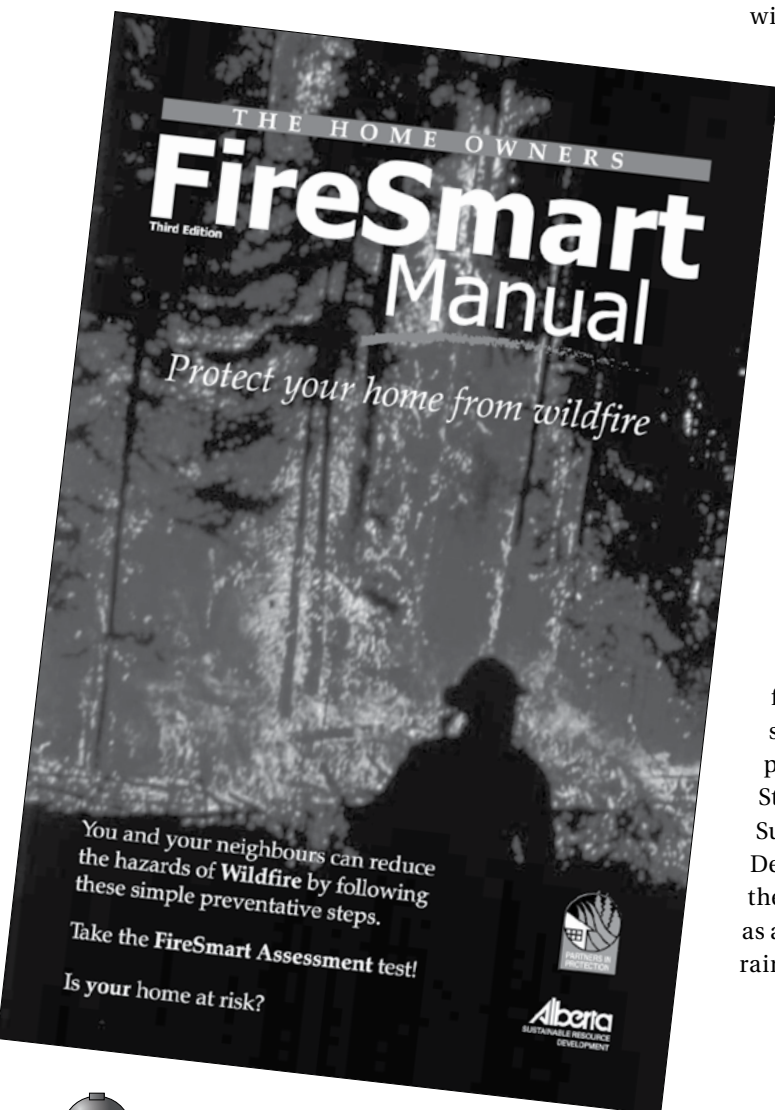
Walkinshaw and Jess stress the importance of preparation. Walkinshaw says fire departments and municipalities should contact their local provincial Forest Protection Division to ensure communication and response protocols are in place for the season. Jess says keeping residents informed of the risks is also extremely important.

"Communities need to encourage their residents to maintain fire-smart, fire-safe spaces around their homes, and fire departments need to ensure that their equipment and training are at their peak," said Walkinshaw.

Human attitudes and error remain the issue. Jess says that until people change their perception that "it is only a grass fire," and refrain from careless activities, such as letting off fireworks in dry areas or throwing cigarette butts out car windows, there will always be a high risk of destructive grass fires.

"The problem is that people regard forest fires as large and devastating, but do not attach the same fear to grass fires. These fires move very fast, resulting in loss of life and property."

Both Walkinshaw and Jess recognize that some progress is being made. Walkinshaw acknowledges that it would be "nice to have more people using



FireSmart,” and he is pleased with the increase in **FireSmart** users over the past few years. Jess is also impressed that more municipalities are imposing fire bans in an effort to control the human causes of grass fires. In addition, many people who live a long way from a dumping area are now using self-contained appliances to burn their garbage, or are hauling their garbage to the dump themselves. However, the most important factor in the control of grass fires is to convince people that one small moment of inattention can cause a massive fire.

Did You Know...

- 40 per cent of all wildfires in the province are caused by humans.
- With the exception of a campfire, any person lighting an open fire for burning debris or any other purpose must have a valid fire permit.
- Last year, the Government of Alberta spent approximately \$198 million battling more than 1,600 wildfires across the province which burned nearly 235,000 hectares of land (an area more than three times larger than the City of Calgary). 🔥

About FireSmart

The impetus of the **FireSmart** Program was the Porcupine Hills fire of December 14, 1997. This grass fire began at 11:35 a.m. and travelled more than 34 kilometres by 1:20 p.m., when it was finally contained. The inquiry into the fire showed that dwellings that did not have surrounding undergrowth or grass and were built of stucco or brick were left standing whereas those buildings that were wood-framed, cedar-shingled or had wood piles or brush close to their walls burned.

The **FireSmart** program involves seven disciplines – fuels management, development (structural and infrastructure options for communities), public education, legislation, interagency co-operation, cross training and emergency planning.

Groups involved in the **FireSmart** program include the Alberta Forest Protection Division, Public Lands and Forest Division, the Fire Commissioner’s Office, Emergency Management Alberta and all municipal governments that have communities at risk.

In addition to the manual, Alberta Sustainable Resources has produced a number of brochures that provide valuable information for homeowners, campers and others. For more information about the **FireSmart** program visit: www3.gov.ab.ca/srd/wildfires/fpd/mfp/mfp.cfm. Or, contact Community Protection at Alberta Sustainable Resources at (403) 679-8265 or your local Fire Safety Officer.

Developing an effective partnership

BC-Alberta working group update

In the spring of 2005, the Fire Commissioner’s Offices of British Columbia and Alberta signed a Mutual Co-operation Agreement to formalize a working relationship and define areas where the two offices could and should work more closely together. A working group, co-chaired by Richard Simpson, Deputy Fire Commissioner (British Columbia) and Ernie Polsom, Assistant Fire Commissioner (Alberta) and including representatives from the fire

services in each province and technical experts was set up to explore those potential areas of co-operation.

The working group has met formally three times and has identified a number of areas that would benefit from a closer working relationship, including methamphetamine lab awareness and mitigation, Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) training and programs, building

upgrade programs, fire service advisory/ liaison committees, fire investigations and inspections, emergency resource inventories and others. The committee is currently formulating a series of recommendations for continued action for consideration by the fire commissioners. One of the key recommendations will be to invite the other western provinces and territories to participate in the working group. 🔥

Alberta fire deaths – a five-year review

This article is a summary of a detailed statistical report prepared by Mahendra Wijayasinghe, Assistant Fire Commissioner, Research & Programs. The detailed report is available under the “Statistics” section of the FCO web site: www.municipalaffairs.gov.ab.ca/fco_index.htm

A total of 165 fire deaths were recorded in the Fire Commissioner’s Fire Statistics Information System for the five-year period 2001 to 2005. The number of deaths varied randomly from 43 in 2001, 31 in 2002, 24 in 2003, 27 in 2004 and 40 in 2005, for an average of 33 deaths per year. A comparison of fire fatalities in relation to all injury fatalities in Alberta indicates that fire is the 10th leading cause of injury fatalities in Alberta.

Out of the 165 fatalities during the five-year period, 116 were males, including one firefighter who died in September 2003. While the majority of fire fatalities were people between 20 and 50 years of age, seniors were the most likely victims. The fire death rate for seniors between 2001 and 2005 was 2.1 per 100,000, higher than the provincial average of 1.2.

The majority (62 per cent) of fire deaths occurred in homes, with 103 fatalities occurring in single/multi-family dwellings, apartments or mobile homes. The top four causes of fatal fires at home were smoking, arson/set fires, cooking and electrical fires. Thirty-two per cent of fire fatalities happened in homes that had no smoke alarms. In fatalities where smoke alarms were present, the

alarms activated for 23 per cent, did not activate for 29 per cent and activation was unknown for 49 per cent. The reasons for lack of activation were: no power source (75 per cent – dead or missing battery or power disconnected); mechanical failure (five per cent); unknown (10 per cent) and unsuitable location (10 per cent).

Physical or mental impairment also contributed to many fire deaths, with approximately 20 per cent of fatalities impaired by alcohol, drugs or medication. Twenty per cent were asleep and another 16 per cent were awake at the time of fire. Others unable to respond were the disabled (five per cent) and young children (two per cent). 🔥

For more information, contact (780) 415-0546 or mahendra.wijayasinghe@gov.ab.ca.

Fire related losses significantly increase during the summer months

Launching the Summer Fire Safety Campaign

The summer months (May to August) are a time of high fire risk and danger.

In Alberta, the number of fires significantly increases during the summer months. In addition to everyday fire hazards such as home cooking and smoking, summer brings additional fire hazards such as hotter temperatures, drier conditions, barbecues, campfires and other fire-related activities.

In an attempt to lower the frequency and severity of fires in Alberta during this time of year, the Fire Commissioner’s Office (FCO) puts

out an annual Summer Fire Safety Campaign Kit. The campaign kit includes a variety of fun and informative educational activities and messages. Fire departments, schools, workplaces, the media and other individuals and organizations are encouraged to use, copy and distribute all or significant portions of the material in the campaign kit.

The FCO’s 2006 Summer Fire Safety Campaign Kit is available at www.municipalaffairs.gov.ab.ca/fco_FireCampaigns.htm. Hard copies



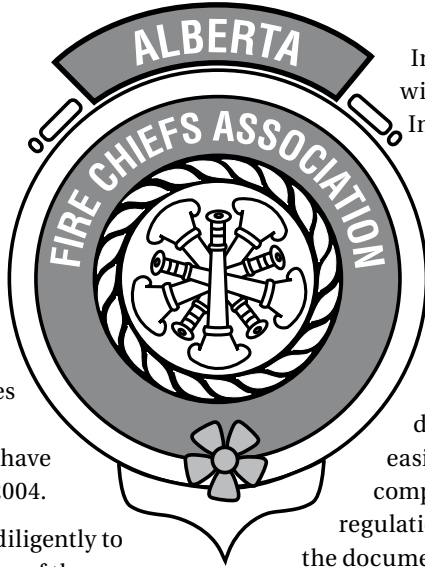
are also available from the FCO. For more information regarding summer fire safety or the campaign kit, contact Te-Jay Smart at the Fire Commissioner’s Office at 780-644-4692 (dial 310-0000 for toll free access outside Edmonton) or e-mail te-jay.smart@gov.ab.ca. 🔥



AFCA update

Working on behalf of fire departments across Alberta, the Alberta Fire Chiefs Association (AFCA) has been heavily involved in the development of a model safety program to meet the requirements of the Vehicle Certificate and Insurance Regulation (AR314/2002). Discussions about the changes to transportation regulations that impact fire departments have been ongoing since October 2004.

“The AFCA has been working diligently to make the proposed application of these regulations realistic for fire departments, especially small fire departments. We continue to meet with the committee on a regular basis and our efforts are paying off,” said Brian McEvoy, AFCA President and fire chief of Bonnyville Regional Fire Authority.



In co-operation with Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation (AI&T), the AFCA has developed a model safety and maintenance program that smaller fire departments can easily implement to comply with the new regulations. Included in the document are specific suggestions on possible policy wording in the various regulated areas.

“The intent of the document is to represent the minimum requirements necessary to meet the regulations,” said McEvoy. “We anticipate that each carrier will ‘customize’ the document to meet their specific needs based on their vehicle types, geographic locations, distances travelled per year, road conditions, etc. Our intent is to provide the basics to make it as easy as possible for fire departments to comply with the new regulations.”

The AFCA is currently working on a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with AI&T. This would allow fire chiefs and deputy chiefs who are members of the AFCA to apply to AI&T for a permit to have commercial vehicle inspections extended to three years to allow for divided record keeping in jurisdictions where municipalities share apparatuses. “This is a huge benefit for small fire departments,” said McEvoy. When completed, details of the MOA will be provided on the AFCA website at www.afca.ab.ca.

Get active with the AFCA

The Alberta Fire Chiefs Association (AFCA) is committed to working on behalf of its members across Alberta. Our annual conference provides an ideal opportunity for all members to gather in one location and connect with each other, but we’re also interested in hearing from fire departments throughout the year. If you’re not able to attend the regional AFCA meetings, we encourage you to contact any members of our Board of Directors with issues or questions you may have. Our contact information is provided on our website at www.afca.ab.ca – we look forward to hearing from you.

Annual conference

If you haven’t already registered, now is the time to sign up for the 59th Alberta Fire Chiefs Association conference, which takes place June 18-21, 2006, at the Capri Hotel and Convention Centre in Red Deer. For registration information or details about the conference sessions, visit the association’s website at www.afca.ab.ca. 🔥

“We continue to meet with the committee on a regular basis, and our efforts are paying off.”

— Brian McEvoy, AFCA President

Increasing communication and awareness

Alberta Aboriginal communities continue to increase and enhance awareness about fire safety and prevention. Read below for an update of activities that have taken place across the province.

Training Opportunities Continue

Further to an article in the December 2005 issue of *Alberta Fire News*, the City of Edmonton's Emergency Response Department has accepted another four Aboriginal firefighters into their 1001 training program. An additional four courses are scheduled for 2006.

The department also accepted two Aboriginal people for the NFPA 102110121 program that started in April 2006.



Workshops on new program provide facilitation opportunities

"Getting to Know Fire" workshops provide an opportunity for Aboriginal fire chiefs to facilitate the program and become more comfortable with offering more programs in their communities. Workshops in Peace River, Lethbridge and Hinton have wrapped up, but additional sessions are scheduled for three other communities in the coming months:

- Okotoks – June 26, 27
- Edmonton – September 12
- Fort McMurray – November 6

For more information about the workshops, please contact Judy Harvie at (780) 644-5031 (dial 310-0000 for toll-free access outside of Edmonton) or e-mail to judy.harvie@gov.ab.ca

Taking steps to encourage increased reporting

The Fire Commissioner's Office has discovered that not all Aboriginal fires are being reported. To encourage more Aboriginal fire departments to submit reports, the FCO is planning training to assist fire departments serving Aboriginal communities with reporting.

Mutual aid agreements

The FCO has received numerous calls asking for assistance with agreements between towns and neighbouring Aboriginal communities. In February 2006, a meeting was held with individuals from First Nations, Métis Settlements, the FCO and municipalities to discuss the state of contracts and agreements and what could be done to improve the situation. Although the meeting went very well, everyone recognized that it will be a slow process and will involve a fair amount of consultation and effort. The end product will be one that meets the needs of both federal and provincial jurisdictions.

Increasing understanding about Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

The FCO hosted a Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) workshop for Aboriginal Fire Chiefs on March 1, 2006, in Edmonton which was attended by fire chiefs and members of both First Nations and Métis Settlements. In addition to developing an understanding of PTSD, its symptoms and how it can develop following exposure to a life-threatening or traumatic event, the workshop focused on how individuals, supervisors and organizations can develop skills, training and support systems to reduce the impact of trauma in volunteer firefighter personnel.

ACICR developing injury framework

The Alberta Centre for Injury Control and Research (ACICR), in partnership with the FCO, Alberta Native Friendship

Centre Association, the Métis Settlements General Council and the Aboriginal Community Health Council of Calgary, are working on a project to develop and disseminate a culturally-relevant injury framework specific to the needs of urban Aboriginal and rural Métis Settlement populations. Objectives for this project include:

- increasing awareness about the need to address injuries within the project's high-risk population,
- increasing understanding about health and its relationship to injury risk affecting urban Aboriginal and rural Métis populations,
- building and strengthening partnerships among injury control stakeholders,
- developing capacity to plan and deliver targeted injury prevention services and programming.

Various other activities taking place

The FCO has also been busy working on additional updates to existing committees and exploring new opportunities to communicate with Aboriginal communities throughout Alberta.

- Work continues on the Fire/Injury Prevention Educators Network, and with the Métis Settlement Fire Chiefs Association on three key issues: equipment required for a fire department; the purchase of fire department apparatus and equipment, training and fire reports.
- Judy Harvie made a presentation to the Jasper National Park Métis firefighters, who recently went through the **FireSmart** program.
- The first couple of meetings relating to a partnership between the FCO, ACICR, the Métis Settlements and Urban Aboriginals have taken place. Included at the meetings were representatives from ACICR, Capital Health, the FCO and administrators from the East Prairie, Paddle Prairie, Kinino, Elizabeth and Fishing Lake Métis settlements.



Municipal District of Big Lakes Fire Chief John Gould with Métis Settlement Fire Chiefs Association members Murielle Lirondelle, Claude Cunningham and Gordon Belcourt of Gift Lake. Also in attendance was MD of Big Lake Assistant CAO John Eriksson, High Prairie Fire Chief Ken Melnyk, and the FCO's Ross Bennett and Judy Harvie.

Prairie, Claude Cunningham of Peavine Prairie and Gordon Belcourt of Gift Lake. Also in attendance was MD of Big Lake Assistant CAO John Eriksson, High Prairie Fire Chief Ken Melnyk, and Ross Bennett and Judy Harvie from the Alberta Fire Commissioner's Office.

Topics discussed were E911/dispatch, regional fire training, course notification, mutual aid agreements and the Métis Settlement Fire Chief's Association. The meeting was very positive and informative and the MD of Big Lakes thanked the Settlement Fire Chief's and the Alberta Fire

Commissioner's Office for attending and contributing to the discussions. Dialogue will continue and a date and location for the next meeting is to be announced. 🔥

- The FCO has been invited by the Urban Aboriginal Initiative Accord to make a prevention/employability presentation at one of their Aboriginal teas. This opportunity will enable the FCO to build relationships between Aboriginal people and potential employers.

Mutual aid agreements discussed

On March 2, 2006, the Fire Chief of the Municipal District of Big Lakes John Gould met with local Métis Settlement Fire Chiefs Association members Murielle Lirondelle of East

OH&S and the fire service

OH&S update

The Alberta Fire Chief's Association (AFCA) and the Fire Commissioner's Office (FCO), with advice and assistance from Alberta Human Resources and Employment, have now produced the first version of the "Occupational Health and Safety Code of Practice for Firefighters." This guide is available on the FCO and AFCA websites or on request from any of the FCO field staff.

Though the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (OH&S Act) has always applied to the fire service, many municipal fire chiefs felt the rules were often unclear when it came to emergency operations. The new guide was created at their request. Creating the guide has also allowed Human Resources and Employment to gain a much better understanding of the unique nature of emergency scene work practices.

The guide consists of a section-by-section interpretation of OH&S Code application as it relates to the emergency scene operations of a fire department. It also outlines a planning process that a municipality and its fire department may wish to follow to ensure that emergency operations are conducted safely. The planning process begins with an assessment of the types of work-related risk that firefighters face when providing the emergency services that their municipal council has approved. To do this, council would first provide some form of "level of service" policy outlining the types and levels of services provided by their fire department. Once this level of service has been established and the work-related risk is identified, the fire department can then use the guide to establish appropriate training levels, operating procedures and equipment needs as these relate to worker safety.

The FCO is providing assistance to fire departments and municipalities in a number of ways, including introductory presentations that are available upon request for municipal fire departments, administrators and elected officials. These presentations explain the relationship between the Code of Practice and the Act and provide some initial thoughts on how fire departments can move toward OH&S compliance. A series of template documents have also been developed, including level of service policy statements that can be adopted by policy or as a part of a bylaw. The FCO and the AFCA are also happy to work with individual municipalities or fire departments to assist in the implementation of a health and safety program for their fire departments. Please contact your local Fire Safety Officer for further assistance. 🔥

Digest

Saying goodbye...

In case you haven't heard, there have been a few changes in the Public Safety Division of Alberta Municipal Affairs. Assistant Deputy Minister Denis St. Arnaud has left for greener pastures... literally. After more than 30 years with the Government of Alberta, Denis and his wife are now spending more time on the golf course, starting with a trip to Arizona in January.

Dave Redman, Executive Director of Emergency Management Alberta, also left his position to pursue other opportunities.

And saying hello...

The new Assistant Deputy Minister for the Public Safety Division is Ivan Moore. Ivan commenced his career with the Alberta Government in 1998 and has served in the Public Safety Division for seven years. In 2001, he took on the role of Executive Director of the Safety Services Branch before taking the position of acting ADM in January 2006, following the retirement of Denis St. Arnaud.

Ivan brings a solid technical and management background to the job along with keen enthusiasm and willingness and ability to work well with stakeholders and staff alike.



Ivan Moore, new Assistant Deputy Minister for the Public Safety Division of Municipal Affairs.

"There are some big things on the horizon for PSD, and I'm excited to be involved in all the important challenges ahead," he said.

Ivan adds that Municipal Affairs and the fire service have developed a very positive working relationship over the last several years, and he is committed to keeping the ministry engaged and supporting initiatives like the Fire Services Advisory Committee that address the need to provide municipal fire services with the tools to deliver the best possible emergency services to their communities.

Communicating the importance of safety around emergency services personnel

In partnership with community stakeholders, the John Petropoulos Memorial Fund (JPMF) recently produced a 30-second traffic safety PSA, entitled *SLOW DOWN: It's No Picnic Out Here*. This PSA is part of the JPMF's nation-wide public awareness campaign entitled, *One, is one too many*. The goal of the campaign is to communicate to the public that workplace safety for emergency services personnel is a shared responsibility.

With the ongoing safety campaign, the fund challenges the myth that emergency services personnel are, by nature of their job description, expendable workers. Not all risks they face at work are necessary; some can be minimized. Most workplace deaths and injuries to emergency services personnel – indeed, to all workers – are preventable. To view the PSAs or for more information on the fund, please visit www.jpmpf.ca. To order DVD copies of the PSAs for education/training purposes, visit www.jpmpf.ca/psaorder.php.

Fort Mac training program shelved

A three-month training program for Fort McMurray firefighters scheduled to start in May has been cancelled due to a lack of interest.

The enhanced training program was set to produce up to 24 graduates specialized in dealing with dangerous goods used in the oilsands extraction and upgrading processes. However, only three applicants came forward for the program, which required an enrollment of 18 to 20 participants.

Jim O'Brien, deputy chief of training and recruitment with Wood Buffalo emergency services told *Fort McMurray Today* the department will try the program again next year.

In memoriam

Michael David Wieler died December 15, 2005, when his vehicle rolled over on his way home from a training session with the Picardville Fire Department. Twenty-eight year old Michael was a dedicated volunteer firefighter whose goal was to become a full-time paid fire chief in Westlock or a town of that size. About 600 people attended the funeral, including 120 firefighters from around northern Alberta. The coffin was placed on the Picardville fire truck for his last ride to the cemetery.

Dale McDonald, Chief of the Darwell Fire Department, passed away Wednesday, April 5, 2006, after a battle with cancer. Dale was one of the founding members the Darwell Fire Department; Prior to Darwell having a fire hall, the truck was stored in Dale's mechanic shop across from the existing fire hall. Dale was also a fire guardian for many years before his retirement in 2005 due to his health. Dale's funeral was held on April 10, 2006.

FCO website updates

The Fire Commissioner's Office continues to enhance its website on a regular basis. Some of the newest features on the website include the following:

- Under the 'Public Fire Education' navigation link (left hand side of the main webpage): 'Education Programs' (which identifies the public education programs available at the FCO and how to obtain them).
- Summer Campaign Kit: Under the 'Fire Safety Campaigns' navigation link (left hand side of the main webpage).
- A new Aboriginal section
- Information about the "Getting to Know Fire" program.

The tip sheets section has been reconfigured to avoid duplication and make it easier for users to obtain the tip sheets that are of interest to them. Check it all out at www.municipalaffairs.gov.ab.ca/fco_index.htm

Waterton Lakes signs five-year emergency services deal

Waterton Lakes National Park signed a five-year agreement with Cardston County for firefighting and ambulance services. The agreement will provide improvements to the level of service in the summer and will include the provision of trained firefighters and ambulance attendants stationed in Waterton. Winter service for structural fires will be provided from Cardston County similar to that of other rural communities in the region. Parks Canada will continue to pay for the service, provide equipment and be responsible for defining aspects such as levels of service. (Source: Fort Macleod Gazette)

Alberta fire service activities calendar – Spring/Summer 2006

EVENT	DATE	LOCATION	FOR MORE INFORMATION
Summer Fire Safety Campaign	May 1 to August 31	Campaign kit available from the Fire Commissioner's Office	1-780-427-8392 (310-0000 for toll free access) www.municipalaffairs.gov.ab.ca/fco_FireCampaigns.htm
Disaster Forum 2006	May 7-19	Banff, Alberta	www.disasterforum.ca
Interactive Conference in Vehicle Rescue (CRASH)	June 2-4	Grant MacEwan College and the Agricom, Northlands Park Edmonton, Deadline to register is May 26	www.crashcanadaconference.com
Safety Codes Conference	June 8-10	Banff, Alberta	Safety Codes Council (phone: 1-888-413-0099)
Prairie Regional Firefighter Combat Challenge	June 10, 11	fire etc. , Vermilion, Alberta	www.firefit.com
Alberta Fire Chiefs Association Conference	June 18-21	Red Deer, Alberta	Jayne Jeneroux (phone: 780-922-2629) www.afca.ab.ca/afca_conf_2006.htm
Hose Coupling Competition	July 22	Myrnam, Alberta Deadline for registration is July 1	sastraty@telusplanet.net
Red Deer Fire Power Competition	July 23	Westerner Park, Red Deer, Alberta	Roxanne Warner, Marketing & Sponsorship Manager Westerner Park (phone: 403-309-0207)
Provincial Hose Coupling Competition	July 29	Westlock, Alberta	Brian Byrnell (phone: 780-349-8515, email: pbandcp@shaw.ca) Terry Stauffer (phone: 780-349-4444)

Verbal smoke alarms

A new item on the market that is generating interest are vocal smoke alarms. This device enables parents to record a personalized wake up and fire escape warning message which children hear during a fire emergency.

As of early March 2006, these smoke alarms were not listed or labeled by the ULC. Therefore, the Vocal Smoke Alarm cannot be used alone to fulfill the smoke alarm requirements in the Alberta Building Code and the Alberta Fire Code. However, the public may use these devices in addition to the code requirements.

The recordable Vocal Smoke Alarm should not be confused with the pre-programmed Talking Combination Smoke/CO Alarm that has pre-recorded messages. The Talking Combination Smoke/CO Alarm is ULC labeled and therefore does meet the requirement of Alberta's fire and building codes.

Double designation

Fort McMurray was recently re-designated as a Safe Community. There are only 94 communities in the world designated as a safe community by the World Health Organization, and Fort McMurray is the first community to receive re-designation.

Gold medal winner



Congratulations to Calgary firefighter Duff Gibson, who won a gold medal in skeleton at the 2006 Olympic Games in Turin, Italy.

Fort MacKay fire department re-established

Effective January 19, 2006, the Fort MacKay Fire Department was re-established with Fire Chief Mel Grandjame and 16 on-call paid department members to co-ordinate fire response in the Hamlet of Fort MacKay.

Prior to the re-establishment, the fire department members completed four months of intensive firefighter training as well as six weeks of officer training. The members are also scheduled to complete first aid and vehicle extrication training shortly as well as an ice rescue course next fall. The vehicle extrication training enables the fire department to expand its response area to include sections of Highway 63 as well as in the hamlet.

Chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear e-learning courses for first responders

The Canadian Emergency Management College (Ottawa) now has its Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) First Responder Training Program Awareness and Basic level courses available online.

Awareness training is designed for individuals who may be in a position to recognize a CBRN incident, but would not be in a position to respond (e.g. public transit operators, building operators and mail room staff).

The intent is to provide these individuals with information on how to recognize potential CBRN threats, protect themselves, and alert those who need to respond.

Basic level training is designed for individuals who may be in a position to recognize and respond to a CBRN incident, but would not be the ones to intervene (e.g. 911 operators, police, firefighters and emergency medical services personnel first arriving on scene). The intent is to provide these individuals with training on how to recognize potential CBRN threats and incidents,

protect themselves, and respond accordingly (i.e. first to arrive on scene assess the situation, and call in specialists as required).

The program has been developed in collaboration with the following federal departments and agencies: the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Public Health Agency of Canada, Defence Research and Development Canada, and the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission.

To access these courses, or for more information, visit the Canadian Emergency Preparedness College website at www.psepc-sppcc.gc.ca/college and the CBRN First Responder Training Program website at www.cbrnonline.psepc.gc.ca.

We need your input

Alberta Fire News endeavours to provide information that is timely and of interest to members of the fire service. If you have any suggestions for topics, department profiles or answers to questions, please send them to us care of Te-Jay Smart at (780) 644-4692 (dial 310-0000 for toll-free access outside of Edmonton) or e-mail to te-jay.smart@gov.ab.ca



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Pictorial essay

Anatomy of a dust explosion

The following photographs were taken by Pat Graham during demolition of a grain elevator outside of Calgary. Despite wetting down the interior of the structure prior to detonating the dynamite placed inside, 80 years of dust accumulation resulted in a spectacular explosion. 🔥

