



Guardians of the badlands

# The Drumheller Fire Department at work

As most Albertans know, nestled in the "Badlands" in central Alberta is the world-famous Royal Tyrrell Museum of Paleontology, one of the largest paleontological museums in the world. But what they might not know is that this location is also home to the very active volunteer Drumheller Fire Department.

Fire Chief Bill Bachynski and his 48 volunteer firefighters are responsible for covering the wide expanse of prairie in this distinctly unique community. The fire department provides firefighting services to an area of 510 square kilometres and vehicle extrication services to an area of

approximately 5000 square kilometres. It includes three fire halls: one in Drumheller, one in Rosedale and one in East Coulee. In addition to the fire chief, there are two district chiefs and two deputy chiefs. The department has nine pieces of apparatus that are used for firefighting, motor vehicle collision extrications and water rescue.

While Bachynski says that the majority of the 70 or so firefighting calls per year are smaller-type garbage and grass fires, they have had their share of major fires. He recalls one at the high school four years ago that caused "quite a bit of damage" as well as others involving grain elevators and lumber yards. "One of the unique aspects of our community is that we're in the valley, and with grass fires especially, there's lots of climbing to do," said Bachynski.

"We've also had a few of our hotels on fire, which is a lot of work," added Bachynski. "That really plays people out so we work them in shifts with lots of coordination of people and apparatus." Bachynski says there has been the potential for a few major fires in the last few years, "but luckily we caught them quickly and put them out."

In striving to keep its community safe, much of the fire department's

## A paleontological perspective



Preserving the heritage of an international site is one of the additional responsibilities of the Drumheller fire department. As a world-class exhibition and research facility, the Royal Tyrrell Museum displays more than 200 dinosaur specimens, the largest number under one roof anywhere. It also includes a paleoconservatory (an indoor garden), that

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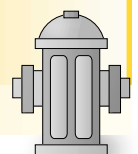
Photo courtesy of Royal Tyrrell Museum / Alberta Community Development



Grass fires are a constant concern for the Drumheller Fire Department.

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efforts are focused on fire prevention. One deputy chief coordinates fire prevention activities and works closely with the community in promoting Fire Prevention Week each year. Last year the department held an open house at the fire hall. This was such a success that it will be continued each year.

Because all the members of the Drumheller Fire Department are volunteers, including the fire chief, firefighting is a second job for everyone says Bachynski. In addition to running his own business, Bachynski also serves as one of two deputy directors of disaster services in the community. "Fortunately, I have a really good business partner," says Bachynski.

To gauge the level of response beyond emergency calls, Bachynski kept track of calls from Monday to Friday for 21 days. During that time, he averaged eight and a half calls per day from citizens seeking information on anything from fire bans to how trucks are serviced.

With the amalgamation with the MD of Badlands that took place two years ago, Drumheller reverted from a city to a town. In addition to protecting the 8500 residents, the fire department also provides fire prevention and protection for the federal penitentiary that includes about 600 inmates and 300 staff. As well, the department provides fire prevention and protection to the Royal Tyrrell Museum, which averages 390,000 visitors each year.



Three fire halls (East Coulee, Rosedale and Drumheller) were involved in controlling the fire that destroyed the East Coulee Community Hall.

"The more you do in fire prevention the less you do in fighting fires," says Bachynski. That's why they put an all-out effort into a smoke alarm blitz two years ago. "We focused on the older area of town. We checked each house to determine if it had smoke alarms and if they were being used. If it didn't we provided new ones for installation in the homes. It was a good initiative that not only enhanced fire prevention in the town but also increased our positive exposure in the community."

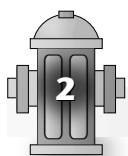
Bachynski has been the fire chief for the past seven years, and was a deputy fire chief for 17 years before that. He's also taken training at both the Alberta Fire Training School and at the federal government's disaster services training facility in Arnprior, Ontario.

According to Bachynski, his biggest challenges are keeping on top of training both in terms of paperwork and recruiting. His recruitment efforts are a community approach. He's always open to applications for volunteers – "especially from young recruits who are stable in the community." Bachynski enjoys training new recruits and advises them to "get a little diary and jot down each call. Then in 20-years' time they can look back and remember all their contributions."

In a community that boasts a huge tourist facility, the uniqueness of 13 wooden bridges and a reputation as a great location for film makers, Bachynski is proud of the service his fire department provides. Equally importantly, he is pleased that there continues to be a high standard of morale among volunteer members. 🔥



Luigi Vescarelli, Deputy Chief, explaining to some school children how a firefighter is protected by special clothing.



## A paleontological perspective

*continued from cover*

houses more than 110 different species of primitive plants, some of which have remained virtually unchanged for 350-million years. The museum also houses 150,000 fossils in its collection, many still wrapped in plaster and encased in rock, awaiting study.

The museum building covers 11,200 square metres on a 20-acre site three miles from the nearest fire hall. It includes 4,400 square metres of display area, a 200-seat auditorium, a research library, laboratories, collections facilities and staff offices.

Fire chief Bill Bachynski says, "I try to do a physical inspection of the museum at least three times a year, making sure that my truck is parked right out front so everyone is aware of our presence. I also talk on the phone with staff at the museum on a regular basis too."

The museum is designed with an emphasis on fire safety. The building includes a comprehensive sprinkler system as well as an alarm system for the sprinklers. There is also a separate water storage system that charges the sprinkler system. The sprinkler system is tested once a year by a qualified company, with reports provided to the fire chief. Outside, there is a cleared fire area, with a fire lane around the building. The main hydrant plus two additional hydrants are accessible from the exterior of the building.

According to Bachynski, there have been two small fires, caused by carelessness, since the museum opened in 1985. Very little damage was caused.

Staff at the museum have been trained to evacuate, not fight fires. While the building is staffed 24 hours a day, the actual staff count at the museum fluctuates. There are full-time and part-time staff throughout the year with a large increase in staff during the summer months. "With more than 390,000 visitors a year, we put a great deal of emphasis on fire safety and practise building evacuation drills throughout the year," says Marty Hickie, marketing and media coordinator for the museum. "These efforts plus the regular inspections from the fire chief enable us to operate the museum in a very safe manner."

## State-of-the-art fire services from a rural location

Travelling along Highway 15 north of Fort Saskatchewan, you can't help but notice a brand new building dotting the prairie landscape. While there are a considerable number of large structures on the west side of the highway, the east side was almost vacant of any facilities, with the exception of a Hutterite colony and a few farm buildings. The existence of Heartland Hall now changes that landscape.

Heartland Hall, Strathcona County's new fire station, is the home of new and improved fire, emergency medical and county services for North Strathcona. Located on five acres south of Highway 15 near the intersection of Secondary Highway 830, the hall is in close proximity to major heavy industry in Alberta's industrial heartland. Heartland Hall is home to a totally integrated fire department where all firefighters are also qualified as paramedics or emergency medical technicians. The department is authorized for five full-time staff on every shift as well as up to 25 part-time firefighters who are called in as needed. The volunteer staff that were at the nearby Josephburg station have also been included in the mix of firefighters working from Heartland Hall. The new fire station includes:

- improved service 24 hours a day by full-time emergency professionals,
- satellite office for the RCMP, staffed 40 hours a week, with 24-hour patrols in the area, and
- contact offices for Strathcona County Ward 5 and North Strathcona.

As Strathcona County Fire Chief Laird Burton says, "this new hall is unique in that it has been planned to handle industrial risk as well as provide a complete safety package for the community from a rural area."

The idea for the new hall began six years ago as a way to bring a high level of service to a region that was fairly isolated and distant from any other large municipal partner. "We had to find a way to handle industrial risk as well as service rural clients," stated Burton.



*Heartland Hall, Fort Saskatchewan*

Heartland Hall is located in viewing distance of one of the largest concentrations of petrochemical industries in Canada. The emergency management full-time service that the hall provides parallels the 365-day, 24-hour operations of the heavy industries in the area. The hall also provides advanced industrial-level fire and dangerous goods support, features that are likely to encourage the pooling of resources, personnel and training among municipalities and industry.

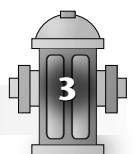
Heartland Hall's response capability was developed with extensive consultation and dialogue with industry, the community and neighbouring municipalities. One of its most unique features is that it was built prior to completion of one of its major clients. "Much of the focus was on building the station to coincide with the work being done on the Shell upgrader project," said Burton. "Usually a fire station is built when such a project is finished. However, in this case, it became apparent that the greatest risk is during the construction phase. Therefore, we

worked hard to have the hall completed and in use prior to the addition of 1500 workers who joined Shell's existing workforce of 3500 for the upgrader project in June."

The hall has been well planned both in terms of design and capacity. While the department's current commitment is for five full-time members at all times, both the eating and sleeping facilities can accommodate more members.

As well, the facility has been designed to provide resources for community and municipal users. The front half of the hall is the public area, and includes a computerized kiosk for the public to obtain information from all three levels of government. There are also rooms and a coffee area for community groups to use for meetings and workshops.

The back half of the hall is intended for firefighters. In addition to eating, sleeping and fitness areas, there are also several study rooms for fire service personnel, including one that is designed to enable exam invigilation



(used for studying and taking exams) for the Alberta Fire Training School (AFTS) and the Alberta College of Paramedics.


The garage is designed to hold six separate pieces of equipment including a pumper, a brush truck, an advanced life support ambulance, a rescue truck and an engine.

The standard tanker is made of polyethylene, with a 15,000-litre capacity to enable the tanker to be filled with foam as necessary. Because some foams aren't compatible with some metals, it was important to have a tanker made of polyethylene, said Burton.

One of the most important pieces of equipment at the hall is a 30-metre elevating platform. As Burton says, "this is a huge asset for the region. There's nothing else like it in the area. The platform is built for industry with a waterway to deliver elevated water or foam, which may be required for industrial fires."

The apparatus bays also include a breathing air compressor room to enable the filling of breathing apparatus and a holding space for foam purchased or leased by the major industries. Burton expects that in the next six months the area will be full of foam.

The 20-metre hose tower serves a dual purpose: besides hanging hoses to dry, it serves as a place to practise high-angle rescue training. If all this wasn't enough to make the hall unique, there will be a full weather station on top of the hall, wired directly to the captain's office.

As Burton proudly states, "everything about this new hall was carefully planned to provide an excellent level of service to the residents of the area as well as the industrial component. In fact, one of the most critical features in creating this hall was the ability to serve large industry and be able to access them much like the service provided to Refinery Row (near Edmonton). What we've created is a complete safety package—one that provides the best level of service in a rural area." 

For more information about Heartland Hall, check out Strathcona County's web site at: [www.strathcona.ab.ca](http://www.strathcona.ab.ca) and click on "Resident Information," then "Emergency Services."



## Volunteer fire service comes to an end

# Changing history at Alberta Hospital Edmonton



Members of the volunteer fire department at Alberta Hospital in Edmonton


The end of May 2001 marked a significant change in the firefighting service at Alberta Hospital Edmonton. Starting June 1, 2001, all firefighting services at the hospital are provided by the Edmonton Fire Department.

According to Pete Rudyk, the last person to serve as fire chief of the volunteer department, the hospital has had a long history of providing fire protection through a volunteer department. "The fire department began in 1923 right after the hospital was opened and used for returning war veterans," said Rudyk. "All of the volunteers either lived on site, in residence or in houses around the hospital. Each firefighter also had a full-time job at the hospital, a tradition that has continued up to now."

Rudyk recalls some of the significant accomplishments of the fire department. "The department's first mechanized equipment was a 1951 Bickel Seagrave

pumper, followed by a new truck in 1968 and another one from the Emergency Measures Office in 1972. In 1981, the hospital received the first metric truck built in Alberta, in Red Deer.

According to Rudyk, "there have been a lot of changes over the years, and the shift to the Edmonton Fire Department is no exception." At one point the department had a full-time chief, Lorne Vandenberg, plus 24 volunteers. It has also been the starting point for many who went onto careers in the fire service in Alberta. Two of note include recently retired Alberta Fire Commissioner Tom Makey and Strathcona Emergency Services Fire Chief Laird Burton.

At the end of its era, the fire department at Alberta Hospital Edmonton consisted of 11 people. While their services are no longer required at the fire department, they will all continue with their full-time careers at the hospital. 

# Profiling the Pincher Creek Fire Department

One of the unique features of Pincher Creek Emergency Services is the way it runs its organization. The agreement it has with the municipality for providing services enables Emergency Services to set its own budget and put forth a requisition to the municipality for funding. However, what is truly unique is the ability to also use revenue from its ambulances for capital purposes. These funds are split 50/50 with the municipality and town. As Fire Chief Kevin Weinberger says, “that way we don’t have to go back to the taxpayers for capital projects. It enables us to plan well.” As part of the agreement, all of the equipment is also owned by Emergency Services.



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Pincher Creek’s Emergency Services was formed in July 1906 by a group of concerned citizens. It has grown into an efficient organization that includes four fire halls—located in Pincher Creek, Lundbreck, Beaver Mines and Cowley. Cowley is within the municipal district but is a stand-alone department. Fire Chief Weinberger serves as the full-time paid regional fire chief, a position he has held for the past two years. He manages all of Emergency Services and its 65 volunteer members.

The department has a fully integrated service providing fire, ambulance rescue, search and rescue, disaster and ice rescue services to a community of approximately 10,000 people within a 3,366 square kilometre area. The jurisdiction borders the Peigan Reserve to the east, the Crownsnest Pass to the west, Maycroft at Highway 22 to the north and Waterton National Park to the south. The department is responsible for servicing Waterton park, except during the summer season, which runs from May to September.

In close proximity to the Rocky Mountains, the landscape includes mountain slopes, rolling foothills and wide-open prairie. The area is well known for its expansive ranching lands, but it is also home to the Shell Waterton Gas Plant, as well as Canada’s largest wind farm.

The strong winds that regularly blow have created a major wind industry in the area, with many windmills erected throughout the land. But as Weinberger points out, “with hot and dry weather, wind creates a pretty high fire hazard, something that all our members are aware of.” Weinberger recalls a major wildfire that occurred in the area in 1997. “It started north of Pincher Creek and with the dry conditions and the wind, the fire spread to Granum. It took seven days to put out and required all of our firefighters as well as volunteers from Claresholm, Nanton, Fort McLeod and the Peigan Reserve.”

Most of the 65 volunteers are trained both as firefighters and as Emergency Medical Responders or Emergency Medical Transporters, which enables them to serve in dual roles. The department averages about 150 fire calls and 800 ambulance calls a year.


The equipment spread across the four fire halls includes a full rescue van with heavy hydraulics, five pump trucks, a water tanker and two forestry bush buggies. The

department’s three ambulances are based out of Pincher Creek. Last year, the department’s response included 24 rescues from collisions and a number of ice rescues.

One of the biggest challenges that Weinberger says he faces is keeping his volunteers motivated and trained properly, but he quickly adds: “I’m very fortunate to have good equipment and a good relationship with the municipality and the town. But most importantly, I have good captains that not only do lots of training but enjoy doing it too. Their efforts plus the courses at the Alberta Fire Training School, where I’m glad to send any volunteers who want to go, help me keep our members well trained.”

The Pincher Creek Fire Department is also involved in many fire prevention activities. Each year, the Beaver Mines, Lundbreck and Pincher Creek fire halls host an open house. “The open houses enable us to distribute a lot of material to kids as well as adults,” says Weinberger. “We also interact with school students on a regular basis through visits to four schools. I visit with the Kindergarten, Grade 1, Grade 3, and Grade 6 students each year, plus I attend the Grade 9 Science and Grade 11 Physics classes. This gives me the opportunity to meet with a wide range of students on various fire safety and fire prevention issues.”

Weinberger says the fire department also participates in a community fire drill during Fire Prevention Week every year. Last year also saw the fire department involved with the *Risk Watch* and *Learn Not to Burn* materials on a trial basis at one school. The success of this project resulted in the materials being included in all schools starting September 2001.

“Fire safety and prevention is an important part of the work we do,” says Weinberger. “The more ways that we can interact with our community members increases our chances of reducing fires.” 



# Candle fires on the rise in Alberta

Candle-related fires caused 723 fire incidents, 10 fire deaths, 168 fire injuries and \$12.4 million in direct property damage in Alberta from 1990-1999. The data in the adjacent chart show a disturbing trend—compared to 1990, the annual number of candle fires has increased 100% in the 10-year period to 1999.

A breakdown of candle fires by property class showed most (90%) candle-related fires happen in homes, comprising one- or two-family dwellings, apartments and mobile homes. Ten (100%) out of 10 deaths, 161 (96%) out of 168 injuries, and \$11.8 million (95%) out of \$12.4 million in property damage in these fires, occurred in homes.

The 10 fire deaths attributed to candle fires were distributed, by age groups and condition at the time of fire, as shown in Table 1.

The 161 injuries in homes were distributed as follows: children under 16 (26); men (55); women (64) and firefighters (16). The condition of 145 injured civilian casualties (other than firefighters) in candle fires, in Alberta homes, is shown in Table 2.

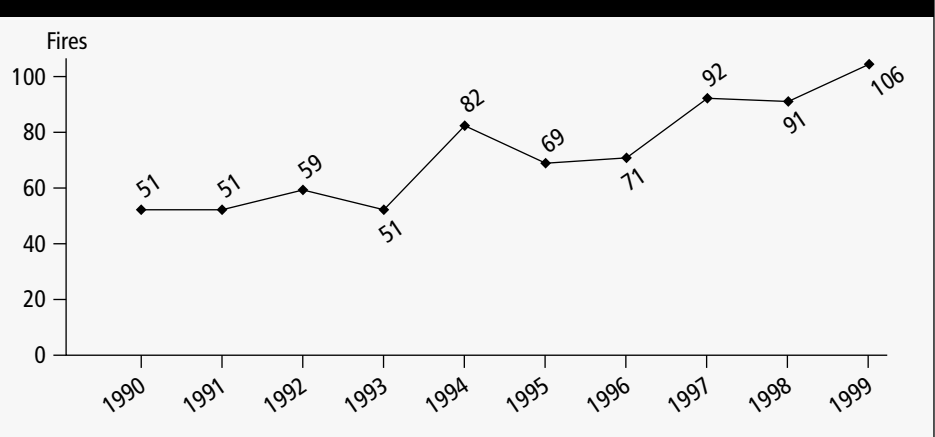
## Where do candle fires start in Alberta homes?

- 36% in bedrooms
- 35% in living rooms/family rooms/dens
- 7% in kitchens
- 6% in dining rooms
- 5% in bathrooms

## Where else do candle fires occur?

About 10% of candle fires occurred in other property classes. The most frequently affected property classes besides homes are hostels/inns/lodges, outdoor properties, individual auto parking garages and general business offices.

**Candle fires in Alberta**



**Table 1: Distribution of candle-related fire deaths by age and condition**

Age of casualty	Condition of casualty	No. of deaths
0-5	Asleep at time of fire	2
	Too young to react to fire	1
6-15	Asleep at time of fire	1
16-25	Asleep at time of fire	2
26-35	Asleep at time of fire	1
Over 65	Condition unknown	2
	Asleep at time of fire	1

**Table 2: Distribution of injured civilian casualties in candle-related fires in Alberta homes, by condition**

Condition of casualty	No. of injuries	%
Asleep at time of fire	61	42
Awake and normal	58	40
Condition of casualty unknown/unclassified	18	12
Impaired: drugs/alcohol/medication	5	3
Too young to react to fire	2	1
Senility	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>100</b>



The share of fires started by candles in Alberta homes has tripled from 2% to 6% between 1990 and 1999, as the adjacent chart illustrates. This increase is partly because total home fires have declined in number and partly because the number of candle fires in homes has increased.

Since candle fires are high in both frequency and severity in homes, compared to all other property classes, further analyses was focussed on candle fires in Alberta homes.

### How do the fires start?

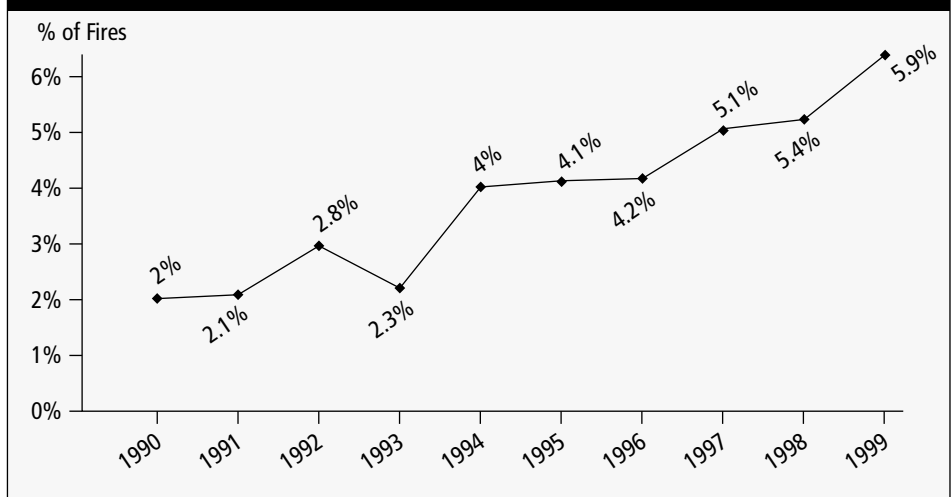
- 59% because of accidents\*
- 9% because of children playing with candles or something combustible near candles
- 8% because some form of combustible material was left too close to a candle
- 7% because of ignorance of hazard
- 4% because candles were misused as a source of ignition
- 4% because occupant fell asleep with the candle burning
- 2% because occupant was distracted or preoccupied

*\*The word accident is being phased out of injury prevention literature as it conveys the meaning of an unpredictable event that cannot be prevented. The Fire Commissioner's Statistics Reporting Manual (1988 edition) contains this word, hence the usage above.*

### What do candles ignite first?

- Furniture (not upholstered) – 12%
- Bedding/mattress/pillow – 10%
- Furniture (upholstered) and furniture (unclassified) – 8%
- Plastics – 7%
- Paper stock – 6%
- Carpets/rugs – 6%
- Curtains/blinds – 5%
- Paper decorations – 4%

**Per cent of fires started by candles in Alberta homes**

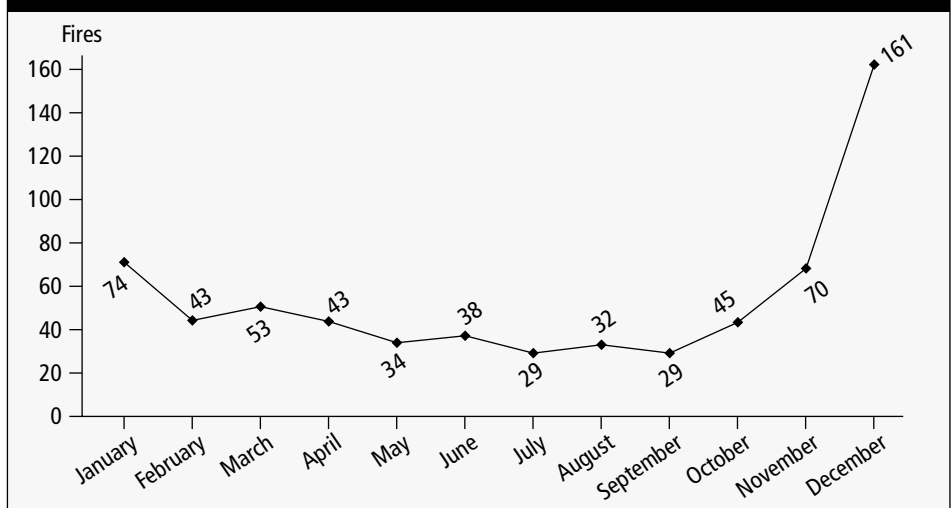


### When do candle fires occur?

Candle fires were more frequent in the months of November, December and January, with a peak in December, at 2.5 times the average monthly number of incidents.

The chart below shows the distribution of candle fires by month.

**Distribution of candle fires by month in Alberta homes (1990-1999)**



### How can candles be used safely?

There are two basic strategies to prevent candle-related fires. First, avoid using candles whenever possible, and second, if candles are used, keep potential fuels as far from the flame as possible. Although there is much scope for human error when candles are used, the fact remains that every unwanted fire starts when a heat source and a fuel are brought together. The potential scenarios that can unfold with an unattended candle are numerous. Fire safety education programs should train consumers to imagine potential ignition scenarios so they can decide how to avoid potential fires.

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## Safety tips

1. Keep lit candles away from combustible items such as clothing, books, curtains, Christmas trees and paper decorations.
2. Make sure to mount candles on non-combustible holders that won't tip over and are big enough to collect dripping wax.
3. Don't place lit candles in windows where blinds or curtains may close over them, and don't use them in places where children or pets could knock them over.
4. Snuff candles out when leaving the room or going to sleep. Remember that 70% of fire deaths related to candle fires happened while the victims were asleep.
5. Never let a candle burn down to the bottom.
6. Never leave children or pets alone in a room with lit candles. Children can play with the flame and start a fire or be burned. Do not allow older children to light candles in their bedrooms. A forgotten candle is all it takes to start a fire.
7. During power outages exercise caution when using candles as a source of light. Many destructive fires start during such times since potential fire hazards can go unnoticed in the relative darkness.
8. Never use a candle for light when fueling equipment such as a camp-fuel heater or lantern.
9. When buying or using novelty candles, try to determine if they might pose a potential fire hazard. If they do, or you suspect they might, inform your local fire department or the Product Safety Bureau of Health Canada in Edmonton or Calgary.

Further information on candle safety is available in the Health Canada public education bulletin at: [www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ehp/ehd/catalogue/psb\\_pubs/candles.htm](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ehp/ehd/catalogue/psb_pubs/candles.htm)

## Conclusions

Although data on candle sales in Canada or Alberta were not available from Statistics Canada, it is apparent that candle usage has grown significantly in North America during the last decade. A National Fire Prevention Association report, *Candle Fires in U.S. Homes and Other Occupancies*, indicates that the candle industry has grown 10 to 15% annually, and the growth rate shows no signs of slowing. Candle consumer retail sales in the United States were projected at \$2.3 billion for 2000. The National Candle Association (NCA) estimates there are more than 300 commercial, religious, or industrial candle manufacturers in the United States, and each major manufacturer offers 1,000 to 2,000 kinds of candles. The NCA also reports that candles are used in seven out of 10 households.

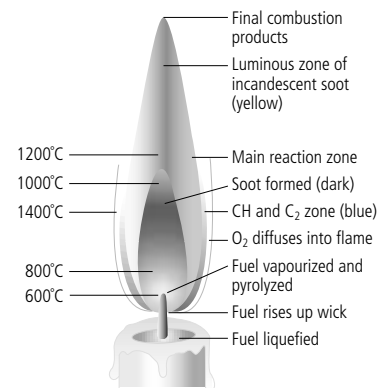
Fire statistics show that too many candle users do not know how to use them safely. Most candle fires involve human error—someone leaving a candle unattended or leaving the candle too near a combustible material (e.g. curtains, furniture, decorations). Unsupervised children frequently

play with candles because they are curious and the flames are fascinating to them. Sometimes people fall asleep with candles burning. Both the fatality and injury data (Tables 1 and 2) certainly indicate that falling asleep is a major factor. Furthermore, the frequency of candle fires shoots up during the festive month of December. Public education about safety measures when using candles is therefore important.

Not all candles are designed to burn safely. In the past, Health Canada and provincial fire commissioners and fire marshals have issued warnings of hazardous candles sold in Canada. Similar actions have been taken by the Consumer Product Safety Commission in the United States, which has issued recalls for some candles, candle holders and candle shades in the past five years.


The Association of Canadian Fire Marshals and Fire Commissioners passed a resolution at its 52nd Annual Conference in 1973 that the so-called relight candles should be considered a hazardous product and requested banning these products under the *Hazardous Products Act*. As a

## How hot is a candle flame?

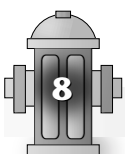


The above illustration from *Fire* by Hazel Rossotti (1993) shows several reaction zones and their corresponding temperatures within a candle flame. Consumers who use candles for light, decoration, birthday cakes and vapourizing scents need to recognize that a burning candle is an open flame or a "hot spot" that is at a high enough temperature to ignite nearby combustible or flammable materials.

result, relight candles have been prohibited from being imported, advertised or sold in Canada since May 1, 1977. This prohibition is enforced by the Consumer Product Safety Program of Health Canada.

Other than the above prohibition of relight candles, there are no standards established to regulate the manufacture or import of candles in Canada. Consumers also assume that their candle holders are safe, and don't expect them to break or catch fire. Again, there are no standards for candle containers. Although some glass containers are made of tempered glass that can withstand high temperatures, others are not. Until suitable standards are available, voluntary safety labels should be considered for all candles sold in Canada. The American Society for Testing and Materials, through its Consumer Products Subcommittee of Candles and Candle Products, recently published a standard for such precautionary labeling of candles and candle products. A copy of this standard can be ordered from: [www.astm.org](http://www.astm.org) 

Prepared by Mahendra Wijayasinghe, with the assistance of the following at Health Canada: Cecylia Bilous, Tom Ben and Kelly Lehman.





# A fond farewell from many

A fine tribute was paid to Tom Makey upon his retirement from the position of Fire Commissioner of Alberta. After spending more than 40 years with the provincial government, and meeting an enormous number of firefighters from across Canada and beyond, it was no wonder that his farewell dinner was so well attended. More than 200 came to say goodbye and provide best wishes, and many more wishes came from those who were unable to attend.

In addition to his wife, three sons, one daughter and their growing families, many other special people joined Tom at the celebration including a few from many miles away. Those making presentations included Dennis Gartner, Assistant Deputy Minister, Municipal Affairs; Wayne Morris, Calgary Fire Department Fire Chief; Doug Popowich, Manitoba's Fire Commissioner; Don Gnatiuk, CEO, Alberta Fire Training School (AFTS); Frank Albert, Cote St. Luc, Quebec Fire Chief and Past President, Fire Prevention Canada; Tom Wickersham,

Lethbridge Fire Department Fire Chief; Terry Murray, AFTS Board Chairman; Rick McCullough, Saskatchewan's Fire Commissioner, and his wife Wendy who also gave a tribute to Tom's wife Cathy; Pat Graham,



President, Alberta Fire Chiefs Association; Laird Burton, Strathcona Country Emergency Services Fire Chief; and Betty Hall-Petry, AFTS board member.

Some of the other many distinguished guests included Gerald Pickett, Nunavut Fire Marshal; Bill Eckel from High Prairie who recently retired after 45 years of fire



service; Michael Wood, Lac La Biche Fire Chief; Bill MacKay, retired Fire Commissioner; and Lorne Vandenberg, retired Alberta Hospital Edmonton Fire Chief. 🔥

## Changes at the Fire Commissioner's Office

# Holding down the fort at FCO

A lot of changes are taking place at the Fire Commissioner's Office (FCO). First it moved to a new location, then the long-serving Tom Makey retired. The latest change is the inclusion of Pat Graham as the Acting Fire Commissioner.

Joining the team on a short-term basis while the department conducts a country-wide search for a new Fire Commissioner, Graham's enthusiasm, experience and education are much appreciated during this transition period.

Originally from Ireland, Graham attended the Merchant Naval Cadet College in Belfast, North Ireland, then spent five years with the Royal Canadian Navy in the Communications Division and Firefighting

Damage Control. Graham also spent five years in the construction industry before acquiring experience and training with various fire departments on the west coast. Graham spent many years with the Victoria, B.C. fire department, first as a firefighter before progressing through a number of positions including: Lieutenant Investigator, Deputy Fire Chief, Administration and Deputy Fire Chief, Operations. Graham then provided fire safety and emergency response services for Alberta's Solicitor General before moving to his most recent position of Fire Chief of the Municipal District of Rocky View No. 44.

Graham is President of the Alberta Fire Chiefs Association and the Vice Chair of the Alberta Fire Training School Board of



Neelu Jairath, Sarah Barter, Pat Graham, Wayne Girven, Gloria Mercer, Mahendra Wijayasinghe

Directors. He also has experience in the command of major city fire combat units having trained with the Seattle Fire Department, the Victoria Fire Department, the Washington State Fire Training School and the B.C. Fire Academy.

Graham says he's enjoying the position of Acting Fire Commissioner. "It's a great opportunity for me. I'm working with a great team, and it's a privilege to provide input on how the FCO will continue to meet the challenges of the future." 🔥



# Fire Prevention Week 2001



The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), the official sponsor of Fire Prevention Week for 79 years, has announced that this year's campaign—October 7-13, 2001—has a baseball theme, "Cover the Bases and Strike Out Fire." It is also the theme for Fire Prevention Week (FPW) across North America.

## What do baseball and fire safety have in common? **Lots!**

This year's Fire Prevention Week campaign highlights some "striking" similarities between the two and teaches people some simple steps to prevent home fires.

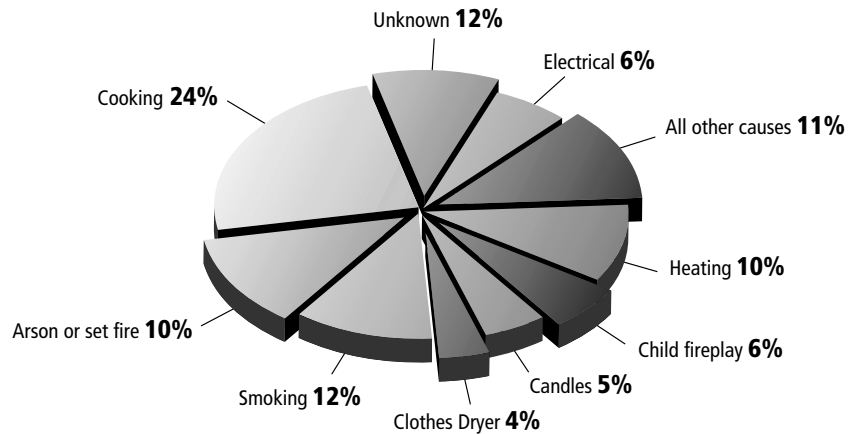
According to the NFPA, human error and problems associated with cooking, heating, and the equipment that provides electrical service are among the leading causes of home fires in the United States. Alberta home fire statistics also support this conclusion, as the accompanying pie chart demonstrates—40 per cent of all home fires result from cooking, home heating and electrical hazards.

FPW 2001 combines a favourite pastime with important fire safety tips to teach children and their families how they can "cover the bases" to "strike out" preventable home fires. Since it is known that children are very effective at driving fire safety messages home, where the risk of fire is greatest, special effort will be made to include children in this Fire Prevention Week campaign, with the help from fire-fighters and teachers.

This year, a baseball diamond will be used as a visual cue. The first three bases on the FPW diamond represent important fire hazards in homes—cooking, heating and electrical hazards. The fourth or home plate serves as a reminder to children to conduct smoke alarm testing and home fire escape planning with parents and caregivers.

FPW campaigns are often cited by fire safety experts as being extremely useful in delivering fire safety messages to families. For the last three

## Major causes of Alberta home fires (1991-2000)



years, "Fire Drills: The Great Escape!" was FPW's campaign theme focusing on home fire escape planning and practice. So far, documented reports confirm that 74 lives have been saved in North America—mostly children—as a result of that campaign.

The following table summarizes what the Fire Commissioner's Office (FCO) in Alberta has planned to promote this year's Fire Prevention Week campaign:

## Promotional plans for Fire Prevention Week 2001

### Promotional Items

**Fire Commissioner's Office 2001 Fire Prevention Week Campaign Kit**  
Contents include in-depth coverage of cooking, heating and electrical fire safety as well as Alberta fire statistics and the municipal fire loss picture. Kit to be distributed to all fire departments; regional health authorities; safe communities network; Alberta Weekly Newspaper Association. The kit will be posted on the Internet web site of Alberta municipal Affairs at [www.gov.ab.ca/ma](http://www.gov.ab.ca/ma) under Fire Commissioner's Office. In addition, radio and TV stations will be contacted to explore further avenues for promoting FPW.

**Fire Prevention Canada Fire Prevention Week Kit 2001**  
Distributed nationally, and within Alberta by the FCO. Provides a national perspective in both English and French. Includes Governor General of Canada's FPW proclamation, ready-made public service announcements and a media release, Canadian fire loss statistics and fire safety articles.

**NFPA's Fire Prevention Week Kit**  
Contains the theme and what it means in relation to this year's FPW, and US fire statistics, safety articles, and a Home Fire Safety Checklist

**McDonald's Fire Prevention Week Program**  
McDonald's Restaurants of Canada, working in partnership with the FCO and participating fire departments, will provide worksheets for children in Grades K to 3 in communities served by McDonald's outlets. In June, the FCO surveyed selected fire departments to assess interest, and those who responded favourably will be sent shipments of worksheets in early September. McDonald's program also offers opportunities for a Fire Chief for a Day contest, and a chance to win a trip for four to Disney World, Florida.

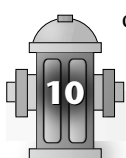
### Approximate Distribution Date

August 15, 2001

August 15, 2001

August 15, 2001

September 4, 2001



## Risk Watch activities around the province...

Last issue we brought news of how the Bonnyville area was implementing the *Risk Watch* program in its area. This issue, our focus is on Grande Prairie.

After successfully piloting *Risk Watch* in two schools, Grande Prairie and Area Safe Communities received funding from the Wild Rose Foundation to provide resources and a part-time coordinator to support teachers in implementing this injury prevention program in the community.




According to Angie Dixon, *Risk Watch* Coordinator, teachers in three additional schools have been trained and provided with manuals. "But in Grande Prairie the support doesn't stop there," said Dixon. "We have 11 different organizations actively doing presentations to students and our teachers have an up-to-date contact list for these people, so the program is really reaching out to everyone."

For the two years of funding for this program, Dixon also has a number of tasks, including:

- Providing schools with a collection of appropriate pamphlets and information on where to order them
- Establishing resource tubs with useful items for teachers and presenters
- Maintaining a *Risk Watch* bulletin board in schools
- Maintaining a list of relevant videos that are available
- Presenting to other community organizations so that they are aware of the program
- Conducting an Injury Behaviour Survey every year to track long-term behaviour change success
- Providing prizes and certificates for "graduation" ceremonies every spring
- Charting how *Risk Watch* activities link into other curricular areas

With funding from the Alberta Centre for Injury Control (ACICR) Community Injury Control Fund, Dixon also conducted a poster contest

this spring. "It was advertised in Grande Prairie and area through schools," said Dixon. "We had many great posters and will be scanning them for duplication and sharing with other communities."

While Dixon continues to focus on bringing more schools into the *Risk Watch* family next year, she's pleased with the results to date. "The *Risk Watch* program has had a huge success in Grande Prairie largely because of the incredible support from the Grande Prairie Fire Department," said Dixon. "Office space, laminating, staffing display booths—no matter what we needed, members of the fire department lent a hand in helping." 

### *Community recognition for Grande Prairie fire chief*

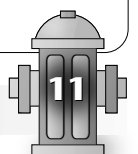


Stewart Wilson, president of Grande Prairie and Area Safe Communities, presents awards to fire chief Bill Walker.

On an annual basis, Grande Prairie and Area Safe Communities honours individuals, groups and organizations with a safety award. The award recognizes a commitment and dedication to injury prevention to reduce the impact of illness and injury in the community.

This year's winner was Bill Walker, fire chief of the Grande Prairie Fire Department. Walker's commitment to the community started back in the late 1980s when he initiated the first Safe Community group. Over the years, both he and his staff have provided hundreds of hours of support to the Safe Communities organization. Walker's other contributions included sponsoring and maintaining the *Risk Watch* program, involvement in creating the Grande Prairie and District Burn Society, serving as a member of the Alberta Centre for Injury Control and Research (ACICR) and assisting Safe Communities in the development of a Safety City for Grande Prairie.

According to Kim Fenton, Executive Director of Grande Prairie and Area Safe Communities, Walker is very deserving of this award. "Bill's overall commitment to injury prevention in the community has had a tremendous impact," said Fenton. "Through his continued support of injury prevention programs and awareness in the community, he is helping make Grande Prairie a truly safe community."



## New and improved juvenile firesetter intervention handbook created

A new juvenile firesetter intervention handbook has been created. The handbook was prepared for the United States Fire Administration, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) by Jessica Gaynor, Ph.D.

The new handbook expands on the content provided in the *Alberta Juvenile Firesetter Handbook & Resource Directory* (Second Edition, 1998) that was distributed to all fire departments, and to participating psychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers in Alberta in early 1999. The Alberta publication referenced three FEMA handbooks designed for assessment and intervention of juvenile firesetters in three corresponding age groups:

- *Preadolescent Firesetter Handbook:* Ages 0-7
- *Preadolescent Firesetter Handbook:* Ages 7-13
- *Adolescent Firesetter Handbook:* Ages 14-18

Dr. Jessica Gaynor, a well-known clinical psychologist, researcher, management consultant and author on juvenile firesetting has served as the main author in combining the above three FEMA handbooks and related publications into a revised and improved single publication titled *Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Handbook*.

The six chapters of this handbook can be viewed as the six building blocks essential to constructing a successful program. The cornerstone of the blueprint is understanding the personality profiles of juvenile firesetters and their families. The next step is identifying at-risk youth and assessing the likelihood that they will become involved in future firesetting incidents. The identification of the three

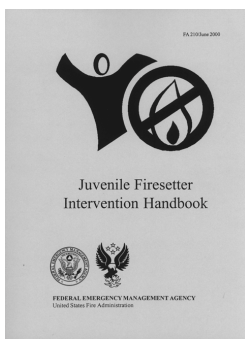
levels of firesetting risk—little, definite, and extreme—leads to specific types of intervention, including evaluation, education, referral and follow-up. These are the critical components of a juvenile firesetter program.

To provide a complete complement of services to juvenile firesetters and their families, the juvenile firesetter program must be part of a community network. This network consists of a continuum of care designed to provide a range of intervention services, including prevention, immediate treatment and graduated sanctions to juvenile firesetters and their families. Finally, there is a specific set of tasks that will ensure the delivery of swift and effective intervention to at-risk youth and their families.

Target audiences for this handbook are diverse. Because the fire service operates the majority of juvenile firesetter programs, these chapters are designed specifically to meet its needs. Fire educators, fire prevention specialists, arson investigators, juvenile firesetter program managers, interviewers, educators, and team members all will find this information useful. Because juvenile firesetter programs are part of a community network, many other professionals will also benefit from the handbook. People working in law enforcement, mental health, schools, child protective services, social services, and juvenile justice will find it useful.

Copies of the new *Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Handbook* were distributed to all Alberta fire departments and some other professionals in July 2001. 🔥

For further information, contact Mahendra Wijayasinghe, Research Officer at the Fire Commissioner's Office, at (780) 415-0546.



## You were asking...



**Q.** When refueling my vehicle I have noticed that a number of companies have removed the latch-open device on the dispensing nozzle. **Can I wedge open the nozzle** while I attend to my windows, check the oil, etcetera?

**A.** The practice of wedging open the nozzle is not permitted and can lead to a serious situation if the nozzle falls during dispensing. At facilities where latch-open devices have been removed, the person filling the fuel tank must continuously operate the nozzle. Some gas companies have removed the latch-open device due to a small number of incidents involving a static electric discharge when individuals return to the dispensing nozzle.

**Q.** I recently ran out of gas. Having an empty windshield washer fluid container in my vehicle I proceeded to a gas station for fuel, but the attendant refused to fill the container. Are there restrictions on the type of **containers for storing gasoline?**

**A.** Containers for gasoline are required to meet construction standards outlined in the Alberta Fire Code and gas station attendants are not permitted to allow the dispensing of fuel into containers that do not meet those requirements. Containers found at most hardware outlets that bear the symbol of either ULC or the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) are considered appropriate for gasoline storage. Glass and light plastic containers are unacceptable.





Ray Cox, Edmonton and Ray Ligenza, Calgary

# Focus on Fire Prevention Canada— a national perspective

As anyone in the fire service knows, firefighting takes a lot of resources, energy and commitment. While fighting fires is foremost in the public's mind, much of the work behind the scenes is focused on fire prevention—stopping fires before they happen. That too takes a tremendous amount of energy and resources, but there are organizations that provide a helping hand. At the national level, Fire Prevention Canada (FPC) is a tremendous source of assistance and support.

Since 1976, FPC has focused on working with the private and public sectors to achieve fire safety through education across Canada. Its mission includes communication, education, fundraising and development, and partners and supporters.

## Communication

FPC provides a clearing-house of information on fire prevention and safety issues for fire services, governments at all levels, industry and the private sector across Canada and serves as a resource for the public and media. Through its Board of Directors it also interacts with other fire prevention and safety organizations.

Additionally, FPC organizes and coordinates the national launch of Fire Prevention Week on Parliament Hill and works closely with the fire service to promote provincial and territorial Fire Prevention Week activities across the nation.

## Education

Perhaps best known for its involvement with the Canadian version of the National Fire Protection Association's *Learn Not to Burn* (LNTB) program across the country, FPC also initiates and develops a range of educational material for use by the public and the fire service.


## Fundraising and Development

One of FPC's most important activities is interacting with federal government departments to lobby for funds and reinforce the importance of fire prevention in Canada. FPC also organizes and coordinates the Partners in Fire Prevention Special Events, solicits corporate and government funding for materials and invites corporate partnerships for events and projects.


## Partners and Supporters

FPC is very proactive in developing fire prevention and safety initiatives that are available at reasonable or no cost to the public and fire service. Much of this work is supported by the Council of Canadian Fire Marshals and Fire Commissioners, the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs, the federal government, corporations, the private sector, the public and the fire service through sales of fire prevention materials and products.

Through these activities and the tremendous support and efforts of fire departments across Canada, there has been a significant decrease in the number of lives lost due to fire. In fact, over the past 20 to 25 years, there has been a 50 per cent reduction—from 800 to 400. Additionally, 88 lives have been saved by 35 children who learned about fire safety skills through the LNTB program that's been delivered nationally since 1994 to children from Kindergarten to Grade 3.

Canada still has a long way to go to become a leader in fire safety. As a result, FPC continues its efforts to work with the fire service to make Canadian communities the most fire safe in North America. 

**Q.** I want to install a **wood-burning space heater** in my home. How do I ensure that the installation will conform to the building code?

**A.** The Alberta Building Code requires all installations to conform with CSA standard CAN3-B365-M, which covers clearance requirements, floor/wall protection, combustion air provisions, etcetera. Section 9.21 of the code deals with chimneys and flues. Individuals should consult with the building authority having jurisdiction regarding building permit requirements on such installations before work is started. The safety codes officer involved may perform a site inspection on completion of the project. 

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

For more information about Fire Prevention Canada or its resources, contact Christine Sones, Director of Development and Communications, at (613) 749-3844, e-mail [firepreventioncanada@on.aibn.com](mailto:firepreventioncanada@on.aibn.com) or visit the FPC web site at [www.fireprecan.ca](http://www.fireprecan.ca)

# Alberta Fire Training School course update


Starting this fall, the Alberta Fire Training School (AFTS) is offering a full-time program for those interested in acquiring Fire Inspector and/or Fire Investigator professional qualifications.



The program will enable candidates to complete the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1031 Fire Inspector Level 1 qualifications in just six weeks. As well, a substantial portion of the NFPA 1033 Fire Investigator professional program can be completed in seven weeks. Candidates can also attend the full nine weeks to earn Investigator qualifications and credit toward Investigator certification. The program also provides qualification for Safety Codes Officer certification at Level 1 Inspector and Investigator.

The five courses common to both Inspector and Investigator designations run in a consecutive series from October 15 to November 9, 2001. Each course is four days in length. The additional two Inspector courses are scheduled from November 13 to 22, 2001, followed by a two-day practical evaluation. The additional Investigator courses are offered November 27 to December 7, 2001, with a four-day practical evaluation from December 10 to 13, 2001.

According to Chris Senaratne, AFTS Manager of Accreditation and Course Development, "these courses continue the excellent training opportunities available for those in the fire service. At the request of the AFTS Board of Directors, we are offering this training in a block schedule to best accommodate the needs of candidates. We had excellent response to our full-time offering of the NFPA 1001 Firefighter program the past few years and

believe that there is an interest in a similarly structured program for those wanting to earn Inspector and Investigator qualifications." 

For more information about the courses or to register, contact the Alberta Fire Training School at 1-888-863-2387 or (780) 853-5800, send a fax to (780) 853-3008 or you can e-mail the school at [aftsinfo@afts.ab.ca](mailto:aftsinfo@afts.ab.ca). Information and application forms are also available at the school's web site at [www.afts.ab.ca](http://www.afts.ab.ca)


## Convenient, cost-effective training

# SCOTI program update

Now in its fifth year, the Safety Codes Officer Training Initiative (SCOTI) is providing fire-related training opportunities for volunteer fire departments across Alberta. The program is coordinated by the Fire Commissioner's Office through a partnership with the Alberta Fire Training School and the Safety Codes Council.

In 2001-2002, the program is being delivered in eight locations across the province. According to Wayne Girven, Assistant Fire Commissioner, the intent is to offer the program in the most convenient and

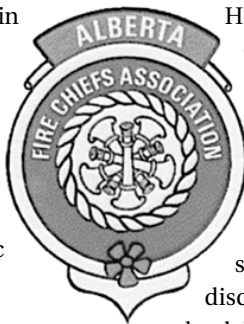
cost-effective way possible. "We offer the program in various locations and with varying course material based on the feedback we receive. This enables participants to take the courses they need without major disruption to their work and home life," said Girven.

Since the program began, more than 1500 individuals have taken advantage of the training offered under the SCOTI program in different communities around the province. 

## The 53rd annual conference of the Alberta Fire Chiefs Association


# Gathering and learning...

A good representation of fire chiefs from across Alberta gathered in Strathcona County between June 23 and 27 for the 53rd annual Alberta Fire Chiefs Association (AFCA) Conference. Based on the theme *Working with Industry*, the conference focused on a topic of particular interest to many fire chiefs across Alberta.



Executive Director of Alberta's Industrial Heartland, who talked to the 175 delegates about how municipalities and fire departments have to work together.

Alberta's fire chiefs combined business sessions with industry site tours, attendance at the trade show and an industry-focused panel discussion. Industry reps accompanied the delegates to their choice of tours to Dow Chemical, Petro Canada, Shell and Enbridge/TransMountain Pipeline.

In addition to the industry reps, other panel members included representatives from EAPUOC (Edmonton and Area Pipeline Utilities Operators Committee) and SIA (Strathcona Industrial Association), the president of NR CAER (North-east Region Community and Emergency Response) plus representatives from Fire Master and Safety Boss. 

For more information about the Alberta Fire Chiefs Association, visit its web site at [www.afca.ab.ca](http://www.afca.ab.ca)



The conference's keynote speaker was Larry Wall,

# Digest

## Municipal Affairs has new deputy minister

C.D. (Doug) Radke joined Municipal Affairs in March as the department's new deputy minister. Doug has many years of provincial government experience in Alberta Agriculture, Alberta Transportation, and Alberta Environment. He served as deputy minister of both Agriculture and Environment before coming to Municipal Affairs.

Doug was born in Lacombe and educated at the University of Alberta, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science and economics. He also obtained his masters in public administration from Carleton University in Ottawa.

"Alberta's fire service plays a critical role in keeping our communities safe, and that was never more apparent than this spring when fire threatened many municipalities," said Radke. "The department appreciates all that firefighters do to maintain the safety of Albertans."

## Mark your calendar

- **August 11-12**  
Provincial Hose Coupling  
Strathcona County
- **October 7-13**  
Fire Prevention Week

## Free-wheeling safe house

The Grande Prairie and District Burn Society recently opened the doors to its Kids Community Safe House, which looks like a luxurious camper-trailer. The \$60,000 unit constructed in Pennsylvania is the first of its kind in the province, though similar units exist in Ontario, Winnipeg and Whistler. It will be wheeled out to schools and events to teach children about the dangers of fire and what to do if fire happens. The Community Lottery Board and the Alberta Lottery Fund donated \$40,000 for the project and the GP and District Burn Society raised the rest.

## Look waaaay up...

Nothing in James Kostuk's three years with the Grande Prairie Fire Department prepared him for the ordeal of sitting atop a 30-metre arial ladder for 100 hours. But it was all for a good cause—to raise money for the local Burn Society. His time sitting in a car seat strapped to the top of the ladder raised \$17,000 and may even get him into the *Guinness Book of World Records*. "Some of the firefighters have submitted the paperwork and we're just waiting to hear if we've been accepted," said Kostuk.

Kostuk, 27, was chosen for the May ladder-sit from a number of department volunteers. "I was up there from a Wednesday to a Sunday and I didn't sleep more than about two hours a day because you couldn't get comfortable enough," he said. According to Kostuk, the most difficult part of his sit was lack of mobility and boredom, though Grande Prairie residents did come to see what he was up to and even got crane rides to pay him a visit.

Allowed five minutes of ground time for every hour on top of the ladder, Kostuk generally saved up his breaks and took them at eight-hour intervals. Three colleagues kept watch at all times from the ground to look after food, donations, site control and crane operation. Asked whether he would do it again Kostuk was skeptical. "I don't think so right now, but you never know."

## Check it out ...

If you haven't surfed the Fire Commissioner's Office web site lately, you might be in for a surprise. There's a wealth of useful material and resources contained on the site, including current and back issues of *Fire News*.

The web site also provides updated statistics, relevant key dates and information plus links to many other fire-related web sites. Check it out at [www.gov.ab.ca/ma/fco](http://www.gov.ab.ca/ma/fco)



## New videos available

*Emergency Preparedness/Incident Prevention/Crisis Management* – this 14-minute video ensures employee safety in an emergency by following this program's guidelines for developing an emergency plan. The video shows what departments and facilities to contact for assistance; how to announce an emergency and conduct an evacuation; how to handle the media; and much more. It also explains the purpose and function of a crisis management team and demonstrates a practice drill.

*Red the Fire Dog and the 3 P's of Fire Safety* – an entertaining and memorable 15-minute video for young children to teach them everything they need to know about fire safety. The video introduces the 3 P's of fire safety: PLANNING, PRACTICE, PREVENTION and features Red the fire dog, who explains making a family fire escape plan, preventing fire at home and protecting yourself.

*Smokey's Fire Safety Tips* is a 12-minute video about Smokey the Bear. Kids everywhere love Smokey. In this delightful live-action story, Smokey teaches young children a valuable lesson about playing with matches.

*Fire Extinguishers: On the Spot Know-how* – a 12-minute video that shows professional firefighters in live-action demonstrations. Also shows graphic illustrations of portable fire extinguisher use. Includes practical, detailed information on choosing the right model as well as installation and upkeep. Also covers when to use an extinguisher and safe and effective use.

*How to Select and Safely Use Portable Fire Extinguishers* – this video is useful for showing employees how to operate portable fire extinguishers safely and effectively. Viewers will learn how to use fire extinguishers, when to use them and why people should practise beforehand.

*Fire Extinguisher Training: Using The P.A.S.S. Technique* – a 15-minute video on when and how to use a fire extinguisher before you need it. Key topics include conditions where portable extinguishers can be used, the different classes of fire and which extinguisher to use, how to approach a fire using the P.A.S.S. Technique—PULL, AIM, SQUEEZE, SWEEP, proper fire extinguisher installation and maintenance and basic fire safety.

*Heat Stress* – this 14-minute video shows how heat stress can lead to exhaustion and stroke. It provides common sense steps to avoid heat stress, including correct clothing, gear and cooling equipment, as well as first aid information.

*No Ordinary Fire* – 13 minutes of dramatic footage of actual fires to help reinforce critical rules for reporting, containing, and extinguishing fires in health care settings as well as techniques for evacuating patients using one- and two-person carriers.

*Holiday Fire Safety* – a 13-minute video showing the increased potential for fires and burns on special occasions and holidays—including Thanksgiving, Halloween, Hanukkah, Christmas, and New Year's Eve. The video addresses specific holiday activities and their associated risks, such as fireworks, candles, open flames, festive lights, electrical wiring, decorations, cooking, outdoor grilling, smoking, Christmas trees, and general fire safety.

*Adventures of Safety Frog: Fire Safety* – a 10-minute video demonstrating vital fire safety rules to children in an entertaining and easy-to-remember way. See Georgette the puppet frog transform into Safety Frog to prevent her friends from following the match puppet's advice to "light up my light." Safety Frog also instructs the other puppets about smoke alarms, safety with fireplaces, and a home fire drill. This performance by the Schifelly Puppets, complete with a Superman spoof, will appeal to elementary school children. The video includes a demonstration of a properly executed classroom fire drill.

*Fire and the Elderly* – this 12-minute video presents the special challenges faced by senior citizens with respect to fire prevention in the home. It shows seniors what they need to know to prevent fires, and what they should do if a fire occurs. Details all aspects of EDITH—exit drills in the home—and includes special sections on smoking, heating sources, kitchen safety, and electrical appliances.



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## The Fire Commissioner's Office gets Bronze

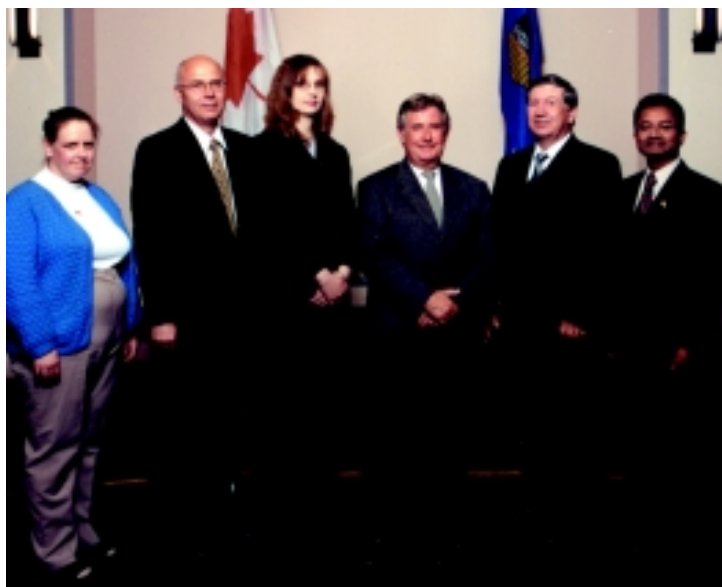
# Receiving recognition for a job well done!



More than 10 years of focused efforts towards children's fire safety education have paid off for the Fire Commissioner's Office with a Bronze at the 2001 Premier's Award of Excellence.

The Premier's Award of Excellence Program is designed to promote and recognize superior client service and business practices in the Alberta public service. A ceremony was held on June 18, 2001 to recognize winners of the Premier's Award. Each team honoured with the award, which is displayed at the Legislature Building, received a carving to recognize its achievements. Each member also received a certificate signed by the Premier, a lapel pin and the opportunity to use the award logo on business cards, letterhead and documents.

The award winning team at the Fire Commissioner's Office consisted of Mahendra Wijayasinghe (team leader), Tom Makey (team sponsor), Wayne Girven, Gloria Mercer and Wendy Butterworth.



From left: Gloria Mercer, Assistant Deputy Minister Dennis Gartner, Wendy Butterworth, Premier Ralph Klein, Tom Makey and Mahendra Wijayasinghe.

"The team wishes to recognize its partners, specifically the municipal fire departments, the Alberta Fire Chiefs Association's Public Fire Safety Education Committee, Fire Prevention Canada, Health Canada, McDonald's Restaurants, and the Alberta Centre for Injury Control and Research, to name a few, who have worked with us to implement these programs," said Wijayasinghe. "Thanks also go to all our partners who wrote letters supporting our submission," he added.

### Summary of reductions achieved in Alberta between two 10-year periods: 1980-1989 and 1990-1999

Measure	1980-1989	1990-1999	Change from 1980-1999
Number of fireplay fire incidents	5356	2302	-57%
Number of all deaths from fireplay fires	51	19	-63%
Number of child deaths from fireplay fires	42	15	-64%
Number of child deaths from all fires	110	72	-35%
Age specific fire death rate*	37.5	16	-57%

\*Fire death rate per 100,000 population for children aged 0 to 4 years.

