

## Fire safety activities across Alberta

# Creating community interest in fire safety

*In communities throughout Alberta, fire departments conduct a broad range of activities to increase awareness about fire safety and prevention. Provided below are examples of activities that have taken place in fire departments across the province.*

### Airdrie Emergency Services

During Fire Prevention Week (FPW) 2004, Airdrie Emergency Services participated in a smoke detector blitz involving the older area of Airdrie. The area was divided into quadrants and firefighters went door-to-door to test smoke alarms. Listed below is the breakdown of the results from the tests:

- 26 households had no detection at all. These homes were given battery-operated smoke alarms to install in their homes
- 146 households had working smoke alarms. After testing these smoke alarms, replacement batteries were given to these households.
- Unfortunately, some households did not want Airdrie's free service. Nevertheless, a battery-operated smoke alarm was given to them.

Firefighters also visited 53 units in a senior's community and tested their smoke alarms. They were pleased to discover that all units had hard-wired smoke alarms. As a good gesture, however, they gave each of the tenants battery-operated smoke alarms as additional support.

For more information about Airdrie's fire prevention efforts, please contact Butch Davy at [butch.davy@airdrie.ca](mailto:butch.davy@airdrie.ca).



*Children enjoying Bonnyville's miniature fire truck*

### Bonnyville Fire Department

Thanks to terrific support and co-operation from local area businesses, the Bonnyville Fire Department enhanced some of their FPW activities, including acquiring a Bonnyville Firefighter Association miniature fire truck that carries nine children at a time plus a hidden driver. "The department's dream of owning our own little truck became a reality in time for the 2004 Fire Prevention Week campaign," said Darryl Shyian, Captain, Bonnyville Fire Department.

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## Minister's message



*As fire service professionals, your commitment to keeping our communities safe from fire is admirable and very much appreciated. Albertans value your commitment and the service you provide, and I know they join me in thanking you for doing an excellent job.*

*Fire can occur quickly, and be devastating. It's important we maintain a top-notch fire service. The annual fire training grant program helps to ensure municipal response personnel and volunteers have the training they need. In addition, the Alberta Emergency Resource Inventory System (AERIS), recently made directly available to municipalities, will provide an accurate picture of available firefighting resources. We are proud to continue the presentation of Alberta Emergency Services Medals to recognize those with more than 12 years of firefighting service.*

*Our province's firefighters are among the best in the country. As the new Minister of Municipal Affairs, I look forward to working with the Fire Commissioner's Office to keep it that way.*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rob Renner". The signature is fluid and cursive.

The Honourable Rob Renner  
Minister of Municipal Affairs

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To kick off FPW 2004, members distributed 1,000 Fire Chief for a Day entry forms at the local elementary schools, which also included information about the department's Open House and an opportunity to win one of three battery-operated miniature vehicles decorated as emergency response units. "This distribution method ensured that every child at the school received the fire safety information package," added Darryl. "By getting information to the kids, they literally pestered their parents or guardians to take them to the fire hall for the evening open house, which enabled us to get our fire safety messages out to the parents/guardians while offering rides on the miniature fire truck for the kids."

The Open House included fire safety presentations and fire hall and equipment tours, as well as showing off firefighter culinary skills with hotdogs and hamburgers. "2004 was the second year that the fire department hosted the Fire Chief for a Day contest, and it wouldn't be possible without the great support from area businesses," added Darryl. One student from each of the three elementary schools was chosen as Fire Chief and took part in hose handling opportunities, fire truck rides and other fire safety-related activities. Each of the Power Wheel battery-operated vehicles included a fire extinguisher, smoke alarm, CO detector, first aid kit and other fire safety items. "To be eligible to win, the kids had to correctly fill out a fire safety quiz and have their parents/guardians sign it, which encouraged the adults to review the fire safe quiz questions with their children," added Darryl.

The 2004 FPW presentation to schools included a fire call to the 911 dispatch office, which set off the pagers of firefighters in attendance. This allowed everyone to hear what the 911 operator asked and what information was relayed to the firefighters, which enforced the need for students to learn their address or land location. Laminated placemats with fire safety slogans were handed out to elementary school children who



participated in the fire drill. "This was literally another way to get fire safety messages to the dinner table," added Darryl.

Support from the local businesses, community residents and members of the Bonnyville Fire Department are key to the continued success of Fire Prevention/Education events within Bonnyville and the surrounding area.

*"...the open house enabled us to get our fire safety messages out to the parents/guardians while offering rides on the miniature fire truck for the kids."*

For more information about Bonnyville's FPW activities, contact Darryl Shyjan at (780) 826-4755.

## Red Deer Emergency Services

Red Deer Emergency Services, together with local businesses, recently launched The Smoke Detector Program. Through the campaign, fire-medics offer a 29-point inspection of the home. The service is provided free to the citizens of Red Deer thanks to the generous support of the volunteer committee and major sponsors that include ING Canada, ATCO Gas and ENMAX.

According to Wes Van Bavel, Fire & Injury Prevention Specialist and Fire Inspector/Investigator with Red Deer

Emergency Services, they hope to visit 3,000 homes each year, with a mandate to visit every home in Red Deer over a 10-year period. "The Smoke Detector Program is a comprehensive home safety check," said Van Bavel. "In addition to checking smoke detectors, firefighters inspect Red Deer homes for fire and injury hazards and provide residents with information about installing, testing and maintaining smoke detectors." Van Bavel added that people who don't want an inspection could have a check done at the door. Residents who don't have a smoke detector can have one installed free of charge. Batteries are also replaced for free during the inspection. And, to ensure that everyone has the opportunity of a free inspection, the department will leave information about arranging for a free visit for people who are missed in the block visits. 🔥

For more information, contact Wes Van Bavel at (403) 346-5511.

## Donated fire truck finds new life in Mexico

# South of the border

Yellowhead County Council was part of a unique opportunity to promote international co-operation and spread goodwill on behalf of the Yellowhead region through the gracious gesture of selling its surplus #65 fire engine, a 1980 Ford F600, to the Rotary Club of Edson for the nominal amount of \$1.00. The decision came after a presentation made to Council by members of the Edson Rotary Club, which partnered with the Rotary Clubs of Grande Prairie to provide assistance to the City of Mazatlan, Mexico. Mazatlan, which has a population of over 500,000, only has a 58 person volunteer fire department and is short on good firefighting equipment.

In January 2005, the fire truck, along with two other used fire trucks and a used school bus from the Grande Prairie Rotary Clubs, were driven the 5,000 kilometres to Mazatlan by Grande Prairie firefighters, along with local Rotarian passengers. The Rotary Clubs involved covered transportation costs.



Fire truck #65 at the snowy start of its journey to Mexico

The #65 fire engine served the Robb Fire Department from 1981 until 1993, and was used as a backup machine for the Edson Fire Department between 1994 and 2004. No longer meeting the

Canadian operating regulations for pump pressure, it provides a much-needed resource to Mexico, which has different operating regulations. 🔥


## He's at it again!

A few issues ago, we shared with you the efforts by Victor Fernandez, EMT with the City of St. Albert Fire Department, to gather donations of firefighting equipment for one of the fire services in Santiago, Chile. Thanks to the generosity of many, Victor was able to send \$86,000 worth of firefighting equipment, breathing apparatus, helmets, jackets, pants and boots to Chile. His next foray was with Colombia, where \$49,000 worth of firefighting gear and firefighting manuals – in Spanish – were delivered to the City of Paz de Ariporo, Colombia. The next step for Colombia is finding a fire truck or tanker truck that can be donated or purchased inexpensively.



Donated fire gear ready to make a difference in South America

Victor's latest initiative involves working with firefighters from Dodoma, Tanzania, which is a sister city to St. Albert. Some of their officials will be coming to St. Albert

in the near future and Victor is hopeful that he'll be able to assure them that donations of helmets, jackets, pants, etc. will be sent to help firefighters in Dodoma. "This is the time of year that spring clean up takes place at fire stations across Alberta. It's the perfect opportunity to clean out the buildings and assign any old equipment or clothing to help fire departments in need in other countries," stated Victor. "Any one with any items to donate, please give me a call at (780) 458-7917 or email me at victorstalbert@hotmail.com." 

### Fire department profile

## Profiling the Longview Fire Department

Forty-five minutes south of Calgary on Highway 22 lies the Longview Fire Department. Volunteer Fire Chief George De La Mare and his 22 volunteer firefighters are responsible for firefighting and response activities in Alberta's largest area boundary, which covers seven miles north and eight miles east of Longview, west to the B.C. border and south to the Old Man River. The jurisdiction includes 354 village residents as well as a similar number in the rural areas.

"Our volunteers respond to about 85-90 calls a year, most of them for rangeland fires, motor vehicle collisions and medical assistance, but we also have one or two structural fires a year," points out De La Mare. "Thanks to our fire prevention efforts, though, structural fires aren't as big a problem as they used to be."

"In addition to firefighting and response activities, we also have an agreement with Alberta Forestry to help them. That includes rescue efforts such as searching for lost hikers and lost or injured snowmobilers," added De La Mare. "We also have mutual aid



Members of the Longview Fire Department, from L to R: #121 Aaron Lyons, fencer, volunteer for four years; #118 Chad Sartison, financial planner, volunteer for two years; #108 Scott McPherson, rancher, volunteer for nine years; #104 Ron Caumartin, grader operator, volunteer for 27 years


agreements with other villages in the area and, through an agreement with the Calgary Fire Department, we have assistance for any hazardous material occurrences.”

De La Mare joined the fire department in 1980 as a volunteer firefighter, and became fire chief in 1991 when the new fire hall was built. While the fire department has been in existence for many years, 16 years ago the Village of Longview signed an agreement with the Municipal District of Foothills to look after the rural areas around the village. The fire department’s equipment, which is owned by the M.D., includes a tanker, pumper, bush buggy and command vehicle.

In addition to responding to calls, firefighters are also involved in the community, such as making presentations to Longview School and the school on the Eden Valley Reserve. “We also do a number of talks and presentations to organizations, such as our fire extinguisher demonstration once a year for the Foothills School Division and talks with our local Rural Crime Watch,” stated De La Mare. As well, we regularly conduct in-house training twice a month to ensure our firefighters are well-prepared for any calls.”

While De La Mare isn’t a boasting man, he is proud of the work his firefighters

do and the fact that so many of them continue to volunteer. “I have a great bunch of volunteers, who readily respond to any call we receive,” said De La Mare. “In fact one of our firefighters has been with the department for 27 years!”

Most recently, Longview’s firefighters took part in a successful fundraising effort to raise the profile of volunteer firefighters and generate funds toward the purchase of needed equipment and supplies. As indicated in the sidebar below (see Firefighting calendar), by profiling their department and 11 others, Albertans are starting to see another aspect of volunteer firefighters and the tremendous work they do. 

## *Firefighting calendar*

It all started with a comment made while redirecting traffic from a Highway 22 motor vehicle collision. A lady who overheard Longview Fire Department’s Chad Sartison mention that all the firefighters on the scene were volunteers exclaimed surprise that volunteer firefighters existed. This sparked an idea in Sartison to get the word out about volunteer firefighters and the work they do. The end result was the creation of a beautiful black and white 2005 calendar that pays tribute to Alberta’s 9,000 volunteer firefighters and the important role they play in their communities.

“There were two reasons behind the calendar’s development,” said Sartison. “Rural areas already know that volunteer firefighters exist, but most city dwellers aren’t aware that volunteers run most of the fire departments outside of the cities. The other reason is that the majority of the motor vehicle collisions we respond to involve people going to or from Calgary. And, as the calendar states: ‘volunteer departments cover almost 95 per cent of Alberta’s land mass, which means any time you leave the city limits your safety is in their hands.’”

With the sale of approximately 5,000 calendars and an increase in awareness about volunteer firefighters, Sartison says he’s quite happy with their efforts so far. “We learned a lot in the process, and we’re already planning to start earlier with the 2006 calendar.”

Proceeds from the calendar sales go towards funding the kind of state-of-the-art equipment, training and vehicles needed to save lives. Some of the proceeds from the 2005 calendar went to the Boys and Girls Clubs of Calgary, who helped sell the calendars through their volunteer network.

Sartison points out that the 2005 calendar highlighted volunteer fire departments located in and around the Calgary area; however, he’s hoping to hear from other volunteer fire departments across Alberta who are interested in being involved. Contact Chad Sartison directly at (403) 395-2368 For more information or to order the 2006 calendar.



# Strengthening Canada's emergency preparedness

The January 24, 2005 meeting of federal, provincial and territorial ministers responsible for emergency management has set the stage for improvements to Canada's emergency preparedness.

Co-chaired by Anne McLellan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, and Monte Kwinter, Ontario Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, the meeting was attended by ministers and emergency management officials from Canada's provinces and territories.

In recognition of the importance of regular discussions among Federal/Provincial/Territorial (FPT) Ministers responsible for emergency management, the ministers agreed to establish a permanent forum and meet annually to collaborate on improving emergency management.

One of the most important components of this meeting was the collective commitment by the Ministers to assess, manage and mitigate risks to Canadians as well as ensure better emergency preparedness across Canada. At the meeting, the Ministers agreed to an eight-point forward work plan that includes:

## Emergency response framework

Governments will work together to improve and enhance the emergency response framework in order to harmonize the federal system so that it complements each provincial and territorial system by fall 2005. At their next meeting, officials will report back to Ministers on the progress made.

## Disaster assistance

Officials will continue discussions aimed at reinforcing the current disaster financial assistance

arrangements and develop options for disaster financial assistance outside of the existing Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements, both for review by FPT Deputy Ministers in summer 2005.

## Inventory of disaster assistance programs

Ministers agreed to continue work aimed at creating an inventory of disaster financial assistance programs and invited provinces and territories to link their programs to the existing federal inventory. The inventory will help applicants with the process of claiming for assistance. Ontario will be the first province to link its listing of provincial programs with the federal inventory.

## Disaster mitigation

Officials will prepare options for the development of a National Disaster Mitigation Strategy and submit them for review by FPT Deputy Ministers in summer 2005. The strategy would aim to reduce the risks, impacts and costs associated with natural disasters such as hurricanes, ice storms and floods.

## Training

Ministers tasked officials with reviewing and updating the Training Strategy Action Plan for 2005-2010 to ensure progressive and sustainable emergency management training in Canada. FPT Deputy Ministers will consider options in summer 2005.

## Exercise calendar

Officials will develop a calendar of joint FPT emergency response exercises for review by FPT Deputy Ministers in late spring or early summer 2005.




## Public alerting

Ministers agreed to expedite the development and implementation of the National Public Alerting Strategy led by Industry Canada, with a report to FPT Deputy Ministers in summer 2005.

## Critical Infrastructure Protection Strategy

Ministers agreed to develop the work plan for a national Critical Infrastructure Protection Strategy by summer 2005.

These eight points are critical components in ensuring a comprehensive plan across Canada. The next step will be a joint meeting of FPT Emergency Management Ministers with FPT Ministers responsible for Justice – in advance of the FPT Justice Ministers' meeting – to discuss issues such as the current threat environment and parliamentary review of the *Anti-Terrorism Act*.

"The January 24, 2005 meeting was a critical step in establishing a Canada-wide strategic plan regarding any types of emergencies," said Dave Redman, Executive Director, Emergency Management Alberta. "While Alberta already has a very strong program in place, by working with our counterparts across the country, we can all achieve even greater outcomes." 

For more information about the First Ministers' Meeting, visit Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada's website at: [www.psepc.gc.ca/publications/news/2005/20050124\\_e.asp](http://www.psepc.gc.ca/publications/news/2005/20050124_e.asp)



# Aboriginal news update

Last issue we introduced you to some fire safety activities taking place in Aboriginal communities across Alberta. This topic will now be a regular feature in **Alberta Fire News**. The following provides a list of recent Aboriginal fire safety activities.

## Métis Nation of Alberta

The Métis Nation of Alberta hosted a group of Métis students in the Emergency Services Technology program, which commenced March 21, 2005 at **fire etc.** in Vermilion, Alberta. Graduates of the program become National Fire Protection Association 1001 Professional Firefighters as well as Emergency Medical Technicians-Ambulance (EMT-A). Emergency Services Technology (EST) is the only full-time diploma program in Canada.

Many graduates of this program are employed with major metropolitan emergency response and fire departments across Canada. Career possibilities include municipal, industrial and airport firefighting, pre-hospital medical response and loss prevention. As well, this program may form the basis for career advancement

## Benefiting the Métis people

The Association of Métis Settlement Fire Chiefs was created when Fishing Lake Fire Chief Leon Cardinal suggested that Métis fire chiefs could accomplish more by working together. The February 17 meeting in Edmonton was one example of these efforts. The Association is aware that to be a recognized accredited community and access grant money after 2007, they must have as many agreements as possible in place. In addition to strengthening fire departments, such agreements will also benefit the Métis people as a whole. The Association is encouraging all settlements to participate in such activities. For more information, northern settlements should contact Wade Parenteau, Deputy Chief, Paddle Prairie Fire Department at (780) 981-2881 or via fax at (780) 981-3737.

Southeastern settlements should contact Leon Cardinal, Fire Chief, Fishing Lake Fire Department at (780) 943-2202.

to fire officer, inspector, investigator, instructor or public educator.

## Aseniwuche Winewak Nation of Canada

The Aseniwuche Winewak Nations co-ordinated home and school presentations for the Fire Commissioner's Office (FCO). Judy Harvie, Aboriginal Fire Safety Officer for the FCO, visited several homes in the Grande Cache area and talked to residents about fire/injury prevention.

Residents were very kind and welcomed Judy to the area. Aseniwuche staff were also very helpful as they escorted Judy on the home and school visits. During the visit, Grande Cache firefighter Dave McKenna joined Judy at the Susa Creek School with his trunk of fire prevention materials. Judy and members of the Grande Cache Fire Department are continuing with ongoing dialogue, presentations and visits.

## Métis settlement fire chiefs meeting

Paddle Prairie and Fishing Lake fire chiefs Wade Parenteau and Leon Cardinal worked with Judy on co-ordinating a Métis Settlement Fire Chief and Council meeting, which took place in Edmonton at the Edmonton Fire Training Academy on February 17, 2005. At the meeting, Fire Commissioner Pat Graham presented an overview of FCO activities, and Assistant Fire Commissioners Mahendra Wijayasinghe and Ernie Palsom presented an outline of Fire Incident Reporting and Field Operations, respectively. Spence Sample, advisor to the Alberta Fire Commissioner, and Judy Harvie presented information on legal and Occupational Health & Safety topics relevant to the Settlement fire departments. 🔥



Staff members of the Aseniwuche Winewak Nations and the Alberta Fire Commissioners Office visited residents in the Grande Cache area to discuss fire prevention

# Training to be prepared

Located in the heart of a heavily forested area in the northwest area of Alberta, the City of Grande Prairie is a thriving and vibrant community. In addition to producing more grain than the entire province of Manitoba, Grande Prairie also thrives in many other economic sectors including forestry, oil and gas, retail and regional services and the service industry. Providing fire and emergency services to this fast-growing city is the responsibility of the Grande Prairie Fire Department.

"In addition to fire suppression and 911 dispatch, we're also responsible for Hazardous Materials; EMR co-response; disaster services; investigations; inspections; maintenance; thermal imaging; emergency response; pre-fire plans; training; school programs; and rescue operations, including air crash, water and ice rescues," said Fire Chief Bill Walker. "All of our firefighters are certified as Emergency Medical Responders, with some of them also certified as EMT-As. Our department operates on four shifts of 11 personnel, which includes a platoon captain, two lieutenants and eight firefighters for each shift. We also have 13 staff employed in the dispatch centre, which serves as the 911 call answer service for the region, servicing the area up to Peace River and down to Grande Cache."

To ensure that personnel are prepared for any event, the fire department places considerable emphasis on training exercises. "We usually try to conduct one to two tabletop exercises as well as a practical exercise each year," said Charlie Martin, training officer for the Grande Prairie Fire Department. "We also participate in training exercises coordinated by industry in the area, such as ERCO International."

Working closely with Dieter Langer, district representative for Emergency Management Alberta, Martin is able to co-ordinate significant training exercises, such as the tabletop exercise around a major

downdraft scenario that hit the nearby campground. As Martin points out, the exercise had many components that were similar to the tornado that hit Grande Prairie last summer. "The tornado response went very well, thanks in part to our downdraft exercise," said Martin. Another exercise focused on a pandemic influenza, which enabled the fire department to test response procedures on another level. Working closely with the Peace River Health Authority, the fire department used drama students as victims who had to be transported and admitted to the hospital.


"One of our biggest exercises to date, in terms of the number of people involved, was a simulated evacuation of a six-storey home for seniors. Using drama students from the high school, we went through an evacuation process of an older-type building. The evacuation included sheltering people in place and making arrangements for the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) to handle people with special medical needs. It was a very good working exercise for the EOC," added Martin.

Martin says they've also simulated a plane crash, again with the help of students. "This exercise included transporting people by ambulance, evacuating or relocating people, feeding and lodging them and setting up services around the Public Information Officer. It was a sustained incident that provided real value for everyone involved," he added.

*"... a simulated evacuation of a six-storey home for seniors using drama students ... we went through an evacuation process ... making arrangements for the Emergency Operations Centre to handle people with special medical needs."*

"Ultimately what we try to do is list different components of our emergency response plans and test one area, such as communications. By using or removing processes, we are able to see how they work and where we have to make changes."

While Martin points out that the department is currently busy upgrading the EOC and preparing for a second site for 911 dispatch, he's already starting to think about what his next training exercise will be. "Ham operators provide a very valuable resource and to date we haven't utilized them," said Martin. "Including them in an exercise might be very interesting."

Martin also points out that he tries to get as many people as possible involved in the exercises, particularly in the EOC. "In addition to having staff involved, I try to bring in other personnel so they can see what takes place in an emergency event," added Martin. "The more people who have a good understanding of their role, the better prepared we are to handle real incidents. And that's really what all the training exercises are geared towards." 

For more information about the Grande Prairie Fire Department training exercises, contact Charlie Martin at (780) 538-0395.





# Horizons – Beyond 2005

Mark June 9 - 11, 2005 on your calendar for the Safety Codes Council annual conference at the Capri Centre in Red Deer.

2005 is a significant milestone for the Safety Codes Council as it marks the Council's 10th year of operation and the third consecutive year for what has become the premier safety codes event in Alberta. The conference provides opportunities for front-line individuals to meet with Technical Council members from all disciplines, other municipal officials and provincial government representatives.

Alberta Municipal Affairs and the Alberta Building Officials Association will be joining the Safety Codes Council to bring a new slate of topics and information to those attending the conference.


The conference is also held in conjunction with the Council Annual General Meeting and the Partners Award Dinner. The trade show has been expanded and will include many new exhibitors from codes-related organizations and suppliers. The golf tournament has also been booked for June 9 at the Alberta Springs Golf Course.

Using the theme "Horizons – Beyond 2005", the conference will look at the next five to 10 years as the Council continues to evolve and change.

The main objectives of the conference are to:

- provide a forum for safety codes officers, municipal staff and administrators from a variety of disciplines to interact and discuss common issues;

- provide important information to industry partners including safety codes officers, municipal officials and other accredited organizations about codes, legislation and business practices; and
- add value back to the system by providing ongoing learning opportunities for safety system partners.

Conference and trade show registration forms were mailed in March and information on topics and speakers is available on the Safety Codes Council website at [www.safetycodes.ab.ca](http://www.safetycodes.ab.ca). 

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

## FERS update

# Fire Electronic Reporting System (FERS)

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

## FERS users (via *milenet* online)

- The FERS performance issues brought to our attention have been resolved. The system is now quicker and easier to use.
- As of January 07, 2004:
  - 341 of 346 municipalities have signed the *milenet* agreement to get access to *milenet* (revised or original).
  - 128 of the 341 municipalities with *milenet* access have signed up their fire department(s) for FERS.

## Electronic fire reporting (via private software vendors)

- Fire incident reports submitted electronically from private fire reporting software, including reports

from the cities of Edmonton and Calgary, are successfully being uploaded into FERS by FCO staff.

- FDM systems are now ready to send fire data to the FCO.
- The City of St. Albert (Crysis) has also sent in a few test files and steps to streamline the process are underway.

## Fire departments submitting hard copy fire reports

- PDF fillable report forms are available on the FCO website.


Please contact Te-Jay Smart at (780) 644-4692 (dial 310-0000 for toll free access outside of Edmonton) or via email at [te-jay.smart@gov.ab.ca](mailto:te-jay.smart@gov.ab.ca) for further information.

## Urgent request to submit 2004 fire reports

The FCO is ready to begin the 2004 Fire Commissioner's Statistical Report and it is essential that we capture all of the fire

incidents that happened in Alberta to make this report accurate and complete. If you have any 2004 fire incident reports that have not been submitted from your jurisdiction, please follow the guidelines below:

- \* Please mail all unsubmitted 2004 fire reports as hard copies to the FCO or submit them electronically if you have access to FERS. **Deadline for submitting 2004 fire reports is May 30, 2004.**
- \* If you are serviced by a private software vendor (i.e., FDM or Crysis) and have not yet submitted reports electronically, please mail in your 2004 reports as hard copy documents.
- \* FERS online users must finalize their fire reports still sitting in the "draft" mode in "My Events" in FERS.

If you need any assistance with fire reporting, please call Gloria Mercer at (780) 415-0548. 



# Genesis Canadian Fire & Life Safety Public Educators' Forum

The Council of Canadian Fire Marshals and Fire Commissioners (CCFM/FC) held the Genesis Forum of Fire and Life Safety Public Educators of Canada in Toronto, Ontario from November 21-25, 2004. Public educators identified by fire marshals and fire commissioners from each province and territory, the Department of National Defence and Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, as well as two lead representatives of the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs (CAFC) actively participated in the forum. True to the word "Genesis" this forum was a first of its kind in the Canadian fire service. It provided an opportunity for fire and life safety educators across the country to meet face-to-face to present and discuss fire and life safety issues in each jurisdiction as well as to focus on what can be done at the national level.



Participants at the Genesis Forum

Representing the CAFC were Fire Chief **Reid Douglas** (North Vancouver Fire Department) and **Brian Shand** (Prince Albert Fire & Emergency Services, Saskatchewan). Fire and Life Safety Educators representing their respective Fire Marshal's Office/Fire Commissioner's Office were: **Cheryl Deibert** (Saskatchewan); **David Gallant** (New Brunswick); **Bev Gilbert** (Ontario); **Mahendra Wijayasinghe** (Alberta); **Kathy Danino** (Manitoba); **Frank Savage** (Nova Scotia); **Barb Kidd** (British Columbia); **Lucie Boulanger** (Quebec); **Kellie Mitchell** and **Ann Kall** (Northwest Territories); **Luc Page** (Department of National Defence); and **Randy deLaunay** (Human Resources Skills Development Canada). **Frederick G. Hollett**, Fire Commissioner/Director, represented the Newfoundland and Labrador Fire and Emergency Services and **Gina Pontikas** from the Ontario Fire Marshal's Office provided administrative assistance. Prince Edward Island, Yukon and Nunavut were not represented at the forum.

Chair of the CCFM/FC Fire Prevention Committee and New Brunswick Fire Marshal John C. McLaughlin led the group in a four-day exercise, sharing best practices and identifying potential gaps in life and fire safety education design and delivery. The primary objectives of the forum included providing the Council with ideas and direction regarding the future of public education nationally. The consolidated report and

its recommendations are expected to be released in the near future to participants, and tabled formally for CCFM/FC consideration. "The participants in this forum worked very hard to set priorities for the CCFM/FC and the CAFC to consider the advancement of fire and life safety public education initiatives nationally. I commend each and every one of them for their focus and energy in attaining our objectives," said Fire Marshal McLaughlin.

The Genesis Forum was made possible through the support received from sponsors across Canada. They included Human Resources and Skills Development Canada; the CAFC; CSA International; Underwriters Laboratories of Canada; the National Fire Protection Association; the New Brunswick Association of Fire Chiefs; the Northwest Territories Fire Chiefs Association; the Nunavut Fire Chiefs Association; the Manitoba Fire Chiefs Association; the Newfoundland and Labrador Fire Chiefs and Fire Fighters Association; and the Fire Chiefs Association of British Columbia. Sponsors in kind included the Ontario Office of the Fire Marshal; the Saskatchewan Office of the Fire Commissioner; the New Brunswick Office of the Fire Marshal; Universal Signs of New Brunswick; Wheelers of New Brunswick; and Last Logos of British Columbia.

The collegial efforts of fire and life safety educators who met in Toronto is expected to help set a new and enhanced direction for fire and life safety programs across Canada. 🔥



# Special Edition of Fire News

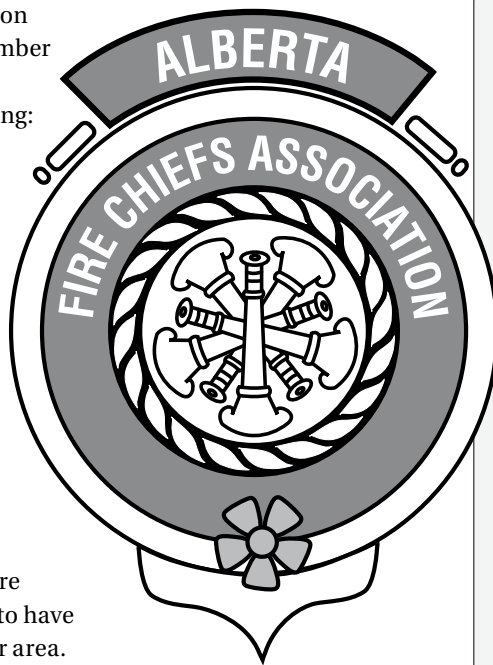
In keeping with Alberta's 100th birthday, the next issue of *Alberta Fire News* will be a centennial edition, celebrating highlights of 100 years of fire protection and prevention in Alberta. Look for it in August 2005.

*Keeping you informed...*


## Alberta Fire Chiefs Association update

Since the last issue of *Alberta Fire News*, the Alberta Fire Chiefs Association (AFCA) has participated in a number of key provincial fire service initiatives, including the following:

- The 2005 AFCA Conference, which brought together fire personnel from across the province to share ideas, problem solve and network.
- The Electrical Safety Training Program, a partnership between the AFCA and the electrical industry co-ordinated through the AFCA Regional Directors. Contact your Regional Director for more information if you would like to have the program presented in your area.
- AFCA board members have been meeting with the Fire Commissioner's Office and other officials to review the impact of including fire department vehicles in the definition of commercial vehicles. Discussions are ongoing. If you are not aware of this change it is suggested that you may want to look into the matter.
- The change in governance for the EMS from a municipal responsibility to Regional Health Authorities has also been under study, particularly among those AFCA members that operate integrated services. The AFCA has served as an information-sharing vehicle for those members.
- An AFCA committee has also been working on determining the impact of



changes to Occupational Health and Safety requirements for the emergency service. As progress is made, members will be updated. It is hoped that the process will facilitate compliance and, as always, improve life safety for fire department members.

While the 2005 AFCA Conference is over, it's never too early to make plans to attend the 2006 Conference, which takes place next June in Red Deer. We hope to see everyone there! 

### *Get active with the AFCA*

The AFCA is committed to working on behalf of its members across Alberta. While the annual conferences provide an ideal opportunity for all members to gather in one location and connect with each other, there is often little or no contact with the association between annual conferences. We also realize that some members are unable to attend the regional AFCA meetings where updates are provided on numerous subjects. Including information in *Alberta Fire News* provides the opportunity to share with members some of the activities that your association is pursuing on your behalf. We also encourage you to contact your Regional Director if there are issues or questions you have. Check out the web site at [www.afca.ab.ca](http://www.afca.ab.ca) or call (780) 415-8300.

Unfortunately, there are still a number of Fire Chiefs and Deputy Fire Chiefs who are not members of the Association. The Board of Directors urges you to consider joining the AFCA and contributing your energy and opinions for the benefit of all.





# Ghost Dam exercises prove valuable

Several months ago a group of Safety Codes Officers began meeting on a monthly basis to discuss issues pertinent to their duties. Part of the conversations that took place focused on the need for training opportunities to expand their knowledge and practice their skills. When the group became aware that TransAlta was willing to donate several houses from its Ghost Dam location, the group got busy organizing training opportunities. The end result was an innovative and unique training exercise.



The Ghost Dam exercise seen from a distance



Firefighters conducting a smoke progression experiment

Sean Conaboy from Cochrane Fire/EMS co-ordinated the fire suppression aspect, Ken McMullen from the Fire Commissioner's Office (FCO) co-ordinated the fire investigation portion and Ray Ligenza with Safety Services led the engineering team. The team decided

to use the houses to conduct several experiments related to fire and life safety, including experiments involving smoke progression through the furnace and ductwork of a home and what effect the mechanical system has on life safety. Training sessions were held on October 13 and 14, 2004.

## Strong support ensured successful training exercises

Attendees at the training sessions included representatives from numerous organizations, including Alberta Municipal Affairs and the Fire Commissioner's Office; Morrison & Hershfield; Calgary Fire and Building departments; Red Deer Fire; Ares; Rockyview Emergency Services; MD of Bighorn Fire; Cochrane Fire – EMS; Canmore Emergency Services; Strathmore Fire; Strathmore County Fire; Blackie Fire; Redwood Meadows Emergency Services; Airdrie Emergency Services; Carseland Fire; Kananaskis Fire; and the High River Fire Department.

Thanks are extended to everyone who participated in or provided resources for the training sessions. A special thanks is also extended to Butch Davy with Airdrie Emergency Services for his hard work and commitment to the project, as well as Trevor Allen, Deputy Fire Chief, High River Fire Department for his work with the suppression training. A huge thank you also to Terry Desserre and Kori Simonson from Strathmore/Calgary for their help with suppression training on the first morning.



Briefing the suppression teams prior to an exercise

The valuable training that resulted and the great working relationship developed with TransAlta led to the donation of another five structures, with the caveat that they be used prior to December 2004. Not wanting to lose a training opportunity, the group quickly organized additional training sessions for November 6 and 7, 2004. The end result was a total of 191 participants from 22 different agencies involved in the October and November sessions.



Fire suppression exercise



Safety Services' Ray Cox gearing up for entry into one of the test burns



Information learned during the Ghost Dam exercises will be shared with other key fire researchers

“The exercises were a resounding success, and the response far exceeded our expectations,” said Ray Ligenza, Technical Advisor, Technical Services of Alberta Municipal Affairs. “Participants in the Ghost Dam exercises were able to learn from one another, share practices and techniques and improve personal knowledge and skills. Most importantly, though, these exercises wouldn’t have happened without the enthusiasm, dedication and commitment of everyone involved. The co-operation and camaraderie among those involved was the real reason behind the success!”

In addition to practicing fire suppression and fire investigation activities, the Ghost Dam exercises also provided critical information related to fire research in terms of smoke testing, scientific testing and secondary suite concerns.



Frank Harris (Regional Fire Safety Officer – Red Deer) and Te-Jay Smart of the FCO take notes while investigating the fire

“These exercises were an incredible opportunity for everyone involved,” said Ken McMullen, Fire Safety Officer with the FCO. “We arranged it so that we could evaluate a number of variables, such as the type and quantity of fuel, furnace running and not running, etc. In fact, one scenario provided results that will be shared with other key fire researchers. This certainly provided additional value to our exercises and will hopefully result in greater research and action on specific fire safety scenarios.” 🔥



# Tragic multiple fatality fire in Ontario remains unsolved

The November 8, 2004 house fire in West Lincoln, Ontario that killed seven children and their mother was absolutely devastating, according to Ontario's Fire Marshal. "This was the worst fire I have seen in my 15 years as Fire Marshal," said Bernard Moyle. "There is no greater tragedy than a fire involving children. My heartfelt sympathies go out to the family and the community."

Under an automatic aid agreement with West Lincoln, the Pelham Fire Department was the first to arrive on scene and the West Lincoln Fire Department arrived shortly after. Both departments rely heavily on volunteers, so assembling a crew in a timely manner was an impressive achievement. Unfortunately, the structure was already fully engulfed in flames when the crews arrived and rescue efforts were impossible.

"Despite their best efforts, state-of-the-art equipment and communications abilities, the fire service was not able to save this family," stated Moyle. "It is a fact that the majority of fire deaths occur when the fire department response time is under five minutes. That's why it is so important that everyone check their smoke alarms and develop and practice a home fire escape plan with their families."

While Ontario Fire Marshal (OFM) staff worked diligently to investigate the circumstances surrounding the fatal fire, the severe damage to the house and

## *Taking immediate action*

In response to the fire, the Ontario Fire Marshal's office developed and circulated public education materials to increase public awareness of home fire safety. Additionally, media releases about the West Lincoln fire also included messages about the importance of smoke alarms and home fire escape plans, and media were encouraged to spread these messages to the public.

A fire safety alert was sent to all directors of education in school boards across the province. The alert included a fire safety checklist to be sent home with all students, and requested students to go through the checklist with their parents to ensure that fire safety practices were being followed in the home.

A letter was also sent to provincial fire chiefs, urging them to step up fire prevention and public education activities. The letter included a list of resources available to fire departments to assist with these activities.

Links to public service announcements related to the fire are available on the OFM website at [www.ofm.gov.on.ca](http://www.ofm.gov.on.ca).

its contents caused by the fire made the investigation arduous. Investigators seized a number of exhibits from the home and sent them to the Centre for Forensic Sciences and OFM Fire Investigation and Evaluation Section for examination. Included in the exhibits were the remains of the living room fireplace. Electrical components were also examined and x-rayed.

The investigation was led by an OFM investigator and included OFM engineering staff and Centre for Forensic Sciences staff. Despite their efforts to examine every aspect of the scene, the team announced on February 11, 2005 that they were unable to determine the cause and circumstances surrounding this tragic fire.

"The fire is believed to have started in the living room on the main level of the home," said Mike Stewart, lead investigator from the OFM. "But because of the extensive damage caused by the fire, the exact cause and origin cannot be determined."

Ontario Fire Marshal Moyle added, "In some fire investigations, the severe damage makes it impossible to pinpoint a cause. While we do not know what caused this devastating fire, we must do all we can to prevent fires in our home." Moyle also included a reminder about the importance of having working smoke alarms. "One smoke alarm is not enough. Smoke alarms should be installed on every level of the home and outside all sleeping areas." 🔥



Ontario Fire Marshal Bernie Moyle inspects the fire scene as fire investigators begin to sift through the rubble at the fatal fire scene



# Fire deaths in Alberta – 2004

*The Fire Commissioner's Office compiles statistics on all fatal fires in Alberta. These statistics can assist fire departments in planning fire prevention and safety initiatives and targeting public education activities.*

A total of 24 fire-related deaths were reported for the year 2004 – two children under 11 years, 18 adults (18-64 years) and four seniors (65+). Of the adults, 15 were males and seven were female.

The majority (17) of the fire deaths occurred in homes (one and two family dwellings, apartments, mobile homes, camperized van). The probable causes of death were: smoke inhalation – 17; burns – 3; physical injury – 2; and other causes – 2.

The fire deaths were distributed by municipality as follows: Edmonton – 5; Calgary – 4; Fox Lake #162 – 2; County of Camrose #22 – 3; Coalhurst – 2; M.D. of Rockyview #44 – 1; M.D. of Foothills #31 – 1; Mountain View County – 1; Claresholm – 1; Ponoka County – 1; Jean Baptiste Gambler #183 (reserve near Calling Lake) – 1; Newell County #4 – 1; M.D. of Willow Creek #26 – 1.

Ignition scenarios involved in the 24 fire-related deaths broken down by Fire Deaths\* and Deaths Involving Fire\*\* are presented below:

## Fire Deaths by Ignition Scenarios and Property Classification – 2004

### One and Two Family Dwellings, Apartments, Mobile Homes and Camperized Van

Unknown	6
Stove/top burner (cooking oil fire in pan), victim asleep (suspect impairment)	2
Cigarette ignited bedding of victim (suspect impairment)	1
Cigarette ignited upholstered furniture	1
Suspected arson	2
Fire causes unknown, victim returned to burning mobile home to rescue pets	1

### Trash/Rubbish/Recyclable

Unknown	1
Ignition of garbage, trash, rubbish; victim ignorant of hazard	1

**Total Fire Deaths 15**

## Deaths Involving Fire by Ignition Scenarios and Property Classification – 2004

### One and Two Family Dwellings and Mobile Homes

Ignition of propane released due to part failure, leak or break	1
Explosion of natural gas leaked into mobile home	2
Suspected arson involving ignition of bedding	1

### Car

Fire causes unknown, victim sitting in car while it burned	1
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### Truck/Tractor Trailer

Unknown	1
Victim asleep (suspect impairment)	1
Industrial truck collision, ignition of diesel	1

### Gas Distribution System, Pipeline

Ignition of flammable gas	1
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**Total Deaths Involving Fire 9**

\*A Fire Death is a death directly due to fire or death within one year of a fire injury.

\*\* A Death Involving Fire is a death from causes other than fire, but occurs at a fire incident.



Structural remains after the multiple fatality fire

# Sharing success

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual *Risk Watch* Champion Conference was held November 11-14 in Miami, Florida. The conference brought together 31 *Risk Watch* Champion Management Teams (CMTs) from the U.S., Canada and the U.K. Dave McKenna, Ken McMullen and Ken Fuhrmann from the Alberta Champion Management Team attended the conference with western Canada's National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) *Risk Watch* Field Advisor, Tim Vandenbrink.

The NFPA had a full schedule for the conference, with the days starting early and finishing late. The variety of sessions and workshops provided invaluable opportunities for teams to improve and develop in a number of areas including leadership and presentation and communication skills, as well as injury prevention marketing strategies and techniques.

In addition, teams had the opportunity to become familiar with both the *Risk Watch*: Natural Disasters and Remembering When programs.

All teams appreciated the ability to network with other CMTs and to explore

*Risk Watch* initiatives in other parts of the world. Many delegates from larger centres spoke highly of established injury prevention coalitions where corporate partnerships and community services have worked together in providing stability and sustainability for the *Risk Watch* program. Other CMTs are working with public sector organizations such as health departments/regions, emergency services, departments of education and local government in order to provide the *Risk Watch* program and assistance to educators.

Team Alberta returned to Canada confident that our province is at the forefront in injury prevention education and the *Risk Watch* program. The conference enabled the team to recognize that injury prevention is a challenge across the globe and that each team has their own stories of both successes and failures. Collectively, the conference inspired us to never lose hope, and to never forget the common vision of reducing the number of preventable deaths and injuries in our communities. 🔥

*This article was provided by Dave McKenna, Lt/EMT; Alberta Risk Watch CMT – Team Leader, Grande Cache Fire Department & EMS*



Amy Lebas and the NFPA

Ken McMullen, Ken Fuhrmann and Dave McKenna at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual *Risk Watch* Champion Conference

## Made in Alberta Video Coming Soon

Looking for a way to increase the use of the *Risk Watch* program in area schools, Paul Little, Fire Marshall with the Lethbridge Fire Department, started thinking about what enhancements could be made to the program.

"While the videos we receive from the NFPA are terrific, I thought it might make the whole program even more acceptable if the images were from Alberta," said Little. From that idea, Little began working with the *Risk Watch* Implementation Committee of Alberta's Champion Team to produce a 10-15 minute video for distribution to fire departments and school boards across Alberta. The video includes an overview of the *Risk Watch* Program as well as key messages from Alberta Fire Commissioner Pat Graham and the Alberta Centre for Injury Control and Research's Dr. Louis Francescutti. To generate funds for the project, the Lethbridge Fire Department worked a bingo and secured donations from the Independent Order of Forresters and the NFPA.

Working with CFCN TV in Lethbridge, Little and producer Tom Caldwell are currently in the filming stage and plan to have the completed video ready for distribution in the next few months. For more information about the project, please call Paul Little at (403) 320-3806.

If you require any other information from the Alberta CMT, please email [gcfdeems@telus.net](mailto:gcfdeems@telus.net) or contact the Fire Commissioner's Office at (780) 427-8392 (dial 310-0000 for toll free access outside of Edmonton).

# Fire & Life Safety Educators' Network of Alberta – A New Initiative of the FCO

Teaching the public about safety has become an important role of the modern fire service. Firefighters respond to all types of situations, and it is estimated that fire emergencies only account for about 10 per cent of all responses. The rest are predominantly injury-related, which is why the fire service has recognized the importance of educating the public about life safety and injury prevention in addition to fire safety.

Although injury is the leading cause of death among children and Albertans under the age of 44, information gathered by the Fire Commissioner's Office (FCO) of Alberta Municipal Affairs indicates that fire and injury prevention are not currently being taught consistently across the province. While there are a handful of municipalities where schools and local fire departments offer such life saving lessons, the vast majority of Alberta's children are not exposed to this information on a consistent basis. This same situation exists for other target groups such as seniors, the disabled, building owners/operators, immigrants, Aboriginals, etc.


To help close these educational gaps, the FCO has initiated a Fire & Life Safety Educators' Network in Alberta. A primary goal of the proposed network is to encourage firefighters, emergency medical services (EMS) personnel and other community members with an interest in fire and injury prevention education to provide community-based educational programs reaching out to all target audiences. Networks of this kind have already proven successful in helping to reduce fire and injury incidents in British Columbia, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick and Ontario.

Since injury prevention is an area that goes beyond the scope of any one organization or jurisdiction, and only a co-operative effort will be successful in generating the most effective ideas, **Denis St. Arnaud**, Assistant Deputy Minister of the Public Safety Division at Alberta Municipal Affairs invited representatives from government ministries actively involved in safety promotion to an inaugural meeting of the network, held on April 13, 2005.

Participants representing ministries/agencies included: **Elizabeth Kohle**, Alberta Health & Wellness; **Don Shaw**, Alberta Education; **Jeanette Espie**, Infrastructure & Transportation; **Laurel Aitken/ Raelyn Peterson**, Alberta Agriculture, Food & Rural Development; **Dale Sobkovich**, Alberta Children's Services; **Micheline Charrois** and **Braden Hirsch**, Alberta Seniors & Community Supports; **Dan Clarke**, Alberta Human Resources & Employment; **Gerry Baron**, Safety Codes Council; **Dr. Louis Francescutti**, Alberta Center for Injury Control & Research; **Dave Treppel**, Alberta Ambulance Operators Association; **Cecylia Bilous**, Health Canada (Product Safety Program); **Ben Boettcher**, AAMD&C; **Fred Tyrrell**, Alberta Community Development; **Louise Hayes**, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development; and **Stew Walkinshaw**, Alberta Sustainable Resource Development. The following staff members of the FCO also participated: **Pat Graham**, Fire Commissioner; **Mahendra Wijayasinghe**, Assistant Fire Commissioner (Research, Development & Programs); **Te-Jay Smart**, Fire Safety Officer (Programs); and **Judy Harvie**, Aboriginal Liaison Officer.

The meeting opened with welcoming remarks from Denis St. Arnaud and Pat Graham. Mahendra Wijayasinghe presented an overview to explain the need and the potential for a Fire & Life Safety Educators' Network in Alberta, and Dr. Francescutti added encouraging words to the initiative. All participants shared the safety programs that they deliver and expressed an overwhelming support for the concept as well as their willingness to serve on the Advisory Committee.

The next steps include setting up a Steering Committee made up of fire department members actively involved

in fire/injury prevention initiatives, as well as other fire and injury prevention professionals representing a broad stakeholder base, and developing a strategic plan to give overall guidance to network activities. The Steering Committee is expected to meet in late May and an action plan will be developed during the summer months for implementation in fall 2005. The FCO will also work with the ACICR to align the Fire & Life Safety Network of Alberta with the Alberta Injury Control Strategy through a membership in the Alberta Injury Control Alliance ([www.med.ualberta.ca/acicr](http://www.med.ualberta.ca/acicr)). 

For further information, please contact Mahendra Wijayasinghe at (780) 415-0546 or via email: [Mahendra.Wijayasinghe@gov.ab.ca](mailto:Mahendra.Wijayasinghe@gov.ab.ca). Network activities will also be posted on the FCO website at [www.municipalaffairs.gov.ab.ca/fco](http://www.municipalaffairs.gov.ab.ca/fco)





## Occupational Health and Safety for the fire service

# New committee helps clarify OH&S Code

As everyone is probably aware, Alberta has a new Occupational Health and Safety Code to help protect workers from preventable incidents and to make workplaces safer for all. The Alberta Fire Chief's Association (AFCA), fire etc. and the Fire Commissioner's Office (FCO) have formed a committee with Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) staff to clarify how the code applies to the fire service, particularly as it applies to emergency scene operations. The committee is also working toward developing a guide that fire departments will be able to use to help them meet their obligations under the code.

The committee consists of Ernie Polsom, Spence Sample and Judy Harvie from the FCO, Terry Noble from the AFCA and Ray Cislo from OH&S. The following identifies some of the fire issues that OH&S leaves unresolved, and provides some potential solutions for them.

Alberta's Occupational Health and Safety Code applies to all aspects of the fire service, whether volunteer or career. The code applies to all fire department non-emergency operations, including training, as it does to any other industry. What is less clear, however, is how the code applies to emergency operations.

Several critical areas, including confined spaces, overhead power lines, demolition, noise and hazard assessments, have been identified as specifically challenging points requiring some clarification. The following information gives the fire service a "heads up" on what has been determined thus far and where the committee is focusing its efforts.

### Hazard assessments

Hazard assessments as outlined in Part 2 of the code are required on all work sites, including emergency work sites. Part 2 requires that an employer assess a work site prior to beginning work, identify existing or potential hazards and then prepare a written report detailing the results of the assessment and the steps that must be taken to control or eliminate the hazard.

Obviously, this raises some serious concerns for first responders who do not have time to do a written report for each and every response. The OH&S explanation guide clarifies this for us. It allows for a single hazard assessment for multiple work sites where the employer faces the same hazards with no significant differences from those encountered on other work sites. For example, the hazards, real and potential, will be the same in one single family dwelling unit in a subdivision as would exist in every other single family dwelling. This would allow a single hazard assessment to be completed for this purpose.

In the fire service, a Standard Operating Guideline should outline the potential hazards, delineate the method of controlling or eliminating the hazard and provide a written document to facilitate training. Pre-plans perform a similar function by developing a specialized assessment and hazard mitigation plan for those facilities that are unusual or require specialized response considerations. Our discussions with OH&S representatives reveal that they agree with this.

### Noise exposure

Part 16, Noise Exposure, presents some unique challenges. Most fire departments are taking steps to protect firefighters from noise exposure on apparatus. Sirens have been moved off the roof, trucks are equipped with hearing protection and are insulated to reduce noise levels in the crew areas. However, little has been done to monitor or develop hearing protection and noise mitigation in the balance of the fire and rescue grounds. Positive pressure fans, hydraulic pumps, chainsaws and other power equipment have added new areas requiring attention.

Section 217(1) requires an employer to ensure that a new work process introduced to the work site or work area not exceed 85 decibels, or is as low as possible. This will impact how we choose new equipment and apparatus.

Due to the high ambient noise levels of many emergency scenes, audiometric assessments may be a requirement as is indicated in section 219. You will need to conduct a hazard assessment and, if your staff are being exposed to noise levels as indicated in the attached schedules, you will need to maintain audiometric testing for those exposed workers.

Hearing protection is an issue that will have to be addressed by the fire service. While protection of the worker's hearing is essential, it raises several questions, including how and where can it be done without adding risks to the worksite, and will the hearing protection reduce the wearer's ability to hear radio and verbal instructions? These are some of the questions we are attempting to answer.

## Demolition

The demolition of buildings in the course of firefighting entails numerous risks. These include disconnection of utilities. The disconnection of electricity is seen as a necessary step prior to any demolition of a structure for the purposes of firefighting due to the unseen hazards that electricity can present to firefighters. The committee was able to show OH&S that hazards such as natural gas could be controlled through other measures as the incident dictates, including flaring.

## Confined spaces

If a fire department is entering a confined space as defined in the code, it is required to have an acceptable accountability program in place to protect workers. The definition of a confined space indicates entry into tanks, process vessels and other structures that are not designed for human occupancy.

As you can see, as a fire chief or safety officer, there is a lot to consider in making sure your fire department is complying with the OH&S Code. What is important to remember is that many of the processes and documents already exist within your organization. We all have operating policies, training plans, safe

work practices and worker orientation programs. Those areas that are not clear in the code are the areas that the committee is continuing to work on with OH&S in developing safe practices for fire departments. The committee is now close to having sufficient understanding of the key issues to begin working on an explanation guide for the fire service. We're continuing work with OH&S to this end, as well as developing a sample health and safety plan for fire departments to use as a template. All outputs of the committee will be placed on the FCO and AFCA websites as they are completed. 🔥

For more information about the committee, please contact Spence Sample at the FCO at (780) 427-8392 (dial 310-0000 – toll free access outside of Edmonton).

## Fire Commissioner's Office update

# Changing the way of doing business...



The Field Operations Section of the Fire Commissioner's Office (FCO) is busy, as usual, travelling to fire departments and municipalities across Alberta to keep them abreast of initiatives of the FCO and communicating or monitoring other matters of interest. We have been heavily involved in looking at insurance and WCB availability for volunteer firefighters, how the Occupational Health and Safety Code applies to emergency scenes (see article on page 18) and collecting data from fire departments on the impact of the changes to the Commercial Vehicle Regulation, to name a few. Here are some of the other activities we are working on:

- The Alberta Emergency Resource Inventory System is progressing well and continues to be a priority project for the FCO. We have our Field Officers out encouraging the fire service to update their information. Amendments were made to the *milenet* User Agreement in February, and fire chiefs and other designated officers now have direct access to the system for both updates and to begin using data. The Fire Safety Officers will be available to help you navigate this system.
- The FCO is developing a Significant Incident Investigation Team that will be used to investigate incidents

where, because of the sensitivity or complexity of the incident, a larger team response is required to determine the cause and origin of the fire. The team will consist of FCO field staff and seconded personnel working with the FCO who are deemed necessary to the investigation. Work is ongoing with the Safety Services Branch of Municipal Affairs to bring them into the team and use their expertise in a wide range of safety systems. We anticipate the FCO portion of the team to be ready for deployment in spring 2005.

- Secondment continues to be one of the tools we are promoting to include the fire service in the day-to-day operations of the FCO. We currently have agreements with several fire departments and one agency in Alberta to assist us in delivering fire investigation services where we either have no officer available or where we require a larger team. We are always interested in talking to any organization that meets our program criteria and entering into an agreement with them. Please talk to your local Fire Safety Officer for more information on how your organization can participate in this program or any other program offered by the FCO.

The Fire Commissioner's Operations Section has also been heavily committed to ensuring that the 2004-05 Fire Services Training Initiative improves on the work begun in the 2003-2004 program. Last year's pilot project grant program was a tremendous success. We were able to partner with groups across Alberta to develop educational opportunities for firefighters from all aspects of the province's fire services. There were some gaps identified through a wide-ranging consultation by the FCO, but every effort has been made to fill these in and improve on the program. We committed to implementing those changes that met the intent of the grant program, so we have updated the rules accordingly. We also identified partners who have now been invited to apply for funding and assist the FCO in facilitating training in larger regional forums.

As always, all of the services you have become familiar with in the past continue to be available through either your Fire Safety Officer or through the Edmonton office. Do not hesitate to contact us on any matter of fire protection, prevention and/or public education. 🔥

For more information about any of these issues or to obtain the phone number for your area Fire Safety Code Officer, please call (780) 427-8392 (dial 310-0000 – toll free access outside of Edmonton).

# Fire Prevention Week – AWNA Winners



**Alberta  
Weekly Newspapers  
Association**

Every year, the Alberta Fire Commissioner's Office (FCO) holds a competition for Alberta Weekly Newspapers Association (AWNA) members that promote fire prevention and safety messages in their publications during Fire Prevention Week (FPW). This contest is held in recognition of the valuable support that the weekly newspapers provide in educating Albertans about fire safety during FPW.

A panel of three judges evaluated the 2004 submissions. Judges included Kari-Ann Kuperis, Communications Branch of Alberta Municipal Affairs; Lynda Herscovitch, Head of Advertising for the Public Affairs Bureau; and Lisa Matheson, Public Education Co-ordinator, Strathcona County Emergency Services.

The 24 entries were divided into three circulation categories (<2,500, 2,501-5,000 and >5,000) for evaluation. The first place winner in each category received an engraved plaque, while the runner-

up winners were rewarded with honourable mention certificates. The overall grand prize winner, the Sedgewick Community Press, received a weekend stay for two courtesy of the Coast Plaza Hotel and Conference Centre in Calgary.

Fire Commissioner Pat Graham and Fire Safety Officer (programs) Te-Jay Smart presented the awards to the winning newspapers at the annual AWNA Symposium on January 29, 2004 at the Coast Plaza Hotel and Conference Centre in Calgary. 🔥

## 2004 AWNA Winners

### 1st Prize:

- Nanton News (circulation <2,500)
- Sedgewick Community Press (2,501-5,000)
- Airdrie Echo (>5,000)

### Honourable Mentions:

- Claresholm Local Press
- Valleyview Valley Views
- Bonnyville Nouvelle
- Innisfail Province/Booster
- Devon Dispatch News



A representative of the Airdrie Echo receives a plaque from Pat for winning in the >5,000 circulation category



Fire Commissioner Pat Graham presents a representative from the Sedgewick Community Press with the grand prize



Pat presenting an honourable mention certificate to a representative from the Valleyview Valley Views



# Summer Fire Safety Campaign

This year's Summer Fire Safety Campaign takes place May 1 to September 1, 2005. Every year, the Fire Commissioner's Office (FCO) develops a Summer Fire Safety Campaign Kit to encourage organizations to implement summer safety activities to remind the public about the life-threatening fire dangers associated with this time of year. This year, a special kit has been developed to meet the needs of the fire service and media. This year's kit contains the following support materials, which can be used, copied and distributed by fire departments, local newspapers and schools to assist communities with summer fire safety activities:

- ✓ Summer fire loss statistics
- ✓ Summer fire safety event planner **New**
- ✓ Sample PSAs **New**
- ✓ Sample advertisements **New**
- ✓ Colourful graphics, cartoons, games and activities **New**

For more information on summer fire prevention and safety tips, view the Fire Commissioner's "Fire Facts" safety tips sheet on the website under the "Fire Prevention Education" tab. 

To view the Summer Fire Safety Campaign Kit, go to [www.municipalaffairs.gov.ab.ca/fco](http://www.municipalaffairs.gov.ab.ca/fco) and click on 'Campaigns,' or contact Te-Jay at the FCO for further information at (780) 644-4692 (dial 310-0000 for toll free access outside Edmonton) or via e-mail at [te-jay.smart@gov.ab.ca](mailto:te-jay.smart@gov.ab.ca).

## Grieving for the lost ones

# Paying tribute to fallen firefighters


The sadness that pervaded fire departments across the country at the recent deaths of two firefighters in Yellowknife resulted in action by firefighters throughout Alberta.

Provincially, all flags were lowered to half-mast, and many Alberta firefighters attended the funeral of Kevin Olson, a young firefighter from Calgary who had only been on the job 11 days when this tragedy occurred. In addition to many Calgary firefighters attending the service

for Kevin, more than 100 firefighters from the Edmonton area, nearby Leduc and surrounding area also traveled to Calgary for the funeral. As well, many also traveled to Yellowknife to attend the funeral services for Lieutenant Cyril Fyfe, a long-time veteran of the Yellowknife Fire Department.

Members of the Spruce Grove, St. Albert and Sherwood Park fire departments also staffed the Yellowknife fire hall for several days, allowing some healing time for

local firefighters. This included providing fire and ambulance response, with Yellowknife police and Bylaw members acting as navigators and guides.

"Any time a firefighter dies it is truly a tragedy," said Pat Graham, Alberta Fire Commissioner. "The camaraderie shown by firefighters across Alberta and beyond reflects the compassion and caring that is intrinsic in our profession. Our hearts go out to the families of our fallen brothers." 



Flags lowered to half-mast recognized the tragic deaths of two Yellowknife firefighters

A memorial to fallen Yellowknife firefighters Kevin Olson and Cyril Fyfe

# New partnership with Métis Nation of Alberta



# fire etc.

Provided below is the latest information about courses and other activities taking place through **fire etc.**

## Partnership with Métis Nation of Alberta

In March, **fire etc.** began delivering an Emergency Services Technology (EST) program exclusively for the Métis Nation of Alberta. This is the first program of its kind in Canada. Métis Employment Services throughout the province were involved in recruiting and screening applicants. Funding support for students has been provided by Alberta Human Resources and Employment. The comprehensive, 46-week program provides preparation for entry-level career positions in municipal and industrial firefighting and pre-hospital medical services.

The purpose of this first-time partnership is to offer the program to Métis people who wish to have firefighting and emergency medical skills training to serve in their communities, in other municipal settings, at industrial sites and in wildland areas.

“What we know about EST training is that it opens a door to meaningful work at home or elsewhere,” said Les Brinkworth, Executive Director of Business Development at **fire etc.** “These skills are very portable to a range of settings and open up many career possibilities. This unique partnership is one of which we are very proud.”

The partnership between **fire etc.** and the Métis Nation of Alberta addresses:

- employment opportunities for members of the Métis Nation;
- an opportunity for Métis Nation members to contribute to their communities in a service capacity; and
- increasing the visibility of Métis people in the public safety sector.

Other program benefits include:

- full funding for Métis Nation members to enter the program;
- an opening into the post-secondary sector and the opportunity to pursue further studies; and
- opportunities for rewarding full-time employment.

## Combat Challenge

The FireFit Prairie Regional Combat Challenge happens at **fire etc.** on Saturday, June 4. For registration information, check the website ([www.fire-etc.ca](http://www.fire-etc.ca)) or contact Tami Klatt at (780) 581-2024.

## Appointments and Moves

With the restructure last year of **fire etc.** as a division of Lakeland College, Don Gnatiuk, formerly the CEO of **fire etc.**, was appointed Lakeland College Vice President of Marketing, Corporate Development and **fire etc.** Chris Senaratne now heads up the **fire etc.** division, as Dean.

Some **fire etc.** administrative functions were also merged with those of the college. The Registrar and Student Services offices are now located in Alumni Hall at Lakeland College (just across the road from **fire etc.**). Please note the new fax and telephone numbers for Student Services:

Toll free: 1-800-661-6490

Fax: (780) 853-2955

All other telephone and fax numbers for **fire etc.** remain unchanged.

## New on the Web

- Details on the new NFPA 1021 Level I and Level II modular format
- A handbook to assist in planning the delivery of client-hosted training

## Off-Campus Delivery of Firefighter Training

The success of last year's pilot delivery of the Firefighter Training Program (FFTP) in Calgary as a partnership with the Calgary Fire Department has resulted in another offering, scheduled to start July 22 (application deadline May 13). The program commences with six weeks of self-study. Seven weeks of in-class and practical training begins September 5, and the program concludes October 21.

The FFTP is also offered at Firemaster in Red Deer, starting August 15 (application deadline May 20). 🔥

Contact Student Services for details at 1-800-661-6490, ext. 11633.

# Digest

## Juvenile Firesetter Programs: An update

The TAPP-C Fire Service Educator's Manual is now available for purchase from the Ontario Fire Marshal's Office. This manual offers a step-by-step guide to fire service personnel who offer fire prevention/safety lessons to children who have engaged in fireplay and firesetting behaviours.

An updated version of the Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Manual from the U.S. Fire Administration of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is now available free of charge from the Fire Commissioner's Office (FCO). An upgrade to the former FEMA manual, this publication is designed for the fire service to conduct risk assessment and to identify strategies to assist firesetting children and adolescents and their families to overcome these behaviours.

Please contact Te-Jay Smart at the FCO at (780) 644-4692 for ordering information (dial 310-0000 for toll free access outside Edmonton).

## New Red Deer contact

In case you haven't heard, Ken Webster has retired, and Dale Kelly is his replacement. Dale can be reached at (403) 346-5511.

## Encourage product safety vigilance



Have you noticed that there are a lot of new products on the market that promote fire safety? Have you received calls from your community about such products? If so, you may want to advise or remind them to verify if they are approved devices or products.

There has also been some concern over the use of non-approved logos on products (as in the recent incident of lamps sold in San Francisco stores). Approved logo standards are indicated above, including the new UL standard.

## Alberta fire service activities calendar – 2005

EVENT	DATE	LOCATION
Summer Fire Safety Campaign	May 1 - September 1	FCO website
Calgary Firefighter Training program (FFTP) - application deadline	May 13	Calgary
Red Deer FFTP - application deadline	May 20	Red Deer
FireFit Prairie Regional Combat Challenge	June 4	fire etc., Vermillion
Social Marketing Seminar	June 6 - 7	Calgary
Safety Codes Council Annual Conference	June 9 - 11	Capri Centre, Red Deer
Strathcona County Hose Coupling Competition	June 18	Strathcona County
Myrnam Hose Coupling Competition	July 23	Myrnam
Provincial Hose Coupling Competition	August 13	Myrnam

## \$15,000 donation provided to High River Fire Department

Thanks to input from one their volunteer firefighters, the High River Fire Department recently acquired a \$15,000 Scott thermal imaging camera, donated by Cargill Foods Ltd. According to Fire Chief Len Zebedee, Wade Edwards, one of 40 volunteer firefighters with the department, works at Cargill and was asked what items the fire department could use. After reviewing the list of items, Cargill Foods Ltd. decided to purchase the camera. "This donation was a tremendous contribution to the fire department and can be utilized in so many ways," said Zebedee. "Most importantly, it will increase safety for our firefighters when approaching a structural fire or other incidents."

## AAMD&C contact information

There have been a few staffing changes within the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts & Counties (AAMD&C) over the past several months. Provided below is the most current information for both Jubilee Insurance and AAMD&C key contact staff.

### Jubilee Insurance

Rhonda Baker, *Risk Manager Analyst*  
Debra Depel, *Customer Service Representative*  
Shenaz Manji, *Customer Service Representative*  
Holly O'Neil, *Customer Service Representative*

### AAMD&C

Shawn Hathaway, *Manager, Trade Division*  
Gerald Rhodes, *Executive Director*

The AAMD&C is located at:  
2510 Sparrow Drive, Nisku, AB T9E 8N5  
Phone: (780) 955-3639  
Fax (780) 955-3615  
Visit their website at [www.aamdc.com](http://www.aamdc.com)

## Farewell

Ed Pomerleau, Fire Safety Officer with the FCO for 28 years, retired as of March 31, 2005. Ed plans to spend his free time fixing up his newly-acquired hot rod. Everyone at the FCO wishes Ed the best.

## Sharing of educational resources encouraged

The FCO has a variety of educational resources available for fire departments, safety organizations and teachers. These include portable display units; Hazard Houses; Sparky costumes; fire prevention and safety literature; programs for targeting high-risk groups; public fire education campaigns and planning materials; a provincial fire service newsletter; an injury prevention program for school children; and fire statistics and instructor/presentation methodology. For additional information on obtaining any of the above, contact the FCO by phone at (780) 427-8392 (dial 310-0000 for toll free access outside Edmonton) or visit [www.municipalaffairs.gov.ab.ca/fco](http://www.municipalaffairs.gov.ab.ca/fco) and look under the "Fire Prevention Education" navigation tab on the left side of the page.





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## Alberta Emergency Services Medal

# Clarification on placement

Recipients of the Alberta Emergency Services Medal (AESM) have been asking for clarification on the set procedure for wearing their honourable service medal. The following information should assist AESM recipients in proudly displaying their medals.

*The AESM is not yet recognized by the Chancellery in Ottawa and so cannot be worn on the left side of your chest with your federal honours. The AESM should be worn on the right side of your chest, with your federal medals on the left. They should be lined up so they are approximately evenly positioned – vertically and horizontally.*

If you have had miniature medals made for your mess kit, these can be worn together with the federal awards on the left side, as these are not the official medals and are not covered under the protocol. Ribbon bars can also be accumulated and worn together, as these too are not covered by the protocol.

There are a number of suppliers that can assist medal recipients who wish to purchase miniature medals or the ribbon bars. There are also a number of suppliers that can assist you in getting your medals court mounted, ribbon bars made and miniature medals created. These include Joe Drouin Enterprises in Quebec and Lafleche Brothers in Edmonton. 🔥

