

What it takes to be a firefighter

By THADDEUS MAST

Laramie Boomerang

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LARAMIE, Wyo. (AP) — Six firefighters carefully gather their gear and place it behind Engine No. 7 at Fire Station 1.

"Whoa whoa whoa, are those unzipped?" says Kevin Lam, Laramie Fire Department company officer. "Come on fellas, zip your boots."

Two men lean over and pull their boots back on before Lam begins the speed drill.

"Three, two, one, bunker drill."

The six scramble over their pile of gear. First on is a specialized ski mask to keep out any heat or flames. Oversized pants go over the firefighters' standard pants, suspenders and all. A thick coat made of Nomex covers the rest of the body.

"Joel's beating you, Cole," firefighter Brian Fortman shouts.

An oxygen pack fits snugly on each man's back, a hose from the tank connecting to a mouthpiece. A yellow helmet finishes the ensemble.

Turning on the oxygen finishes the drill.

"You guys got beat by the new guy," someone says.

Joel Dehnert, the newest firefighter in the station — "He's been here for, what, 30, 45 minutes?" Lam adds — beat everyone with a time of 58 seconds.

"Well, I got 38 seconds in Academy," says Ben Cole, who finished his first full year at the department.

The Laramie Fire Department's 45 firefighters, equipment operators and officers work in 24-hour shifts — one day on, two days off.

A firefighter's shift begins at 8 a.m. One of the first tasks is to find out what one's duties are for the day, Lam said.

Duties are more involved than who is set to clean the toilets for the day.

"I try to line out the assignments for my guys for a particular day, based on what call comes in and who is going to go to it," Lam said.

A pump engine, such as Engine No. 7, takes four personnel to operate. Three firefighters are needed to work a ladder truck, and at least two men are needed for an ambulance call.

After duties are received, the shift spends a couple hours checking over equipment — the trucks, ambulance, personal gear, hoses — and cleaning up the station.

Training is scheduled from 10 a.m.-noon. Training includes how to suppress a fire, handle hazardous waste situations and EMS training, among other important aspects every firefighter should know.

"Even if we train all day, we couldn't reach everything," Lam said.

Training is split between classroom and field. Time in the classroom is spent learning EMS processes and other related information. The shift will sometimes go out to the training fields to put their knowledge to the test. While putting out fires will likely take up a lot of training time, firefighters need to know more than just extinguishing flames.

"We'll tear apart a car to train for a car accident," Lam said.

Firefighters get a lunch break from noon-1 p.m. before taking on the rest of the day, which can be anything from maintenance to compliance checks to more training. Flushing hydrants are also an afternoon job.

One job the fire department offers is proper training on car seats. One woman pulled her car into the garage — firefighters had already cleared a place for her to park — and was shown how to safely hook up the child seat.

A mandatory workout hour usually runs from about 5-6 p.m., followed by dinner. A TV with four Xbox controllers sits in one corner of the recreation room. Three computers line the wall in the back, although they are used for turning in reports, mostly from medical calls.

Of course, the entire schedule could easily get thrown out the window with an emergency call.

"Every time someone calls 911, we get an address and location," said Dispatch Supervisor Yancey Brown about a typical fire call. "We put that into our CADS system and it knows what will be the main responding fire engine."

A CADS system — computer aided dispatch system — has nearly all addresses within the county programmed to allow for faster response times by identifying which fire station is closest and what kind of response is warranted.

At the fire station, a loud alarm sounds throughout the building accompanied by flashing lights, waking up any sleeping firefighters.

"Fire call, fire call, full response," blares over the loudspeaker. "Station 1 report to the intersection of Flint and 11th for reported smoke coming out of a residence."

Firefighters have two minutes to get the engine out of the station and on the road, lights flaring and sirens blaring.

The engine, as well as ambulances and police cruisers, will likely race to the scene. Firefighters could jump out of the engines, ready to fight any flames, and they find out there's no emergency.

"A majority of our calls are false alarms," Lam said. "It seems like we go out to the university daily for a fire alarm."

While fire calls can bring all firefighters to attention, about 75 percent of emergency calls are medical calls.

"We get the page and send out two-three guys to the location," Lam said. "We transport the patient (to Iverson Memorial Hospital), write up a report, restock (the ambulance) and then its available again."

All firefighters are certified emergency first responders. They are capable of placing IVs and administering certain drugs to the patient and can operate a myriad of equipment inside the vehicle.

Brown said the most common calls are difficulty breathing and other altitude-related problems, but medical calls can mean almost anything.

"It can range from a bad headache to the most severe, a child found not breathing," Brown said.

Regardless of the call, the firefighters/EMTs respond the same, Lam said. The situation can always change.

The stress of a possible call at any moment and the constant readiness can take a toll on some of the men, Lam said.

"When you're a brand new guy, you have that anticipation of the next call," he said. "After a while, your adrenals wear out, and when you get a call, you think 'OK, we're going a call.' Still, I've been doing this for almost 15 years, and I don't sleep nearly as well here as I do at home."

Lam acknowledges being a firefighter is not for everyone.

"I'm a little kid, I really am," he said. "I walk in here in the morning and think 'I get to play with fire trucks today.' I'm still that way. I'm 43, and I'm still that way."

Being a firefighter isn't always about playing with toys.

"After working here for 15 years, you get to see some horrible things," Lam said. "One of the biggest calls that sticks out in my mind is the pileup at mile post 332 in 2004. Myself and another firefighter were on the first ambulance that arrived up there. It was quite the mass-casualty scene. A burning pile of semis surrounded by fog with screaming people and explosions. It was straight out of a movie."

Thirty-five vehicles and four deaths were involved in the 2004 crash. However, not all calls end in tragedy.

"There was a patient that was a person that I know that was involved in an auto vs. bicycle crash," Lam said. "Because of the care we provided, she lived. I don't know why she lived, but she did."

Lam listed off a list of requirements every firefighter has to accept.

"You've got to be willing to not sleep much, be the one walking toward something while everyone else is running away from it," Lam said. "It's not for everybody. But if you have those qualities and have a deep seated sense of wanting to help people, and you're fit and active and good looking and humble, you might be ready."

Information from: Laramie Boomerang, [http://](http://www.laramieboomerang.com)

www.laramieboomerang.com[<http://www.laramieboomerang.com>]

Laramie firefighters Brian Fortman and Ben Cole race during a bunker drill Feb. 18, 2015, in the garage bay of Laramie Fire Station No. 1. in Laramie, Wyo. During the drill, firefighters must properly adorn full fire gear in less than 2 minutes and be ready to respond to a call. (AP Photo/Laramie Boomerang, Jeremy Martin)

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News

Firefighters travel to American for specific safety training

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Smiths Falls Record News

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English

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More than 72,000 cars carrying hazardous materials roll through town on the train tracks every three or four months and fire Chief Normand Beauchamp wants his staff to be prepared in case one of those cars turns into an emergency.

"The risk posed by the railway in Smiths Falls is very important. It is the mandate of the Smiths Falls Fire Department to be able to ensure the safety of citizens," reads a report submitted by Beauchamp to council on March 9 during a special meeting.

To ensure this duty is fulfilled council approved out of country travel for the fire chief, Randy Normandin and a firefighter trainer to travel to Pueblo, Colorado March 16 to 18 for Crude-by-Rail training. The expectation is that the trainer will be able to share his knowledge with the remaining firefighting personnel upon his return.

"It's for our specific risk," the chief said.

He was unable to elaborate on why this training was selected over other hazardous materials training, but did confirm other hazardous materials are also known to be traveling through town on a regular basis. The approved Crude-by-Rail training, accommodation and travel is valued at approximately \$9,000 and is being covered entirely by a CP Rail grant the department received.

Beauchamp noted this training is over and above the certified hazardous materials training his firefighters will wrap up this week. Certification exams on the Hazardous Materials/Weapons of Mass Destruction Incidents Operational training are expected to take place this April.

"We are at the professional level," Beauchamp added. "We are going to be one of the rare fire departments in eastern Ontario with certified firefighters."

It is believed Smiths Falls is the only one in the county to achieve this level.

The chief noted Smiths Falls is on one of the most important rail corridors in Canada and as such is exposed to a number of rail cars carrying hazardous materials. After this training, the local fire department will be better able to work with CP Rail staff in an event of an emergency as the first responders.

Equipment grant

The fire service is also anxiously awaiting news on a second CP Rail grant they applied for that would allow them to purchase equipment. Specifically, the grant would look at purchasing detection equipment for spills and a thermal imaging camera.

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Thirty-five weeks ago I became Minister for Fire Resilience and Emergencies, and Peter Dartford, at the Chief Fire Officers Association conference shortly after that gave me a list of challenges to focus on in the then 33 weeks I had left:

Firstly, be a cheerleader of the service across government, secondly promote its prevention role and finally, set out a clear vision for the future.

Although I shall not be claiming credit for it, in that short space of time substantial progress has been made by the service, and in the profile of the service across Whitehall and in our communities.

From Home Office to Foreign Office the fire service's activities are highly regarded, whether it is its resilience role, its contribution to international development or getting businesses back to work quickly, the breadth and quality of what you do is recognised and appreciated.

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills has recently praised the 'short audits' being developed for compliant businesses which will radically reform an overly bureaucratic process and means that fire safety audits for low risk businesses could be cut from 6 hours to just 45 minutes, to name but one example.

And of course the tremendous efforts that are always made in response to an emergency.

The recent appalling arson attacks in Oxfordshire were one pertinent example to my own department where we saw Oxfordshire Fire Rescue Service not only dealing with that serious situation but also 2 other major incidents at the same time.

Able and seamlessly supported by neighbouring services they did a terrific job and enabled the council to re-establish its services to the community before the blaze was out.

I have been a cheerleader for the service, Peter, but the excellence and reach of what you all do made it an easy job, and I offer my sincere thanks for everything you have achieved.

Likewise regarding Peter's second challenge.

Your role in prevention is well understood and third parties are alive to the possibilities that are opened up with the fire and rescue service as a partner.

Whether it's the Chief Fire Officers Association's focus on partnerships to keep older and more vulnerable members of the community safe by accessing data from other agencies to target those over 65.

Or Merseyside's campaign to deliver important safety messages such as having working smoke alarms on each floor of the house.

Or Devon and Somerset's chip pan fire demonstrations.

Or Humberside's awareness raising during Chinese New Year of the dangers of lanterns.

Or West Midlands push on volunteering in the fire service and the cadets.

Or Cheshire internationally recognised leadership in road safety and its innovative work with primary and secondary schools.

Or Lancashire's focus on reducing levels of anti-social behaviour and associated fire-related incidents through football. In every service there is something good going on.

The fire service is continuing its excellent record on prevention and community engagement.

In reaching the most hard to reach, and the most vulnerable and in cracking the tough stuff.

That is recognised not only within government but with agencies and the third sector who are focussed on the communities you serve.

On this theme I have some shocking news – it is a good job you are sitting down because the government is about to regulate!

I am pleased to be able to announce today that following the consideration of responses to the public discussion paper on Property Conditions in the Private Rented Sector we are introducing regulations requiring private sector landlords to install smoke alarms on each storey of their property, carbon monoxide alarms in the rooms considered most at risk from high levels of carbon monoxide and to check the alarms are in working order at the start of any new tenancy.

To aid this we will be providing additional one-off funding to fire and rescue authorities this financial year to enable them to support landlords in the transition to complying with these new regulations.

We estimate the regulations will result in up to 36 fewer fatalities and 1,529 fewer injuries over a 10 year period.

Alongside this targeted regulation for carbon monoxide alarms the government intends to pursue non-regulatory alternatives to encourage installation of carbon monoxide alarms in all private rented sector properties.

It is right that prevention and your amazing achievements get the recognition they deserve but there has been so much other progress in the last year too.

I've seen new services designed and developed in Norfolk which stemmed from the ideas front line firefighters had for using specialist dogs to trace fatalities through the water.

I am delighted that the West Midlands have developed, and will advance, 999 Eye with other emergency services, health care professionals and community services, which will make use of social media to build up a picture of the scene of an incident to enable the ideal response to be mounted.

You are finding ways to make your communities more resilient as I saw in Humberside, who have set up a trading arm to deliver training in CPR and supplement the ambulance and first responder service.

Any surplus made is reinvested in the fire and rescue service or to make payments for social and charitable purposes. I have never met a more resilient community - everyone I met on that visit: the butcher, the vicar, the pub landlord and the WI had been CPR trained.

Oxfordshire and Staffordshire have dedicated business support managers and teams that work with partners, businesses and communities to prevent fires and in cases where there are devastating fires this function can advise and assist those in returning to normal which benefits business, staff and the community.

And services are becoming more efficient: I want to congratulate Dorset and Wiltshire for their move to merger. Not easy to do, and it took great political and professional leadership and will benefit the communities you serve.

The Chief Fire Officers Association have acknowledged that the sector needs to procure smarter and better to deliver efficiencies.

They have taken ownership and have shown leadership by not only developing a national procurement strategy but by creating a national fire back office which could mean that procurement, and other policy areas would be co-ordinated nationally. And my department has awarded £370,000 from the Fire Transformation fund to support this. The energy, drive and focus is tremendous. But just as the service has moved, so have the goal posts.

There are a million more pensioners now than there were at the start of the Parliament.

There are 40,000 more people with dementia in the UK than there were a year ago.

The number of people over 85 is predicted to double in the next 20 years and nearly treble in the next 30.

There are new demands on the service, to support national resilience, and potential new scenarios the service might respond to.

The pace required to adapt to the changing need and greater demand is phenomenal.

Government has been trying to remove the milestones which slow you down in transforming your services:

Many tell me that clinical commissioning groups have been helpful in getting further progress with working with healthcare and ambulance trusts.

Transformation funding has provided much needed capital to help make those changes, and also incentivised authorities to take the plunge, whether it is a new headquarters or greater collaboration of blue light services or merger.

The findings of the Cabinet Office data sharing project, which not only looks at data sharing between statutory services but also with the third sector too is an invaluable piece of work and I know chimes with one of the key asks in your first 100 days manifesto and will add further momentum to the array of projects looking at better targeting of prevention strategies.

And where we can change the law or bring in new initiatives responding to what you have told us we have done so. Most recently in introducing roadside drug testing.

But to ensure the pace remains and that the service can make best of use of all of this we need strong leadership and excellent management. More opportunity and options are needed for our local services to be able to drive change as they wish.

The Conditions of Service Review was commissioned to do just that, and I know Adrian Thomas will be speaking to you tomorrow about it. But there is one theme which comes out from his review that I do wish to raise with you now, because, in my view it is the most important and the one upon which all the others, and the success of the service, hinge: it is the values of the service.

What I am about to say is distressing, but it needs to be said, I raise it in the context of all the good work and good will I have mentioned.

The Conditions of Service report makes, in some places, very uncomfortable reading about certain behaviours in the service. Its findings are supported by other reports produced in the last 12 months including reports by the unions and women's organisations in the fire service.

Two-fifths of all respondents to Adrian's survey stated that they have been bullied during their time in the service.

The Fire Officers Association's recent behaviours survey reported that 60% of respondents had been subject to abuse over the last 5 years, 56% reported it and in 71% of cases a senior officer knew about it. In 66% of cases no action was taken and in 63% of cases the victim was disappointed in the outcome.

Bullying takes many forms and it takes place both on and off duty.

People being ostracised and denied the use of station facilities.

Station equipment being tampered with.

Personal property being damaged.

Threats made if a person does not follow a particular course of action.

Verbal abuse, acts of intimidation, physical and sexual violence or threats to do so.

And anti social behaviours - being drunk and abusive.

In my short time as Fire Minister I have listen to too many painful stories: Of police officers, resilience crews and members of our armed forces on the receiving end of abuse.

Senior officers being threatened with violence and not being supported by their oppos in other services, or their political masters.

A firefighter contemplating suicide because they are ostracised and bullied for not going out on strike.

Or a victim of bullying being asked to resign by their HR department because it is the easiest way to deal with the abuse.

And those at every level of the service who have had to endure threats of dismissal, violence against their person or worse, but who still describe their role as "the best job in the world".

We often salute the courage of those in this service, for running into danger to save others. Today I want us to pause and salute the courage of those in the service who have, and do, endure this abuse.

Who have carried on protecting their communities in the face of threats.

Who go into work every day knowing they will be treated shabbily and their wellbeing will be harmed and who have little confidence in the support or redress for them.

And that includes those elected too – councillors and MPs have not escaped this inappropriate behaviour.

One elected member, who had recently been threatened by the Fire Brigades Union was so terrified at the consequences for their family on the occasion they did have a house fire that, having dialled 999 and depositing their family outside their home, then re-entered the blazing building and hid to prevent repercussions to their loved ones.

I doubt very much that any of those firefighters who turned up on that shout would have acted with anything but the professionalism we would expect, but that persons contact with their fire and rescue service had so convinced them otherwise that they were prepared to take such a great risk to their personal safety.

I am sure everyone in their room can point to other stories where the behaviours of the service have been far removed from its values.

The frequency of industrial action and the venom it has brought in pockets of the service has affected both its reputation and stamped on these fault lines within it. Minorities have suffered most.

Whether these stories are told by firefighters, support staff, management, politicians or the public they are heart-breaking. Not just because of the suffering they describe but because we all know they are not representative of the service.

One firefighter told me at the start of my tenure, "I find it so sad how the reputation of the service has been damaged. When we are out and about the kids wave to us, but the parents just glare".

It is a minority of the service which perpetrates this, but their impact on its good running and its reputation is disproportionate and highly damaging. It must end.

Such behaviour is a barrier to change, a barrier to our workforce thriving, a barrier to us serving our communities.

We owe it to all who work in and with the service, and the community it serves to do better than this.

In 2 days time the Chief Fire Officers Association will lead a discussion between members of the fire family: professional service, employers and the unions on this topic. I know there has been work in this area to date, and that progress has been made, but I can tell you it is not enough.

A resurgence and affirmation of the values of the service must and can only come from the Service.

You all have to take responsibility for that and it will require strong leadership from you all.

Employers need to take responsibility and the professional service must act to change the culture.

I have given extreme examples of where things have gone wrong. But there are subtler examples which illustrate a lack of care. The legend that is John Bonney once said "Equality and diversity are operational imperatives". He is was and is right.

The women in the fire service and Fire Officer Association womens group have produced reports into how their members feel about the

service they are in. All take great pride in their work, but there are some common themes in their ambitions for the future:

poor maternity policies and practices, and little understanding of the effects of the menopause are common themes.

One female fire fighter commented that she'd get a better maternity package if she got a sports injury - an extra 4 months off!

They want more flexible working - and I have seen many examples of reasonable requests denied.

Complaints about ill-fitting or inappropriate uniform are frequent. With women often being asked to source their own.

Unisex changing rooms are not appreciated or appropriate nor are unisex dorms or a lack of regard for feminine hygiene needs.

But we know it doesn't have to be this way - those reports from women's organisations also contain a wealth of good practice:

On maternity leave and adoption leave.

One service, on having a new Mum return to work undertakes a medical and bespoke fitness support.

Others offer a phased return to work and enable new mothers to be able to express milk and keep it in the fridge.

Some have paid time off for antenatal checks and IVF.

Other services have quality uniforms and well sourced personal protective equipment to fit smaller sizes and job share arrangements.

One even provided tampons in the port-a-loos to be deployed at a major incident. Well done!

I know some of these topics might be a little outside peoples comfort zones - I do understand that: my 26 year old male private secretary now knows more than he ever thought he would need to know about menopause!!

But it is important you do understand if we are to give all our staff equal opportunities and demonstrate how much we value them all.

Later this week the government adviser on older workers will produce a report on the impact of menopause to the workforce, you should all get a copy!

There is a wealth of good practice, you should share it, and spread it. It should not always be up to the minority of women fire fighters we have to be asking for these changes. It is up to all of us to make sure they don't have to.

I pay tribute to the work of these women's organisations and to the work of the Asian Fire Service Association who champion good practice and latest thinking in equality, diversity and inclusion.

I strongly believe, the key to delivering the best service to the local community is to have a diverse, representative workforce, equipped to understand and meet the needs of those it serves and capable of delivering a first class service to everyone.

In my reply to Peter's challenges last year I spoke about the leadership the professional service needed to show.

Today I want to echo that for those in governance positions: the chair and members of authorities, you the employers.

Government has, as of today, tabled the final SI for the new pension scheme. One of the final changes we made last year was to change the National Framework to give older workers reassurances if they lost fitness.

The importance of the "no job, no pension issue" lies not so much in anyone actually being in that situation but the fear workers have that it might be them in those circumstances, and that fear might cause them to cut short their career - that would be lost investment in that person, lost knowledge and skills from the service: bad for the service, bad for the community it serves.

It was because of that concern we changed the Framework, a firefighter now cannot simply be dismissed for losing fitness if they don't qualify for ill health retirement.

Employers need to recognise this and demonstrate that they want to treat their workforce fairly. This doesn't mean giving up their ability to make a judgement in each case, should any case ever occur. What it means is setting out those principles by which they would make such a decision.

Employers should assert that they value older workers for the experience they bring.

That they want people to be able to enjoy a full career in the service and will invest in it accordingly, as Humberside have in fitness support and motivation, where the average time for an older worker to regain fitness is 6 weeks.

That they recognise that genuine concern, and that it is in the services interest they are reassured.

They need to set out clearly the principles on which they would decide to award an unreduced pension. I am pleased the Local Government Association is undertaking this work. It may never be used, but it is important that each employee understands the process and principles that would be applied to them.

Government has acted and if, following the work of the Fitness Working Group, more can be done to further strengthen this then we shall.

In the meantime any authority Chair who writes to me stating that I cannot fetter his or her decision and in the next sentence asks me to do precisely that will get short shrift. Employers must step up and take responsibility, act fairly, and provide reassurance.

With the new pension scheme laid the whole service has an opportunity to look to the future and all the opportunities that comes with it: for the workforce, and the public we serve.

Without that responsibility, focus and strong values we will not achieve our full potential, or meet the needs of our ever changing community.

So Peter, in answer your third challenge: to set out a vision for the service I would describe:

A Service whose reach touches every vulnerable person in the community.

That acts in seamlessly with its neighbours and its partners.

The go to place for innovation, training and community action.

Where all employees work in an environment where they are valued and can thrive.

Where their ideas and vision are acted on.

Where their race, age, gender and sexual orientation is irrelevant to the facilities they have access to, or their promotion opportunities and reflects the community they serve.

A service which provides a uniform that fits. And modern, fit for purpose kit.

Where best practice is shared and best value achieved.

Where every firefighter can be a member of whichever union they chose or none.

Where everyone has everyone's back.

A service which is respected and valued by the community it serves:

Where the parents, as well as the kids, wave and cheer as it goes by.

A service where everyone in it understands its values and purpose and how they can deliver on both.

A service that is the hall mark of leadership, integrity and duty.

That is my vision.

And I have seen enough in by brief time as your minister to know you can achieve it.

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Iowa City Fire Department reshuffling with loss of training facility

By Mitchell Schmidt, The Gazette, Cedar Rapids, Iowa

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Feb. 25--IOWA CITY -- With Riverfront Crossings District development providing several examples of new construction, one related casualty has been the Iowa City Fire Department's training facility.

December's closure of the three-story training facility at 1001 S. Clinton St. has forced the department to reshuffle training exercises and equipment storage until a new facility is built.

Those storage needs could be addressed as soon as next year.

Iowa City Fire Chief John Grier said officials knew, with plans in place to turn that area into a community park, that eventually the facility would be closed.

"We always knew that down the line there was the chance that we would have to relocate out of there," Grier said. "It just came quicker than anybody anticipated."

The facility served as a central location for the department's regular training operations since 2002, providing a space for classes, forced entry and extrication practices and some live fire exercises.

Without the facility, the department has been focusing more on video conference classes, which allow crews to remain at all four city fire stations, and plan to use Coralville's regional training facility for controlled burn practices.

Grier said added focus will be placed on finding opportunities to perform live training sessions in vacant buildings slated for demolition, such as the entry and search training that took place Wednesday at a former residence at 918 E. Bloomington St.

"We're certainly taking advantage of more opportunities," he said. "Over the years I think we've done a great job of doing what we can with what we've got."

Iowa City's fiscal year 2016 budget, slated for a March vote, includes a \$700,000 line item to build a new storage facility on the city's public works campus off South Gilbert Street. The building would provide shared space for the city's police and fire departments.

Discussion on a future training facility will likely occur at a later date, city Finance Director Dennis Bockenstedt said.

John Crane, Iowa City firefighter speaking on behalf of the Iowa City Association of Professional Firefighters IAFF Local 610 union, said equipment once stored in the training facility is now kept in the city's four fire stations.

"So now that that's not available to us all our stuff is kind of scattered around," Crane said. "It's kind of a logistical challenge to conduct our business as we used to."

Crane, who wrote the Iowa City Council on the matter earlier this month, said the union encourages the city council to build a new training facility to bring sessions back to a central location.

"We feel a city as progressive as Iowa City, with all the growth and development going on, we just want the fire department and other emergency service departments not to take a step back," Crane said.

"The ultimate hope is you'd be able to replicate what we had and possibly improve on that."

Coralville Fire Chief Dave Stannard said the Coralville training facility, located near the Magellan Pipeline Company off Hughes Street, was first built in 2006 and has served firefighters from as far away as Burlington, Grinnell and Cedar Rapids.

"We built it with that in mind, being kind of a regional complex," Stannard said.

Stannard said Iowa City firefighters haven't used the building since the closure of their facility, but said discussions have taken place on the matter.

"We've offered it to them and they're welcome to use it," he said.

Crane said the ability to host training operations at Coralville's facility is helpful, but not viable long term as it takes responding firefighters out of city limits and, if an emergency were to occur, would increase response time.

Grier said, in any training session, whether in Iowa City or another community, extra coordination takes place to ensure backup responders are available in case of an emergency.

While the transition period will require more coordination, Grier said the one thing that will not be sacrificed is public safety.

"The safety of the community is at the top of our list, we will not leave the safety uncovered," he said. "That's just not a part of our plan."

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Space a big factor in Richland's fire department upgrades
 By David Hurst, The Tribune-Democrat, Johnstown, Pa.

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KRTJO

English

Distributed by Tribune Content Agency

Feb. 23--According to planners, nearly \$1 million in renovations to Richland's fire station were drawn up with one thing in mind: space. Upgrades to the facility will create wider bays to park their trucks, renovated rooms for their live-in firefighters -- and even a stage in their banquet hall to host bigger bands and special events, Richland Fire Vice President Rob Hudson said.

"This project has been nearly four years in the making ... and it's really going to be a face-lift for our whole building," he said.

The project, planned to get underway in the spring, will move the facility's main entrance from the rear of the building to the side facing Cemetery Road.

In the rear, space will be added to make room for a banquet hall's stage, which planners hope will make their facility a bigger draw for receptions and parties, while bolstering it as a venue for events like their Shamrock Firehouse Music Festival and Richland Bike Bash.

There have been times over the last few years where national acts, like punk legends The Misfits, have been turned away because their banquet hall's current ceiling doesn't meet many touring act's specifications, Hudson added.

"These renovations are going to open up a lot of options for us," he said, saying the stage and banquet hall remodel should only add to their special events. Interior upgrades will create "a fresh new palette for our renters," Hudson said.

Now 25 years old, the banquet hall is due for a face-lift, he added. Guests will be welcomed by a new entryway and canopy, site plans show.

A storage area is also being added, according to the H.F. Lenz plans submitted to Richland Township's planning commission, which have since been approved.

Among the plans:

- The fire station's bays are being reconfigured to make roomier space for their apparatus and training efforts.

- Dorm-style rooms for live-in firefighters and a "day room" are being renovated. A separate room for a female live-in firefighter is also being added.

- The banquet hall's capacity is expected to stay at more than 660 or, potentially, grow, Hudson said.

The project is being paid for through a state redevelopment assistance capital program grant, he added.

Construction would begin in the late spring and last a year but the construction schedule is being structured to avoid impacting currently scheduled and future banquet hall events, Hudson said.

Work on the banquet center's portion will be undertaken during specific sections of the year to avoid running into event issues, he added.

"Our goal is to have the entire project being completed without the typical construction clutter or shutdown that is sometimes needed," he said.

David Hurst is a reporter for The Tribune-Democrat. He can be reached at (814) 532-5053. Follow him on Twitter @TDDavidHurst.

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Local News

Lights, siren, into action

868 words

21 February 2015

The Hays Daily News

HAYSDN

English

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By KAREN LA PIERRE

klapierre@dailynews.net

When the call from 911 communications comes, firefighters immediately put on all 40 pounds of bunker gear in the required one minute, climb on to the red truck and race to the scene of a fire - sirens blaring and adrenaline running.

Fire fighting is not your usual job, and Friday afternoon, Hays Daily News reporter Karen La Pierre and photographer Jolie Green spent a few hours participating in the Citizen Ride-Along Program to see just that.

For those 24 hours the firefighters stay at the fire station, they work, eat and sleep with one eye open - waiting for the call to duty, never knowing when, if or what will come. They remain alert and ready to face what could be a life-or-death moment. Ninety percent of the time, the first fire crew arrives on the scene within eight minutes.

It's definitely not a job for those who prefer routine, and it requires a strong commitment because they are never truly away from it, the firefighters said.

The firefighters report at 7 a.m. every third day for a 24-hour shift, regardless of holidays or weekends, and carry a pager during days off in case a large fire occurs.

Twenty-one firefighters staff the HFD.

Admitting they are adrenaline junkies who like change, Capt. Aaron Detter, a 15-year firefighter, said, "Every day is a new day."

They enjoy helping people, too.

When they are not out protecting the public, the men stay busy inside and outside of the firehouse. Beginning the day with checklist in hand, the firefighters inspect the trucks, making sure all equipment is clean and in working order, and water and fuel are topped off.

The firefighters scrub the station clean, and then spend the rest of the morning and afternoon in training or on inspections. They learn such things as the layout of large buildings, in case they one day need to use the ladder that extends 75 to 105 feet above the truck.

They study maps of the city and take tests on the fastest routes, and the closet of the 1,000 fire hydrants in Hays with good water pressure.

The first item on the checklist after arriving at a fire is determining a water source. Rated by the diameter of the water mains in the ground, the fire hydrants are coded by color.

The men also perform maintenance and upkeep on tornado sirens, and alternating days as the airport firefighter who is required whenever there is a commercial airline flight.

At 4 p.m. each day, everyone on duty reports for a workout. The firefighters have to be fit. With all of the gear on, it weighs between 70 to 80 pounds.

"It's very physically demanding," said Lt. Luke Scoby. "It's also a lot of stress."

Firefighters have to pass a physical agility test, be able to lift 100 pounds and pass isometric holding tests to be hired. They also have to pass a thorough physical.

Water weighs nearly 9 pounds per gallon, and even a 2.5-inch fire hose filled with water takes a minimum of two men to hold it.

"And even then you're working pretty good," Scoby said.

Technology has changed the way fires are fought, and the department now has a blitz fire hose that puts out 500 gallons of water per minute. It is free-standing and requires no manpower to operate once it's set up. It can even turn off if bumped.

New construction materials with increased use of synthetic materials have resulted in fires that advance more rapidly. The men are trained to observe how the flames move to determine safety. They also use thermal-imaging equipment to determine hot spots.

The tool chest at the back of the truck contains hydraulic equipment used to extricate victims of wrecks. The hydraulic airbags have enough power to lift the fire truck. The jaws of life are also run off hydraulic power.

In addition, all firefighters are trained as Emergency Medical Technicians, and each fire truck carries trauma kits, oxygen and cardiac defibrillators.

Not only does the Hays Fire Department fight fires in Hays, they provide mutual aid to Ellis County and area towns. They are also a part of the Northwest Kansas Regional Homeland Security Council.

Not everything at the fire station is new, though.

The traditional pole remains in place from the sleeping quarters directly to the garage where the fire trucks are located. Scoby said the pole is safer at night than stumbling down stairs.

The HFD is rated a Public Fire Protection Class 3 for insurance purposes. Out of 1,210 rated communities in Kansas, only 13 have better public fire protection classification. That translates into lower insurance rates.

The Citizen Ride-Along Program has been in place for four years and is available to residents who are 18 and older. Call (785) 628-7330 to schedule a ride along.

The program began to inform citizens about what the firefighters do because at times, the only opportunity they have to interact with the public is during emergency situations.

American Community Newspapers, LLC

Document HAYSND0020150222eb210000c

Spartan Motors Builds 10 New Fire Truck Cab/Chassis for Detroit Fire Department, Celebrates Pure Michigan

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20 February 2015

India Automobile News

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English

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Feb. 20 -- Spartan Motors, Inc. (Nasdaq:SPAR) ("Spartan" or "Company"), through its subsidiary Spartan Chassis, recognized the Detroit Fire Department (DFD) during a celebration on the Company's Charlotte, Michigan campus for the continued commitment of the DFD throughout the city's resurgence. Daryl Adams, Spartan's recently appointed President and Chief Executive Officer, was joined by Detroit Fire Commissioner Edsel Jenkins for a ceremonial presentation during the Pure Michigan Celebration, which resulted in the Company making a \$10,000 donation to the Detroit Fire Department.

Pure Michigan

Spartan is building a 10 unit order for the DFD which it will complete together with Smeal Fire Apparatus Co., and their local dealer R&R; Truck Repair, both which participated in today's event. Boasting a

balanced combination of innovation, industry-leading quality and safety, the Spartan Metro Star will provide the DFD the best fire truck cab/chassis, which is made in Michigan.

"As a Michigan-based company, Spartan is honored to supply the cab/chassis for this Detroit Fire Department order," Adams stated. "We find it rewarding on many levels and look forward to assisting the Detroit Fire Department in protecting the lives and property of its residents. Spartan is committed to supporting the City of Detroit and the state of Michigan by providing the best emergency response cab/chassis in the industry."

40th Anniversary and the Spartan 9/11 Truck

"The Emergency Response (ER) segment is much more than a business at Spartan," said John Szykiel, the retiring President and CEO of Spartan Motors. "Twenty-eight percent (28%) of the Spartan workforce has firefighting experience or currently serves. It is a big part of who we are. Today is also about celebrating the unique fabric of our associates. Following the 9/11 tragedy our associates built the 9/11 truck, which was delivered to the NYFD by Hendrickson Fire and Rescue Equipment of Islandia, New York. The 9/11 truck is a true demonstration of our commitment to the fire service and our national pride. We could not be more pleased to have the truck back. It will be restored and put it to great use in celebrating the fire service and what differentiates the Spartan Team."

February 19, 2015 also marked the commencement of Spartan's 40th year celebration which will progress throughout the year. Spartan has been Pure Michigan for 40 years and will continue as a proud member of the Michigan-based business community and the economic force driving Michigan forward.

The Product

These custom apparatus built on a Metro Star cab/chassis feature a four-door configuration with a 5-inch raised roof, 178-inch wheelbase, six-person seating, extreme-duty interior finish and an EMS cabinet. They are powered by a 400-horsepower Cummins ISL9 engine and an Allison 3000 GEN V EVS transmission.

Spartan is known throughout the industry for durable, high quality products - including its revolutionary Advanced Protection System (APS). Since its introduction in 2012, Spartan's APS has enjoyed strong market acceptance and is specified by customers on approximately 75% of orders received.

Spartan's APS provides protection in rollover, side impact and frontal impact incidents. APS features an industry leading eight airbags; including front airbags, side-impact air curtains, airbags for the driver

and officer's positions and advanced seat belts with pyrotechnic pretensioners. The APS is the only cab protection system to feature ejection-mitigation airbag curtains for enhanced firefighter safety. Community involvement, such as support for the Detroit Fire Department, aligns with Spartan's D.R.I.V.E. initiative as it promotes the Company's vibrant culture while also creating excited customers and brand loyalists. With the aid from Spartan and its approximately 1,700 associates, the Detroit Fire Department protects one of the nation's largest and most active fire and EMT regions.

D.R.I.V.E. is Spartan's operating strategy based on five tenets:

- * Diversified Growth
- * Redefining Technology and Innovation
- * Integrated Operational Excellence
- * Vibrant Culture
- * Excited Consumers/Brand Loyalists

Source: Spartan Motors

Athena Information Solutions Pvt. Ltd.

Document AUTONW0020150221eb2k00033

A-Section

Metro kept quiet about radio alarm malfunctions

Robert McCartney

1543 words

20 February 2015

The Washington Post

WP

FINAL

A01

English

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Metro knew for years that a federally funded alarm system that warns of outages in its emergency response radio network didn't work properly in subway tunnels, but the agency never told the fire officials who depend on the equipment, senior emergency responders said.

When fire officials learned of the problem on their own last year and pressed Metro to fix it, the transit system said it was waiting until a new radio network is installed beginning a year from now.

Nonfunctioning radios complicated District firefighters' rescue of Metro passengers who were trapped in a smoke-filled tunnel outside the

L'Enfant Plaza station last month. One rider died, and scores of others suffering smoke inhalation were sent to hospitals

The Yellow Line accident on Jan. 12 is the latest example of the Washington region's continuing struggles with emergency response, despite spending nearly \$1 billion in federal homeland security grants since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks in order to be nimble in a crisis. Police, fire and other local agencies have enjoyed a flood of federal and local spending on security since the 9/11 assaults.

They bought new equipment - including digital radios and antenna towers, surveillance cameras, high-tech command centers and suits of protective gear for firefighters. Large sums have also gone to fund planning and training exercises.

The Metro system alone has received \$172 million from the Department of Homeland Security. The radio network inside Metro tunnels was built in part with \$11 million of the grants.

But the L'Enfant Plaza incident exposed serious gaps in crisis reaction, some of which were similar to those in previous incidents. Local officials ranging from U.S. senators to county council members have raised questions about how well federal money has been spent.

The faulty alarm system appears to be one example of money that was wasted. Metro spokesman Dan Stessel said that a system was installed for about \$2 million but that it did not produce reliable results and required extraordinary efforts to maintain.

As a result, Stessel said, Metro never advised the fire departments that the monitoring system had been activated in the first place.

He shifted the responsibility to the fire departments, saying that Metro's "expectation was and is that the fire departments test radio coverage routinely."

It's not clear that the alarm system, had it been working, would have given Metro and firefighters earlier notice of the radio outage than they already had.

But the fire officials said the alarms would have provided early alerts to Metro of many other outages found in the radio network.

The episode was an example of what Prince George's County Fire Chief Marc S. Bashoor, chairman of the region's fire chiefs committee, called Metro's record of "lack of transparent cooperation."

Fire officials in the region said they were surprised and disappointed when they became aware last year that the alarm system wasn't functioning. Regional fire documents show that alarms were purchased

in 2006 and that in 2007, Metro was expected to start working to get the alarms functioning.

"To know that that system hasn't been alarmed in years basically means we've been living on borrowed time," said Montgomery County Fire Battalion Chief Michael Baltrosky, a member of the region's subcommittee on fire communications. "It's scary to know that, and from a public safety standpoint, it's simply unacceptable."

The region's challenges in emergency response arise not from a shortage of money or high-tech gear but from human, bureaucratic and training failures, according to local officials, industry experts, and current and former emergency responders.

In the Yellow Line accident, federal safety investigators cited Metro's lack of written guidelines and proper training in concluding that the transit system mishandled ventilation fans that could have cleared smoke from the tunnel.

Separately, police radio trouble caused by too many users was reported in 2013 during the murderous rampage at the Washington Navy Yard. That same year, the inability of Capitol Police and the Secret Service to easily communicate might have hampered their response during the pursuit and fatal shooting of a driver turned away from a White House security gate.

"It's not just a technology issue, it's even more fundamentally a human institution issue," said Falls Church Vice Mayor David F. Snyder, a longtime member of the region's Emergency Preparedness Council. "Frankly, incident after incident shows there needs to be structural improvements."

Many local leaders bristle at suggestions that the region is not well prepared to cope with a terrorist attack, natural disaster or similar tragedy. They stress that the Washington area, in many ways, is ahead of most other U.S. metropolitan regions.

For instance, D.C., county and other suburban firefighters and police in the region all use digital radios that are fully interoperable - meaning that a firefighter in Fairfax County can easily talk to one in Arlington or Montgomery counties.

But that advantage is partially undercut by the fact that many military and other federal agencies, as well as the Metro Transit Police Department, use different radio systems. Communication across agencies, therefore, requires extra equipment, time or attention that is not necessarily available in a crisis.

In the Metro incident, firefighters' radios didn't work because a network of antennas and amplifiers in the tunnel - the system that was supposed to have working alarms - wasn't operating.

The network carries signals from tunnels and underground stations to key command personnel above ground. Instead, firefighters at L'Enfant Plaza had to use cellphones and a person-to-person relay system.

In a telling sign of the bureaucratic tension that afflicts the region, the first response from both Metro and the District was to blame the other. District officials stressed that they had reported the radio outage at the L'Enfant Plaza Station to Metro four days before the accident but that Metro failed to make the fix. They learned of the outage not from the alarm system but when firefighters discovered that their radios didn't work when they were called to the station for a debris fire.

Stessel said that the network was down on Jan. 12 because the District had failed to notify it of changes in electronic signal configurations affecting the system. He emphasized that the changes were made in equipment at an office on Fourth Street in Northwest, for which the District controls access.

The friction over alarms highlighted what the region's fire chiefs complained was a past pattern of poor cooperation on Metro's part that puts the public at risk.

The Yellow Line accident led the region's fire chiefs to agree with Metro to test the radio system more frequently and to speed repairs.

In announcing that accord, Bashoor noted that Metro had turned more responsive since the Yellow Line accident.

"We are now getting the cooperation we need. There have been lapses in the past," Bashoor said at a Feb. 11 hearing of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.

Asked afterward to describe the earlier problems, Bashoor said: "Some of the lapses in the past have revolved around the lack of communications about the status of radio system repairs. They've also revolved around what we felt was a lack of urgency on WMATA's side to get technicians out to the scene of a reported problem."

Edward R. Mills III, a senior D.C. fire official, said at a congressional hearing that during radio testing the week of Jan. 19, nine facilities on four Metro lines failed inspection. All have been repaired, he said. Fire officials learned that the alarms weren't working when they asked Metro in October why the monitoring system hadn't alerted them to outages they had discovered in other ways.

In an Oct. 27 e-mail, Metro communications official Matthew Lang confirmed that the alarm system wasn't working. Fire officials said Metro tried to replace the original alarm network but the effort failed.

Since 9/11, Metro has been one of the region's top recipients of homeland security grants. In addition to funding the tunnel radio network, the money has paid for 3,500 security cameras, an anti-terrorism team, operations control centers, and lighting, fencing and guard booths at Metro facilities.

The grants to Metro are part of more than \$950 million that the region as a whole received from the Department of Homeland Security from 2002 to 2014, according to the D.C. Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency.

That included \$67 million spent on radio projects alone, according to the D.C. agency, which administers the money for the region.

One project begun too late to help during the Yellow Line accident is a revision and enhancement of plans for emergency response and evacuation at each of Metro's 91 stations.

The effort, which began in 2012 with a federal grant, is adding such details as pre-established locations for command posts, staging areas for responders and locations for bus shuttles if needed.

Plans have been prepared for 25 stations. The one for L'Enfant Plaza is yet to be done.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com>[<http://www.washingtonpost.com>]

WP20150220response0220

Washington Post

Document WP00000020150220eb2k0001x

\$2.1 Million Worth of New Fire Engines Purchased for SJI Fire District

392 words

19 February 2015

Emerging Markets Business Information News

EMBIN

English

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San Juan Island Fire and Rescue Department has six new engines in service. The new trucks, which cost an average of \$350,000 each, replace 30-year-old vehicles. The new engines are expected to be in service for 25 years. The replacement project was driven by a need to

protect property owners' insurance rates. The insurance industry penalizes a community when the fire apparatus that protects it is more than ten years old, even if the fire engines are well maintained - as the department's engines were. SJI F&R purchased the new vehicles from General Fire Equipment in Spokane. The sale was structured so much of the sales tax revenue in the community. The cost of each fire truck was estimated to be \$50,000 less than most communities pay. The fire engines were designed to fit the particular needs of firefighting on San Juan Island. They provide better sight for the drivers and all crew face forward making communication easier.

Crew sat facing backwards and exposed to the elements on the old fire engines. The new engines carry 25% more water than the old engines and can draft water from a special fitting on the front, making it easier and faster to get water from a pond. With less need to bring in water, more firefighters can remain on scene. The new engines provide their own electricity for lighting which will eliminate the need for a generator in most cases. Training on the new engines will be streamlined as all are identical. Each firefighter will have a minimum of 20 hours of training. The old fire engines are going their separate ways. Two of them are going to Shaw Island to augment their fire fighting capabilities. One of them will become a shared reserved engine for the entire county, which is an insurance industry requirement. General Fire Equipment took the other engine as trade in and then donated it to Shaw Island Fire and Rescue. A third fire engine was sold to a small town in the Sierra Nevada mountains of California. The fourth and fifth engines were sold to a group that sends fire apparatus to communities in Mexico who desperately need equipment. The new engines were purchased without an increase in property taxes.

Info-Prod Research (Middle East) Limited

Document EMBIN00020150219eb2j000cb

With Funding at Risk, Brown Joins Lakewood Firefighters to Call for Renewal of Program to Keep Northeast Ohio Firefighters Safe Before It Expires at End of This Month; The Lakewood Fire Department Has Applied for Funding to Purchase Breathing Equipment and Safety Gear Through Critical Fire Safety Program; Any Lapse in Funding Could Threaten Department Preparedness. Brown Releases County-by-County Report for Funding through the Department of Homeland Security - Which Helps Ohio Fire Departments Hire Workers and

Purchase New Trucks - That Will Expire on Feb. 27 Unless Congress Acts; Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) News Release

500 words

17 February 2015

Congressional Documents and Publications

CONGDP

English

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LAKESWOOD, OH - With funding at risk if Congress does not act by Feb. 27, U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) joined firefighters from the Lakewood Fire Department to urge a renewal of a critical fire safety program before it expires at the end of the month. Brown called for the full funding of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) - set to expire at the end of the month - which provides grants to local fire departments to hire firefighters and purchase new equipment. If Congress does not pass an extension of funding for DHS by Feb. 27, these critical resources would be delayed under a DHS shutdown.

"The last thing Ohioans want is another shutdown that puts our safety at risk," Brown said. "That's why I'm fighting for Congress to pass a clean funding bill for critical safety gear and equipment to protect firefighters here in Lakewood and around Ohio. We must avoid a costly and dangerous shut down and ensure that our first responders have the equipment and resources they need to keep Ohio communities safe." The Lakewood Fire Department has applied for funding to replace outdated air masks through the Assistance to Firefighter Grant (AFG) Program. More than 500 Ohio fire departments currently have active applications for funding through AFG - which could be delayed or disrupted unless Congress acts. While funding decisions are scheduled to begin next month, a DHS shutdown would delay the grants until the agency is funded. Last week, Brown provided county-by-county information on the fire departments throughout Ohio that have applied for a total of more than \$100 million in AFG funds during this application round.

The AFG, SAFER, and FP&S grant programs provide critical assistance to local fire departments that often depend on federal funding for equipment, staffing, and safety upgrades that local governments cannot afford. The AFG program provides funds for firefighter training, facility upgrades, and new equipment while the SAFER program allows local municipalities to hire career firefighters and recruit and retain volunteer

firefighters. The FP&S program supports projects that enhance the safety of the public and firefighters from fire and related hazards. Read this original document at: <http://www.brown.senate.gov/newsroom/press/release/with-funding-at-risk-brown-joins-lakewood-firefighters-to-call-for-renewal-of-program-to-keep-northeast-ohio-firefighters-safe-before-it-expires-at-end-of-this-month>[<http://www.brown.senate.gov/newsroom/press/release/with-funding-at-risk-brown-joins-lakewood-firefighters-to-call-for-renewal-of-program-to-keep-northeast-ohio-firefighters-safe-before-it-expires-at-end-of-this-month>]

The United States Congress

Document CONGDP0020150218eb2h0002m

A

Cocoa Beach gets modern fire station

By R. Norman Moody

1150 words

14 February 2015

Florida Today

FLTY

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English

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COCOA BEACH — It's like going from living in an old barn with a leaking roof and moldy walls to a new modern house.

Fire Capt. Michael Telesca, a 27-year veteran of the Cocoa Beach Fire Department, said he is pleased that firefighters just starting their careers will do so in a new building, across the street from the old station that felt like home to him.

"I'm excited for the future of this department," he said. "I'm excited for the new employees we have. They are moving into a new house they deserve."

Cocoa Beach will open its new 24,400 square-foot fire station Tuesday with a ribbon cutting ceremony at 5:30 p.m.

Firefighters will be going to the new Station 51 from a building that once was an old telephone company facility converted to a fire station in 1983. The original structure was built in 1951, according to the Brevard County Property Appraiser's web site. The truck bays were added later.

In the new three-story building, they will have a modern facility built to withstand winds of 160 mph video monitoring of the premises, individual dorm rooms, a large day room, classroom and training tower.

"It's such a difference," Deputy Fire Chief Mark Austin said. "That's a hardened structure. Without a doubt, that's one of the safest buildings on the east coast. It will be the hub of recovery in the event of a storm." Austin said the training room is configured to double as an emergency operation center if needed.

An old hose rack, about 12 feet long that has been cleaned up and repainted, sits in the new fire station, hoses already stacked on it. Firefighters insisted on bringing it for use in the new station.

"They were insistent on bringing over some of the history of the tradition of the Cocoa Beach Fire Department," Austin said. "It doesn't seem like much, but for the guys, that was a pretty big deal."

Telesca looks forward to moving into the new station, but the old one, where he started his career as a firefighter at 19 years old, is hard to leave.

"I remember walking in here," he said of the old station. "This was awesome."

Telesca, 46, said that at the time, he was getting the career he wanted and was where he wanted to be in his life. The old station is where he spent his career.

"To me, it is like the house I grew up in," he said.

He said that despite the attachment to one's old house, the time comes to move on. Besides, the leaking roof and moldy walls, the space is cramped and the building is simply deteriorating and hard to maintain. Mayor Dave Netterstrom said he is proud that the city finally has its new fire station to replace one that is so deteriorated it likely would not withstand a hurricane. He said the new station will allow some personnel to remain there during a hurricane to respond immediately after the storm.

"It was much needed," he said. "It was long overdue."

Ken Griffin, a former city commissioner who is a retired fire chief, said the fire station turned out to be bigger than was planned when he was on the commission.

"It's a gorgeous station," he said. "It is a little more than I expected and little more than we needed. But it will serve us in the future."

Several years ago, while Griffin was on the commission, the city had begun setting aside money for a new station. Later, the money was used elsewhere.

The city took out a loan to pay for the cost of the fire station. The building alone cost \$2.9 million. But with the upgrades, furniture and equipment, the total cost comes to about \$4.1 million.

The old fire station, across the street, will be demolished in the next few months. The site likely will be used for various activities such as a farmers market and movie nights, until the city decides what to do with the space and adjacent property it owns to the south.

The city could later consider the space for building a new police station or a combination city hall and police station. City staff is exploring what to do about the cramped space in which city hall and the police department operates.

Janice Scott, a former mayor who describes herself as a "resident advocate," said she thought the fire station is bigger than needed for the city.

She said she thinks the city could have built one centrally located station instead of having two stations. The city has a smaller station north of State Road 520.

"Now we ended up with what looks like a regional fire station instead of a small city fire station," she said. "It's a very fine looking station. I'm not really critical of it, they needed a new fire station."

Netterstrom said that at one time there was talk of a single centrally located station but the idea was discarded after officials looked at Holiday Lane and Fischer Park at State Road A1A.

"Our residents want a fast response time," he said.

Austin, the deputy fire chief, said that with the two stations, the average response time is 4 minutes. The city has 28 firefighters. Generally, there are seven firefighters, including supervisors, per shift at Station 51. Station 50, on west Volusia Lane, operates with three personnel per shift.

"With the two stations that serve our city, this response model best suits our needs for quick, efficient service to the community," he said.

Contact Moody at 321-242-3651 or nmoody@floridatoday.com Follow at Twitter @RNormanMoody

SHARING WITH COUNTY

The Brevard County Commission last week unanimously approved a deal under which Brevard County Fire Rescue will house a rescue unit at the new Cocoa Beach-owned fire station. Under terms of the 20-year agreement, the county will make an initial payment of \$145,000, followed by annual payments of \$11,815 a year for the following 19 years. Total cost: \$369,485.

Interim Brevard County Fire Rescue Chief Mark Schollmeyer said the county's Rescue 61 unit will move from an aging fire station across the street at 45 S. Orlando Ave. that is owned by Cocoa Beach and maintained by the county. That station has only an aluminum overhang to protect the rescue truck from the elements.

The city's new station at 50 S. Orlando Ave. not only has space to house the Rescue 61 crew, but also has enough bay area space to keep the county's rescue unit indoors.

Schollmeyer said the space-sharing deal improves efficiency for the two fire agencies.

— Dave Berman, FLORIDA TODAY

Gannett Co., Inc. - Newspaper Division

Document FLTY000020150214eb2e00002

Local

Police, firefighters train to rescue gunshot victims faster

By Linda Trischitta, Staf writer

837 words

12 February 2015

South Florida Sun-Sentinel

FLSS

Broward Metro

1B

English

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At a Fort Lauderdale cinema Wednesday, two men in camouflage gear calmly walked down the aisle and fired rifles and handguns at moviegoers.

Twenty-seven volunteers were "injured" in three theaters during the drill. Fort Lauderdale police guarded and escorted paramedics wearing protective gear to tend to the wounded actors, even though the "shooters" weren't captured and blank gunfire echoed elsewhere in the Riverwalk movie complex.

The agencies' goal is to speed up paramedics' responses during mass killings, domestic calls and other violent incidents.

The new tactics that lead responders into the "warm zone" of an active crime scene may save lives, but they also put firefighters and paramedics closer to gunmen or other threats.

Wednesday's rehearsal was reminiscent of the 2012 shooting at a theater in Aurora, Colo., when 12 people were killed and 58 wounded. The FBI says there were 486 people killed and 557 injured in 160 mass shootings between 2000 and 2013.

A gruesome trend became apparent: Paramedics stood ready in a safe location until police stopped the gunman, and victims often bled to death.

Fort Lauderdale officials say that if a madman strikes, they don't want such potentially lethal delays to happen in the city.

"Basically about two years ago, around the time of the Boston Marathon bombing, there was a paradigm shift at the national level that there has to be a different way of handling these things," said Fort Lauderdale City Manager Lee Feldman. "We're not the first city to do this, but we're in front, even locally. You can be a city of two thousand or a city of two million, and an active shooter can happen."

The Fire Chiefs Association of Broward County and the Broward County Chiefs of Police are working on a response policy similar to Fort Lauderdale's.

The agreement may be finalized in a month, said Seminole Fire Chief Donald DiPetrillo, president of the fire chiefs' association. Protective gear and training would follow.

"Agencies can choose whether to participate directly," DiPetrillo said. He called South Florida "a target. It's probably a fair assessment to say we've been lucky so far."

Fort Lauderdale's cops and firefighters have trained together for eight months. The city spent about \$100,000 for 112 sets of navy blue helmets and vests marked "fire rescue" that are shared by each shift, said Fort Lauderdale Fire Rescue Deputy Fire Chief Timothy Heiser.

Lighthouse Point Fire Rescue Chief David Donzella said his agency will train and follow any new active shooter procedures that are begun countywide, but he won't equip his 24 responders with body armor.

"Lighthouse Point is the smallest fire rescue agency in Broward County, and we will not put our firefighter-paramedics in harm's way," Donzella said. "We'll rely on our police department and outside agencies should we come into that situation."

Fort Lauderdale's firefighters' duties have changed and they aren't getting paid extra for these new responsibilities.

"Their jobs are to save lives," Feldman said. "And we don't want them to get shot at. That's why they come in with [police protection]. One of our concerns was if our guys were to say, 'This isn't in my job description.' And to their credit, not one of them has raised it as an issue."

Fort Lauderdale Professional Firefighters Union President Scott Bayne said the new safety equipment "is a good thing."

He was not concerned with firefighters wearing the extra gear, but is worried that the vests are blue, like police uniforms, and that firefighters will be mistaken for cops.

He said he was also worried that firefighters may in the future be asked to go into hostile situations before police arrive, though no official has said that is going to be a new procedure.

The International Association of Firefighters in 2012 recommended unarmed firefighters train with police for rescues in so-called warm zones.

The IAFF's local president, Broward Sheriff Fire Rescue Capt. Walter Dix, said he supports the new tactics as long as firefighter-paramedics are protected.

"Firefighters aren't going to carry firearms," Dix said. "That's not our job."

He called rushing into warm zones "another piece of our job, rescuing people in dangerous situations.

"The quicker we can get in, the quicker we can get them out and get them treatment," Dix said. "It's an evolving profession. It will take people time to adjust to this new world we live in."

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Photo: Fort Lauderdale Police and Fire and Rescue cooperated on a live shooter drill Wednesday at the vacant Sunrise Theater in the Las Olas Riverfront Plaza. JOE CAVARETTA/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER | Photo:

At a Fort Lauderdale theater Wednesday, two men in camouflage gear calmly walked down the aisle and fired rifles and handguns at "moviegoers." JOE CAVARETTA/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Tribune Publishing Company-South Florida Sun-Sentinel

Document FLSS000020150213eb2c0000a

With Funding at Risk, Brown Fights for More Than 500 Ohio Fire Departments to Renew Program that Keeps Firefighters and Communities Safe; Brown Releases County-by-County Report on Ohio Fire Departments That Have Applied for Critical Fire Safety Program; Any Lapse in Funding Could Threaten Department Preparedness. Funding for the Department of Homeland Security -Which Helps Ohio Fire Departments Purchase New Trucks and Safety Gear -Will Expire on Feb. 27 Unless Congress Acts; Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) News Release
520 words

11 February 2015

Congressional Documents and Publications

CONGDP

English

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WASHINGTON, D.C. - With funding at risk for their pending applications, U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) is fighting for more than 500 Ohio fire departments to ensure they have the resources and equipment to keep firefighters and communities safe. During a news conference call today, Brown called for the full funding of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) - set to expire at the end of the month - which provides grants to local fire departments to purchase new equipment, protective gear, and emergency vehicles. If Congress does not pass an extension of funding for DHS by Feb. 27, these critical resources would be delayed under a DHS shutdown.

"The last thing Ohioans want is another shutdown that puts our safety at risk," Brown said. "That's why I'm fighting for Congress to pass a clean funding bill for critical safety gear and equipment to protect Ohio firefighters. We must avoid a costly and dangerous shut down and ensure that our first responders' have the equipment and resources they need to keep Ohio communities safe."

More than 500 fire departments have active applications for funding through three federal programs - the Assistance to Firefighter Grant (AFG) Program, the Staffing for Adequate Fire & Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant Program, and the Fire Prevention & Safety (FP&S) Grant Program - which could be delayed or disrupted unless Congress acts. While funding decisions are scheduled to begin next month, a DHS shutdown would delay the grants until the agency is funded. During the call, Brown provided county-by-county information on the fire departments throughout Ohio that have applied for a total of more than \$100 million in AFG funds during this application round.

Brown was joined by Mike Taylor, assistant chief of the Steubenville Fire Department. The Steubenville Fire Department currently has an AFG application pending and previously received a SAFER grant to support the salaries of nine firefighters.

The AFG, SAFER, and FP&S grant programs provide critical assistance to local fire departments that often depend on federal funding for equipment, staffing, and safety upgrades that local governments cannot afford. The AFG program provides funds for firefighter training, facility upgrades, and new equipment while the SAFER program allows local

municipalities to hire career firefighters and recruit and retain volunteer firefighters. The FP&S program supports projects that enhance the safety of the public and firefighters from fire and related hazards.

Read this original document at: <http://www.brown.senate.gov/newsroom/press/release/with-funding-at-risk-brown-fights-for-more-than-500-ohio-fire-departments-to-renew-program-that-keeps-firefighters-and-communities-safe>[<http://www.brown.senate.gov/newsroom/press/release/with-funding-at-risk-brown-fights-for-more-than-500-ohio-fire-departments-to-renew-program-that-keeps-firefighters-and-communities-safe>]

The United States Congress

Document CONGDP0020150212eb2b0007o

Local / News

Museum illuminates firefighting history; Station One shows the call-men, the equipment, the fires and the victims

Jeff Mahoney The Hamilton Spectator

737 words

21 January 2015

The Hamilton Spectator

HMSP

First

A5

English

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I've never been in a fire, thank goodness, but one night when I was a boy, there was scattered shouting outside my house and the muffled clomp of feet on the sidewalk, rushing past.

We went out to see what was going on. Just around the corner and down the street, I recognized one of the new, almost-completed houses, under construction in the half-cleared subdivision; but now it was lit up against the dark, like a giant dancing candle.

That's how it seemed - dancing, the support beams and crosspieces aglow and trembling, popping as they fell, the whole frame shimmying in an ecstasy of flames. It was horrible ... and thrilling.

Then the counterbeat - thundering hoses and stark silhouettes of firefighters flashing against our eyes, mobile black shadows on a ferocious orange page.

The memory returned the other day as I drank in the displays at the Hamilton Fire Department's museum, Station One, on John Street North, near King William.

The photographs recall the conflagration at the Wentworth Arms, the Masonic temple fire 1968 and, deadliest, the Moose Hall Fire, 1944. Others as well.

Images of the deep winter aftermath of the 1923 Lister Block fire, great garlands of ice wreathed thickly over everything - telephone poles, hydro wires.

Few things stay with us, in such powerfully living detail, as the memory of fire, and John Verbeek is the embodied memory of the Hamilton Fire Department, with its richly storied past.

He's the man behind the museum; he has also written a book, and he takes us through from the volunteer bucket brigade beginnings. In 1879 it became a professional corps, and the "call-men" were replaced by full-time firefighters and officers.

Great leaps of innovation happened early, thanks mostly to the department's first chief, the legendary Alexander Aitchison.

"He (Chief Aitchison) was determined to bring down response time, so he was responsible for introducing the brass pole to fire departments," says John, a veteran firefighter specializing in fire prevention and recently promoted to administration.

There's a vintage pole in the museum; not only was Hamilton the first (at least in Canada) to have a slide-down pole, it was also first in the world to have a combination hose and chemical wagon - Aitchison's idea. He also developed an overhead hitching device which enabled Hamilton firefighters to break the world record at the time - six seconds to harness a horse.

Chief Aitchison, who died on a call when thrown from his buggy (he landed headfirst against the Sir John A. Macdonald monument), also introduced an electric stable door opener, box alarm system and, ultimately, the department telephone system.

In the museum the breadth of the department's history is represented, from the switch from horse-drawn to motorized vehicles, early breathing-assist masks, a head shot of the arsonist who started the Moose Hall fire to dispatch equipment, an early portable fire extinguisher, the original Jaws of Life - 1970s vintage, and helmets through the years.

One of the centrepieces is the impeccably maintained 1843 John Fisher engine, made at the Fisher foundry at James and Merrick.

John created the museum in the 2000s, while Station One was being renovated, in time for its centenary in 2013.

Then, at the prodding and with the help of the Hamilton Public Library's inimitable Margaret Houghton, he produced a book, "Hamilton Fire Department: A Historical Look Back." It's an invaluable resource which lists every member of the department from beginning to now as well as the names of many victims of Hamilton's historic fires.

In some ways, fire and our efforts to live with it safely are the story of the human race. Here we have our local chapter of it, in two wonderful resources, the book and the museum, the latter well worth a visit to the handsome Station One.

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Photographs recall fires at the Wentworth Arms, the Masonic temple in 1968 and, the deadliest, the Moose Hall Fire in 1944. Hamilton's historic fire Station One is home to a mini-museum showing the history of firefighting in the city. It's one of firefighter John Verbeek's great passions. photos by Kaz Novak, The Hamilton Spectator

Toronto Star Newspapers Limited

Document HMSP000020150121eb11000io

A

Report: Firefighters had radio problems

Associated Press

789 words

18 January 2015

The Quad-City Times

QCTYTM

_01

5

English

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WASHINGTON — Firefighters responding to an electrical malfunction on the Washington subway system had difficulty communicating by radio and some had to use cellphones instead, according to a preliminary report released by the city Saturday.

The report says fire officials notified transit officials of a problem with radio coverage in the L'Enfant Plaza station on Jan. 8, four days before

the malfunction near the station, which caused heavy smoke. The report also adds detail to a timeline previously released by the city.

One person died and more than 80 were taken to the hospital during Monday's incident. A train inside a tunnel filled with smoke, and the smoke also affected riders at the L'Enfant Plaza station and passengers aboard a second train there.

An email chain included in the 37-page report about the fire department's response shows transit officials were contacted Jan. 8 about a radio coverage problem at the station. The transit agency had been doing work on the communication system and believed it was working, though problems in tunnel areas continued, a transit employee responded the same day.

The employee wrote that officials were "having trouble with the tunnel areas which we are troubleshooting. The stations seem fine." It was not clear whether the transit agency felt everything was working properly on its end by Monday's incident or whether fire officials returned to test the radios as promised in another email.

The report says fire officials' radios could still function as walkie-talkies, meaning they could communicate short distances, but what they were saying wasn't being broadcast so anyone listening to the radio could hear. One firefighter who helped evacuate passengers stuck on the smoke-filled train near the station said that radio communications were "nonexistent" in the tunnel.

The firefighter also suggested that the kind of cars that made up the train may have led passengers to wait for rescuers rather than evacuating themselves. In four of the train's six cars, the way to get the doors to open is not obvious and requires loosening screws on a panel above the door, the firefighter wrote. Passengers have also said the train operator told them to stay on the train.

District of Columbia Mayor Muriel Bowser declined on Saturday to blame the communications issue on transit officials or the fire department. "We think that there are obviously things that need to be improved around communication, around equipment, and that's what I think that the report shows," she said.

Saturday's report also added detail to a timeline of the event released earlier in the week by the city. Both timelines say a fire rescue squad was at the station about 10 minutes after the first report of smoke there, at 3:31 p.m. But the new report says it then took rescuers four minutes to get to the train platform and that they then entered the tunnel to get to the train, reaching it at about 3:40 p.m.

That would seem to conflict with earlier reports that first responders waited before entering the tunnel because they were uncertain about whether power to the third rail, which provides powers to the train, had been shut down.

"It was while the rescue operation was underway that the Battalion Fire Chief, at 3:44 p.m., received confirmation from WMATA that power to the area had been disabled," the report says.

The same firefighter who provided the report about the train doors wrote that the rescue squad asked about power being shut down when they arrived at the station platform, were told it was and entered the tunnel. The report suggests that it was a second group of arriving firemen, a "recon group," that was concerned about third rail power when they heard trains still running, despite using emergency boxes to disable power to the tracks themselves. They asked for confirmation power had been shut down.

The city's earlier timeline had also suggested that the first ambulance arrived on the scene nearly an hour after smoke was reported, though city officials said ambulances were there sooner. Saturday's report says an ambulance was at the L'Enfant Plaza station 17 minutes after smoke was reported there.

Saturday's report also included transcripts of a number of calls to 911 made during the incident. In one, a passenger stuck on the train in the tunnel reports the train filling with smoke.

"It's going to be a bad situation here very soon," the person says.

The National Transportation Safety Board is investigating the incident and the city's Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency also intends to produce a fuller report.

Paxton Media Group LLC

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News

New tests will help ageing firefighters prove their fitness

Rob Lawson

602 words

16 January 2015

Bradford Telegraph and Argus

NQTGB

English

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PROPOSED changes designed to improve the fitness of firefighters across West Yorkshire will make it easier for the brigade to retain its ageing workforce, according to a union chief.

Firefighters who fall short of the required standards in a treadmill fitness test will now get a second chance to remain in frontline operation if they successfully perform a drill-based assessment.

They will then have six months to get up to speed, or face the eventual prospect of redeployment or early retirement.

West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service has used research by Firefit - a national steering group on fitness and health in the UK fire and rescue service - to draw up the new fitness procedures.

Firefighters already have to complete the Chester treadmill test, a 12-minute brisk-paced walk with gradually increasing gradients.

Under the new guidelines, any crew member who falls short and lasts between ten and 12 minutes will be given a physical activity risk assessment to check for any health problems such as high blood pressure or cholesterol.

If successful, they can take a practical drill-based test - featuring a hose run, equipment shuttle run, and a hose reel or casualty drag - which if they pass, would ensure they remain on frontline duties.

Any firefighters who fail to complete ten minutes will be given personal improvement plans and removed from operational duties until they are fit enough to train towards the required standards.

A report to the fire authority's human resources committee next week, states the Firefit recommendations have now been incorporated into its fitness at work policy, with formal consultation with unions set to commence "shortly".

David Williams, secretary for the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) in West Yorkshire, said the FBU had yet to be told of the new proposals.

"It seems this new process is a catch-all situation, as the brigade has realised the problem of its ageing workforce," he said.

"Those thicker-set, and perhaps older, firefighters who might struggle with the treadmill test will now have a chance to perform the drills test and remain in operation.

"When the brigade had more resources, firefighters could be retired or sacked if they weren't capable, but now we can't afford to let people go.

"If some firefighters can't pass the tests now, that number is only going to get higher and higher as the workforce ages, and we can't shore it up with new recruits.

"If we sacked four people a year who couldn't pass fitness tests, who is going to replace them to keep fire engines on the road."

On Monday, a new set of statutory guidelines on firefighter fitness requirements was introduced by the Department for Communities and Local Government as part of the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England.

The guidelines state that each fire authority must have "a process of fitness assessment and development to ensure operational personnel are enabled to maintain the standards of personal fitness required in order to perform their role safely".

A West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service spokesman said it already complied with the changes in the National Framework, with its fitness training, testing, and provision of equipment seen as "best practice nationally for quite some time".

Last month, the Telegraph & Argus revealed the brigade has no full-time firefighters under the age of 25, with the average age of crews set to rise to 48 by 2021.

Fire chiefs were warned an ongoing recruitment freeze could lead to a 'Dad's Army' of frontline firefighters.

Newsquest Digital Media

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News

St. Clair firefighters getting a drone

PAUL MORDEN QMI AGENCY , PAUL.MORDEN@SUNMEDIA.CA

792 words

8 January 2015

St. Catharines Standard

STCTHS

Final

C11

English

2015 Sun Media Corporation

Firefighting and rescue work is set to go airborne in st. Clair Township. a \$4-million capital spending program approved for the township fire department will add a drone, along with two new fire trucks and some fire hall renovations, between now and early 2016.

Chief Walt anderson said the remote control drone the township is set to buy will be equipped with a camera system, including an infrared camera.

"It's got between six and eight little motors on it, with props," he said.

"It looks like a fancy little helicopter."

One role expected for the drone will be helping locate victims at the site of fires, and other emergencies, he said.

"any building or any industry where we have to get in and look at something where it might be too dangerous to put people in, we can use that," he said.

"It should be a good tool." anderson said drones are currently more widely used by fire services in the u.s., but their use in Canada has been growing.

"There are a number of restrictions through Transport Canada that you have to abide by, and with our neighbours, homeland security," he added.

"We'll have a couple of people we'll have to train."

The drone is part of a package of capital purchases the department is calling Project 2016.

anderson said it began with the department looking at the scheduled replacement of a 1991 ladder truck, "and then it sort of grew."

Mayor steve arnold, through discussions with industry representatives in the township, found there was an opportunity to do more.

"so, it was decided by council that we do it all at once, and get everything in place that we need," anderson said.

approximately half of the industries in Chemical Valley are in the township, and range from heavy petrochemical refineries, high pressure gas storage facilities, a nitrogen plant and several natural gas-fired electricity plants.

"some of our big industry have their own firefighter capability" but the township can still be called in to assist when they have emergencies, anderson said.

Other industries in st. Clair don't have those capabilities and may not belong to the Chemical Valley Emergency Coordinating Organization that shares resources during emergencies, he said.

"It gives us something for first response to assist these industries, and back up the ones that do have their own," anderson said.

as part of the project, the township is ordering two 115-foot articulating platform fire trucks being manufactured by rosenbauer.

One will replace the old ladder truck and the second will be an addition to the township's fleet.

"It's a step up," anderson said about the new model.

"They've got a full foam system and pump system on them, to support industry."

The new trucks will take more than a year to build and are expected to be delivered to the township in early 2016.

One of the new trucks is set to go to the township's Corunna station.

"The second truck, we haven't quite decided yet what station is going to be at yet, but we're looking at Brigden," anderson said.

renovations will be needed at the fire station that receives the second new truck, but Corunna station is already large enough to accommodate the model.

The project also calls for renovations to the Becher station, anderson said.

The 1991 ladder truck will remain in the township fleet and be used as a backup truck for the department that has stations in Corunna, Becher, Brigden, Courtright, Port Lambton, and Wilkesport, and is staffed by approximately 180 volunteer firefighters, along with a full-time chief and deputy chief.

The plan is to have the fire station renovations completed by the time the new equipment arrives, anderson said.

"We want to get that started right away."

The project won't increase residential property taxes in the township because it will be funded from approximately \$1 million in reserves the township had set aside for a new truck, as well as a special property tax levy on industries in St. Clair, anderson said.

"They've had some decreases over the last number of years," he said.

"This is adding a little back onto that to support them with some fire equipment."

photo by PAUL MORDEN/QMI Agency \ Chief Walt Anderson stands next to a ladder truck at the Corunna Fire Hall that is set to be replaced as part of a \$4-million capital program approved for the St. Clair Township Fire Department. The money will be spent on two new fire trucks, renovations to two township fire halls, and purchasing a drone. \ Sun Media Corporation
Document STCTHS0020150108eb1800012

LETTER Firefighters need fitness

238 words

4 January 2015

Eastbourne Herald & Gazette Series

EASTBN

English

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With an interest in the local Fire Brigade dating back to the late 1930s (although never a fireman or firefighter as they appear to now be known), I read with amazement the explanation from Stephen Lloyd MP for not supporting the objections of the firefighters' union to changes in its members' pension scheme which includes a requirement that they work until the age of 60.

It suggests very little, if any, knowledge of the degree of fitness – that is, strength and agility – needed by firefighters, male and female, to successfully and safely deal with the wide variety of incidents the public expects them to deal with.

The increased expectation of life does not automatically extend the same degree of health and fitness to the age of 60 years. With the issue still not resolved and the possibility, I assume, of another vote, I suggest Mr Lloyd increases his knowledge of a firefighter's work by visiting the Eastbourne Fire Station or, better still, the East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service's training centre.

I am sure staff would willingly introduce him to the training required and equipment used to ensure the continuing ability of operational personnel to deal efficiently and effectively with the incidents to which they have been called. I am also sure such a visit would cause him to reconsider any future action on his part regarding this matter.

F. Thomas

Westham

Johnston Publishing Limited

Document EASTBN0020150105eb1400001

A

Police, fire hope to expand ranks in 2015

By Deborah M. Marko and Chris Torres

1220 words

1 January 2015

The Daily Journal

DJNJ

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11

English

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Emergency responders in Vineland and Millville are looking to 2015 as a time to beef up their ranks — in staffing and equipment — and set the pace for the future.

Vineland's fire crews hope to lay the groundwork this year for a new pumper truck and get more residents involved in volunteer firefighting.

Vineland police, too, are looking to put more feet on the street with a crop of new officers soon to go through training.

In Millville, the police department hopes to add more officers and continue its relationship with the Cumberland County Sheriff's Department and the Prosecutor's Office. The prosecutor in 2014 assigned a monitor to oversee the city police force.

Vineland Police Department

The Vineland Police Departments enters 2015 committed to strengthening community ties, earning a long-awaited accreditation and bringing on 10 new officers.

The department has aligned its juvenile and community policing units, Police Chief Tim Codispoti said.

"They are still two separate units, but we have put them into one office," he said. "We are seeking closer cooperation between both units in some of their functions."

The benefit is better communication between the units as well as shared resources.

When it comes to community policing, Codispoti said Vineland is "a little head of the curve."

"I'm not the only one; this is an idea I got out of the International Association of the Chiefs of Police — they've been advocating this for years," Codispoti said. "This is the emphasis we should be putting in our communities."

After several years, Codispoti said, the department is starting to enjoy a closer relationship with the public.

"Due to our outreach, our community block meetings, Coffee with a Cop and Facebook, we are starting to get feedback in different venues that a few years ago we didn't get," he said. He noted the department has experienced an uptick in phone calls from the public, who are passing on a tip or sometimes asking a question

"They feel comfortable," the chief said, adding that's the goal of community policing.

This year, Codispoti said, the department is making a concerted push toward accreditation. The goals of accreditation are to strengthen crime prevention, formalize essential management practices, establish fair and nondiscriminatory personnel practices, improve service delivery,

increase interagency cooperation, and increase trust and confidence in the agency, according to police officials.

It requires the department to review every document, policy, procedure and protocol to ensure each is the best standard, the chief said.

This year, the department plans to hire 10 new recruits, bringing the force up 141 officers. The candidates are now going through background checks, and those selected will start training in the spring at Gloucester County Police Academy.

Vineland Fire Department

The Vineland Fire Department starts the new year searching for a replacement for fire director after Robert J. Ternay Jr. gave his notice in October. Ternay cited time constraints in stepping down. The Volunteer Firefighters Association of Vineland has submitted several names to be considered and awaits city officials to name Ternay's successor.

Vineland officials last year approved a bond ordinance to purchase two new fire trucks at \$500,000 each. They are engine/pumpers that Ternay called the "work horse" of the department.

"The two engines that will be replaced were placed into service in 1990," Ternay said. "Normally, a fire engine or ladder truck has a 20- to 25-year life cycle depending on usage and maintenance; at 25 years of age, fire department vehicles are considered to be antiques."

The city should be ready to solicit bids in the spring.

The first of the two new engines wouldn't arrive until 2016. The process from specifications to truck delivery generally takes 18 to 24 months, Ternay said.

The last fire truck acquired by Vineland was Tower 6, a 2012 Sutphen 100-foot ladder truck, largely funded through grants. Prior to Tower 6, the most recent purchases were two engines in 2006, Ternay said.

The fire department has 10 volunteers registered for the upcoming fire academy stated to begin in January. The department continues to look for additional volunteers.

Vineland residents, who are at least 18 years old, may request an application to become a volunteer firefighters by calling Rich Franchetta, the Volunteer Firefighters Association of Vineland president, at (856) 213-2580 or fire Capt. Mark Cifaloglio at (856) 691-2480; or emailing at JoinVFD@vineland

city.org. To become a volunteer firefighter, applicants must complete a physical exam, background check and required training.

Many volunteer members have gone on to be hired to become city firefighters. Ternay pointed out the department expects to fill at least two openings on the career staff this year.

Millville Police Department

Millville police Chief Thomas Haas said collaboration with the Cumberland County Prosecutor's Office will continue into the new year. A monitor was appointed by the Prosecutor's Office in October to review the department's practices and procedures in regards to criminal investigations and other offenses.

Prosecutor Jennifer Webb-McRae appointed Detective Ronald Tobolski to the post. The move was a response to complaints from the public and members of the department.

"It's moving right along," Haas said of the oversight. The chief said the monitor recently oversaw the rewriting of policies related to case management.

Haas said he had been hoping for assistance from the Prosecutor's Office for years.

"Everybody's short with people, and without the manpower, you can progress only so much," Haas said. "This is manpower coming with the knowledge to make us more efficient."

Mayor Mike Santiago, who heads the city's Public Safety Department, said the police department is headed in the right direction.

"I think the department is moving forward," he said. "There's always need for improvements."

The department will bring three new officers on board after they graduate from Cape May Police Academy at the end of this month. That would increase the department's ranks to 71 officers. Haas said the target is 74.

"It's a target we've been trying to hit for about three years now," he said. "As soon as we get close, someone gets hurt on duty or something else. It's unfortunate we can't predict those things."

The chief said the department hopes to expand its chaplaincy program into the city's school system. Millville modeled its chaplain program after one in Vineland. There are eight chaplains in the Millville program, which was established last June.

Haas said Officer Sue Taylor is coordinating with school officials to get chaplains more involved with students.

"If schools have children with outside influences affecting their behavior, they may refer them to us," Haas said. "Then we'll refer them to the chaplains."

Millville Fire Department

Millville Fire Chief Kurt Hess said his department is doing what it can to stay within its budget for 2015. The department added one new career firefighter last year to fill a spot vacated by retirement.

Two volunteer firefighters were brought on in the fall to bring the volunteer total to 45.

Hess said the department also hopes to replace the machine it uses to test how well firefighters' respiratory systems fit.

Gannett Co., Inc. - Newspaper Division
Document DJNJ000020150102eb110000x

EARLY GENERAL NEWS

Camera helps fight fires

257 words

23 December 2014

Murray Valley Standard

FMURAY

3

English

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www.murrayvalleystandard.com.au[http://

www.murrayvalleystandard.com.au]. Not available for re-distribution.

FIREFIGHTERS in the Coorong will be better equipped as they enter the fire danger season this year.

A Thermal Imaging Camera has recently been donated to the Coorong Country Fire Service (CFS) which will help detect hot spots on fire grounds and identify heat sources in emergency situations.

Coombe CFS Captain Greg Kennett said the new equipment would be shared between the Tintinara, Colebatch and Coombe brigades and would help identify unextinguished hot spots after fires had passed.

"We have had instances where we have searched for people, pets and livestock involved in vehicle accidents and the camera will help locate them through body heat," he said.

"It will also help us complete tasks more quickly, reducing the incidence of having to return to sites and will see brigade volunteers go back home to their families more quickly.

"We believe the new technology will have an impact on volunteer morale and enthusiasm and will aid in recruiting younger members."

Mr Kennett would like to see them installed in every brigade's trucks.

As the camera can more easily and accurately locate heat sources, it should help increase firefighter safety and vehicle accident sites and hayshed fires.

It will also enable the best use of volunteers and equipment and help conserve water.

Coorong District Council's Local Action Plan team, the Commonwealth Government Clean Energy Future Biodiversity Fund and the Tintinara Merino Breeders Association collaboratively purchased the state-of-the-art equipment.

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Salinas to replace firefighter breathing gear

461 words

18 December 2014

Emerging Markets Business Information News

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Salinas, Seaside and Big Sur recently agreed to put in 10 percent apiece of a \$900,000-plus grant for replacement self-contained breathing gear for firefighters. The equipment, an absolute necessity in the firefighting world, will be purchased courtesy of a Regional Assistance to Firefighters Grant under the Federal Emergency Management umbrella. Salinas City Council took up the issue most recently when Tuesday night council members unanimously approved a bid from Allstar Fire Equipment and the required 10 percent match to the \$900,388 grant, according to City Clerk Patricia Barajas. Seaside twice beat Salinas to the punch on the FEMA grant. In August, Seaside City Council approved receipt of the grant. On Nov. 20, Seaside council members approved the 10 percent match, City Clerk Lesley Milton said Wednesday. Big Sur's Volunteer Fire Brigade was also included in the grant.

Fire Chief Martha Karstens confirmed in a voice mail Wednesday afternoon, the Brigade's board had also approved acceptance of the grant and the 10 percent match. On Sept. 11, Salinas accepted the grant, according to a report from Salinas Fire Chief Edmond Rodriguez. Bids were opened on Oct. 7. Allstar Fire Equipment made the only bid at nearly \$1.7 million. Staff negotiated the price down to 50 cents below the grant award. Now, it's up to Salinas, Seaside and Big Sur to each foot 10

percent the total cost for 135 self-contained breathing apparatuses, 17 RIC (rapid intervention crew) packs and 38 one-hour oxygen cylinders. Salinas, the largest agency, will receive the most equipment - 80 self-contained breathing apparatuses, 11 RIC packs and 22 one-hour oxygen cylinders. The FEMA grant will pay \$539,352 for that equipment contingent upon Salinas' now approved 10 percent match plus an \$8,100 management fee. Seaside and Big Sur will receive 23.5 percent and 16.5 percent, respectively, of the remaining money. They'll be responsible for combined management fees of \$5,400 plus their 10 percent matches. Rodriguez called self-contained breathing apparatuses "probably our single-most important piece of firefighting equipment next to our turnouts." Without turnouts - the full-body protective gear firefighters wear - and self-contained breathing apparatuses, firefighters couldn't respond to a number of emergencies, he said. "We couldn't go into a building without them or respond to a chemical spill," he said. As it stands, the manufacturers no longer maintain Salinas' self-contained breathing apparatuses. Instead, the Salinas Fire Department must "cannibalize" parts from old equipment to keep them functional. Once the replacement apparatuses are in place - sometime in March or April - Rodriguez said the city might be able to donate the old equipment, possibly to the fire academy at Monterey Peninsula College.

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News

IT'S THE WEEKEND: The young firefighters of Gwent

Ruth Mansfield

1039 words

15 November 2014

South Wales Argus

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English

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They have the uniform, the equipment and are being trained in the vital skills. CIARAN KELLY meets Gwent's young firefighters. FROM hose running to ladder climbing and even search and rescue operations - the young firefighter scheme is providing a unique opportunity for many teenagers across Gwent.

Open to boys and girls aged between 13 and 18, the two year programme is South Wales Fire and Rescue Service's flagship youth activity, with 10 branches in the South Wales region including at Malpas in Newport, Cwmbran, Tredegar and Abergavenny.

In total, around 240 teenagers across South Wales are currently enrolled.

The programme sees the young firefighters have their own fire engine and specially adapted equipment, which they use in activities designed to mirror firefighting drills.

Sian Vowles, station manager of the Young Firefighters, has managed the scheme for the last four years and said that the goal is to provide the teenagers with skills that they can use in later life.

She said: "Each of the young firefighters works towards a BTEC Level 2 course in fire and rescue in the community. We aim to provide them with valuable life skills they can use both for their own benefit and the benefit of others.

"We develop their citizenship skills in a fire and rescue environment. It is all about discipline, teamwork, and confidence.

"We also aim to reduce anti-social behaviour and to reduce fire crimes through the scheme. We have team-building activities and a number of weeks are spent learning first aid.

"Throughout the scheme, the Young Fire Fighters take part in various fundraising and charity initiatives both locally and nationally. This gives them an opportunity to do something positive within their communities, while raising money for the worthwhile charities.

"At the end of the two years, we hold a graduation ceremony at the station which senior fire officers, councillors, local dignitaries and the students' families attend. On the evening, they perform an operational drill – which is usually a simulation of a house fire, with a casualty rescue - to show what they have learnt.

"They then receive a certificate and plaque."

She added: "After the two years, they never want it to finish and are usually quite disappointed to leave. We will often signpost them to St John's Ambulance, the police cadets, or other volunteering work."

Among those to take part in the scheme at Malpas Fire Station are Libby Whittington, 14, and Thomas Coles, 15. The Malpas scheme meets every Monday, between 6.30pm and 9pm.

Libby, who is a pupil at Newport High School, said that the scheme has lived up to her expectations since starting in September.

She said: "I'm really enjoying the scheme and have made some new friends. It's exciting. For example, we have learnt about blind searching

when you cannot see in the smoke. You use your hands and feet as your eyes to find your team or to find people inside.

"We have also learnt about rolling out the hoses and how to use the pumps. I love the activities and it's great to meet new people.

"It would be fun to go on and teach other young firefighters and some of the instructors are also on call, which would be really appealing to me in the future."

Thomas also wants to work in the fire services when he is older and he said that he has already learnt a lot about the skills required for the job.

"We've learnt how to use hydrants and to pitch the ladder against buildings. It's all been focused on teamwork and even though I did not know anyone there at first, everyone is so friendly and it's a good laugh, too. We're all in the same boat, really.

"The various techniques have been harder than I thought and it takes time to learn everything, but I look forward to it every Monday.

"It's nice to do it after school and to learn about all the different rescue operations, whether it is fire-related or car crashes. Both sides really appeal to me and I find it all really interesting."

But it's not just about recruiting future firefighters. Station Manager Vowles said the aim of the scheme is to open teenagers' eyes to the work the fire services do, while aiming to reduce arson and anti-social behaviour. It is also about developing the youngsters' personal qualities for further education or future employment.

She said: "It does not lead to jobs into the fire and rescue service per se, but around 25 former young firefighters have gone on to work for South Wales Fire and Rescue in some capacity. It really opens their eyes about the service and what they want to become.

"The fire and rescue service drills are not the sort of activity you would be able to participate in otherwise and it's a chance for teenagers to be influenced by positive role models. There is a lot to learn and you do not get bored. We have a drill for one night every week during school terms and it's a chance for them to make friends with people who have similar interests.

"We have special rescue teams visit so the young firefighters can see what they do and the fact that it is not just road traffic collisions and fires that the fire service deals with. They also get the opportunity to visit the emergency fire control room, speak to the crews, and have access to what they are doing. For example, they would get to see a simulation of a car being cut up to show how a trapped passenger would be freed.

"They also get the chance to carry out operational drills, including hose running, ladder climbing, search and rescue, and breathing apparatus. It

takes a lot of time to master and it's all about refining those skills during the scheme. Over the two years, no two weeks are the same; it really is just about doing something different."

For more information regarding the Young Fire Fighter Scheme, visit www.southwales-fire.gov.uk[<http://www.southwales-fire.gov.uk>].

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Features

'This is the future of UK firefighting'

MATT SIMPSON

527 words

11 November 2014

The Sentinel

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1; National

6

English

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Staffordshire brigade helps develop pioneering nozzle

STAFFORDSHIRE firefighters will soon be able to extinguish fires more quickly and safely thanks to a pioneering new tool.

The misting branch fire hose nozzle uses less water than the standard implement, yet will reduce the time it takes to tackle blazes.

Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service has been working with South African company FireBug to design and test the new 'ST15' equipment - named after the postcode of the service's Pirehill headquarters. The new tool has been demonstrated to other fire services across the country and Chief Fire Officer Peter Dartford is proud Staffordshire is at the forefront. He said: "We are leading the way with the ST15 nozzle which has been trialled, tested and developed here in Staffordshire.

"We are particularly pleased to be supporting the local economy by arranging for the product to be manufactured locally.

"There is a lot of excitement about the ST15 nozzle, as we are confident that it will revolutionise how we tackle fires in the future.

"The product will also give unrivalled levels of firefighter safety which is one of our main priorities in Staffordshire.

"The feedback we are getting from our crews is very positive and we were delighted to showcase the product to our colleagues at the launch

event." At the launch event, three fires were put out to demonstrate the ease with which they could be extinguished with the new nozzle.

A total of 160 litres of water were used - it is estimated that standard equipment would have used more than 500 litres. Dermot Hogan, the fire service's head of emergency response, said: "The advantages of this are we use only a small volume of water, the nozzle creates the perfect droplet size which allows effective and quicker cooling and it helps with the safety of our firefighters.

"This has been a fantastic opportunity to work with Fire-Bug and develop a fantastic product." FireBug chief executive Nick Link said work began on the project 18 months ago after a meeting at a convention.

He said: "We met deputy chief fire officer Chris Ennis at a convention for sprinklers and he asked if water mist could be used by the fire service.

"The most important thing about it is that it is water mist made up of very small droplets, which have a larger surface area than bigger drops, but still uses the right kinetic energy.

"This allows for quicker cooling and absorption, while using far less water. It is environmentally friendly and will also greatly impact the fire and rescue service.

"We're delighted we are now in the realisation stage of this project which we envisage will become the future of British firefighting." More than £100,000 was invested into the project by FireBug and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service, who will receive a cut of each unit sold.

Already more than 20 other fire services across the country have placed orders and interest has been shown in Sweden, Japan, Indonesia and Dubai.

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Local News

Safety Board wants priority equipment list

Ken de la Bastide The Herald Bulletin

447 words

7 November 2014

The Herald Bulletin

NDRSNH

English

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ANDERSON — Following requests for approval to purchase new equipment, the Anderson Board of Public Safety wants a priority list from the fire department.

Brent Holland, assistant chief of the Anderson Fire Department, received approval to buy new entry masks, thermal imaging cameras and equipment for the dive team. But board members Thursday expressed concern about future costs.

Holland said the department wanted to buy 26 air masks at a cost of \$24,689. He said 10 were replaced earlier in the year.

Shawn Dietzen, a firefighter and member of the safety committee, said 126 masks comprise the inventory. He noted that the city would need a certified mask technician to repair them.

“There are quite a few masks that need to be replaced,” Dietzen said. He asked the board to allow the safety committee to meet and make recommendations to the safety board.

“We need for the department to prioritize what equipment is needed,” board member Bill Watson said.

The request to buy seven dry suits and 10 regulators at a cost of \$36,000 was approved but led Safety Board members to express concerns about the needs of the department.

“The dive team is the most risky of all out technical teams,” Holland said. “They are diving in black water; they can’t see their hand in front of their masks.”

The equipment is 15 years old.

Board members asked about the need to purchase turnout gear for firefighters in the near future. Holland said the department plans to replace 90 percent of the turnout gear in two years.

“Firefighters need the best gear,” said Bruce Dunham, chairman of the board. “Diving gear is secondary. My concern is the front-line firefighters having the best gear.”

Dunham asked why the department doesn’t stagger the purchase of turnout gear so that firefighters get new equipment every five years. He also asked why when gear no longer fits the individual firefighters it isn’t stored and provided to another firefighter.

Holland explained that the department doesn’t have a secure area to store the equipment.

“Is there a plan in place to keep the equipment serviceable and to replace equipment as needed?” Watson asked.

Fire chief Phil Rogers said there is a plan to replace and repair equipment, adding that the department is attempting to have retired firefighters return their gear.

“Things got pushed back in 2012,” Rogers said of staggering the purchase of equipment for firefighters. “We’re trying to get back on a rotating schedule.”

Follow Ken de la Bastide on Twitter @KendelaBastide, or call 640-4863. Midlands Newspapers, Inc.

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LOCAL

CELEBRATING A HISTORY OF FIREFIGHTING

TODD SOUTH

Email: south@northjersey.com

449 words

3 November 2014

The Record

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English

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HACKENSACK -- Equipment, tactics, work hours and pay have all changed in the past century of professional firefighting in Hackensack. But the dedication and the bond that grows from fighting fires has not changed.

Though this city has had men to race into burning buildings since at least 1871, it wasn't until 1914 that the city began a professional, paid fire department.

Fireman Michael Martinelli, 45, has spent two decades with the department and almost immediately took on the extra duties of resident historian. Photographs he scoured from old microfilm to donated items from retired firefighters adorn the inside of 205 State St., the department headquarters.

On Sunday afternoon the fire department opened its doors to the public to share its history and mark its centennial as a professional fire department.

While many municipalities still rely on capable volunteers to fight fires, Hackensack couldn't stay on that path a century ago.

"This is where everything happened," Martinelli said. Until the middle of the 20th century most of the land north of Route 4 was still farmland, and fires could be contained to a single farmhouse.

But Hackensack was seeing the growth of skyscrapers, government buildings, high-rise apartments, oil facilities, chemical factories and other industry -- all with their own dangerous ways of burning.

And as that professional fire department took on the evolving work, its firefighters took on the dangers, bonding through the intimate day-to-day life in the firehouse.

"You become a family," said Hackensack Fire Chief Thomas Freeman, 52. "You live together, you work together."

Freeman should know. Since 1936 there has been a Freeman serving with the Hackensack Fire Department. His grandfather joined then and retired 28 years later as a captain. His father joined in 1956 and retired as chief in 1994.

John Brancato, 65, spent 28 years with the department. His son is now a captain.

Brancato watched the department transform from "old-fashioned" to "progressive" following the department's deadliest fire in the middle of his career.

On July 1, 1988, the roof of the Ford dealership at 320 River St. collapsed, instantly killing three firefighters -- Capt. Richard Williams, Fireman William Kresja and Fireman Leonard Radumski.

Two other firefighters died from carbon monoxide poisoning in the same blaze -- Lt. Richard Reinhagen and Fireman Steven Ennis.

Brancato remembered the key lesson he learned as a young firefighter -- protect your lungs.

As strange as it may sound now, he said, there were many firefighters of previous generations who would not use breathing apparatus, sometimes out of pride.

"In the beginning you're young, you're macho," Brancato said. "Then you learn."

Record / Hackensack, New Jersey

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News

Fire power must be doubled

AMELIA BROADSTOCK ENVIRONMENT REPORTER

299 words

3 November 2014

The Advertiser

ADVTSR

Advertiser

5

English

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FIREFIGHTER numbers need to double within 20 years to cope with the increased risk caused by fire seasons that start earlier and last longer, a report says.

A Climate Council report released today says climate change is contributing to the rising bushfire risk and to the hot and dry conditions increasing the number of extreme fire days.

Climate Council of Australia councillor Professor Lesley Hughes says in the report that the number of professional firefighters in Australia needs to double by 2030, compared to 2010 numbers, to "keep pace with increased population, asset value and fire danger weather".

Based on 2010-11 figures, when there were 1122 Metropolitan Fire Service firefighters, the report is calling for that number to top 2200.

"Increased resources for our emergency services and fire management agencies will be required as fire risk increases," Prof Hughes said.

"Australia's premier fire and emergency services agencies have recognised the implications of climate change for bushfire risk and firefighting resources for some time.

"Longer fire seasons have implications for the availability and costs of firefighting equipment ... substantially increased resources for fire suppression and control will be required." While the report only addressed MFS numbers, Prof Hughes said Country Fire Service numbers would also need to double.

In 2010-11, there were 14,475 volunteers, including firefighters, cadets and operational support members. This year, volunteer numbers have plunged to about 13,300.

Country Fire Service Volunteers Association president Roger Flavell said more support was needed for the CFS "to do its job properly" and cope with the increased bushfire risk. "If there was more money given to our organisation, less of our volunteers would be doing administration work and instead getting out there and fighting fires," he said.

News Ltd.

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METRO

Capturing firefighters' history

ANANDA BOARDMAN

NEIGHBORSGO ABOARDMAN@NEIGHBORSGO.COM

978 words

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The Dallas Morning News

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English

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Fire Station No. 5 has seen a lot of Dallas history in the more than 100 years it has stood on Parry Avenue across from Fair Park. But the station, which has housed the Dallas Firefighters Museum since 1972, needs work to bring it into the 21st century.

"You ask all the firemen, and they want to preserve our history," said Rett Blankenship, a captain with Dallas Fire-Rescue Station No. 11 and president of the museum's board of directors. "This way we're going to preserve our history as well as devote basically the entire half of the museum, if not more, [to] kids and education."

To restore the building's facade back to its 1907 appearance and to bring the interior up to date with modern technology and in compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act requirements, the museum needs about \$5.6 million. The money will also include adding an educational component with interactives on safety and fire prevention.

Using available space

When the Dallas Fire Council met in 1968 to discuss creating a museum, it was given permission to use Fire Station No. 5. Jerry "Zip" Crawford, a retired firefighter who serves as one of the museum's curators, said starting in 1972, the Dallas firefighters began to build their own museum.

"Firemen would just meet over here [after shifts] and work," said Crawford, who was a charter member of the museum. "There's a lot of history in this old station."

Blankenship said it's men like Crawford who are the reason the museum exists today - because they saved the department's history and because they built the museum as it stands now.

For the first few years of its existence, the station was part museum, part active station. The museum fully took over the space in 1975. And for its

entire existence, it's been funded largely by donations from active and retired firefighters, Crawford said.

"The firefighters, since its inception, have donated well over a million dollars to keep this thing open," Blankenship said. "That's kind of the way we've been, is kind of a small museum in Dallas, but one that's been around longer than some of them. The entire time we've been open we've operated in the black ... from the beginning it's almost exclusively been kept open by the firefighters themselves, which is also unique."

About 1,800 people - 87 percent of the department - donate some amount of money each month toward the museum.

"Without the firefighters themselves, there's just no way that we would be able to stay open," Blankenship said.

A quiet campaign

They initially wanted to start fundraising in 2009, but the economic downturn pushed efforts back to this year, Blankenship said.

Once the \$5.6 million needed to restore the facade and launch the educational redesign is secured, he said they hope to raise additional funds to create an endowment for the museum.

Felicia Hill, a senior fire prevention officer with Dallas Fire-Rescue's Inspection and Life Safety Education department, said renovations are planned to recapture the station's early days.

"It's about to get a facelift and the whole second level is going to be the interactive fire part, and I believe they're going to bring it back [historically] to when the horses were there," Hill said. "It's a part of us, it's our past, but we're also moving into the present and the future ..."

Hill said the educational part of the museum will cover other hazards, such as choking and suffocation, trips and falls, pedestrian and bicycle safety and more.

Right now, about 3,500 people a year visit the museum. When the work is completed, they hope to bring in at least 20,000 children per year, Blankenship said.

"It would be 10,000 times more than what we see now," he said.

That would be accomplished by working with local schools and homeschool groups, he said.

What's important

Unlike many fire museums that cobble together exhibits with relics from various places, the Dallas Firefighters Museum is about 95 percent full of things from Dallas, Blankenship said.

"Fortunately Dallas was forward thinking enough, they actually started pondering the idea of a museum back in the 1960s, and even before

that, the fire department had even started holding some things back," he said.

In addition to fire engines, equipment and other memorabilia, the museum also houses thousands of old photographs, scrapbooks made by firefighters' families and other odds and ends. They're working to digitize the photos, Blankenship said.

"You're just overwhelmed with how much these old guys couldn't let go of their time with the fire department, they wanted to take a piece of it with them," he said.

AT A GLANCE

The Dallas Firefighters Museum is at 3801 Parry Ave. Hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday. Admission is \$4 for adults and \$2 for children. For more information, visit dallasfiremuseum.com or call 214-821-1500.

PHOTO(S): (1. File) Capt. Bruzzese posed for a photo outside Fire Station No. 5 on May 2, 1975. The station was closed and reopened as the Dallas Firefighters Museum. (2. Dallas Firefighters Museum) A photo of Station 5 from about 1920 firefighters making the transition from horse-drawn engines to automobiles. Station 5 was built in 1907 and now houses the Dallas Firefighters Museum. (3. File) An April 1978 photo shows the exterior of the Fair Park Fire Station, also known as Old Tige's and No. 5 Hook & Ladder Company. (4. Dallas Firefighters Museum) A rendering by architects Good Fulton & Farrell shows what the Dallas Firefighters Museum would look like with a restored facade.

CHART(S): AT A GLANCE

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NEWS

Firefighters seek a more receptive audience // Minneapolis department finds new City Council allies.

ERIN GOLDEN; STAFF WRITER

STAR TRIBUNE (Mpls.-St. Paul)

1185 words

18 October 2014

Star-Tribune

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English

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Minneapolis fire officials, who long have pleaded for bigger budgets, may be finding a more receptive audience among some of the City Council's newest members.

In recent years, the department and firefighters' union has argued that a growing and aging population is straining its limited resources. Staffing levels are down from a decade ago, while the number of emergency calls is up. By one key measure, emergency response times consistently have been behind national standards with little sign of improvement.

City officials, however, have targeted the department with cuts or been cautious about approving major increases in the budget. Mayor Betsy Hodges' 2015 budget calls for a 1.5 percent increase to the Fire Department budget, with staffing levels held steady.

Now, some of the council's new members are showing an interest in reversing that trend. In a recent budget hearing, Council Members Andrew Johnson and Blong Yang pushed Fire Chief John Fruetel to offer a personal assessment of the department's staffing needs. And after hearing the chief's response — that he's struggling with surging overtime and injury costs he can tie directly to not having enough firefighters — the council members said they're not going to let the issue drop.

Johnson pointed to budget items like a holiday celebration and tourism marketing as things that are "nice to have" but says he sees public safety as a "need-to-have" expense.

"We're not properly staffing 911, and our firefighters are understaffed below safe levels," he said. "We need to take care of that first. That's our core role as city government."

The department's \$60 million budget provides for 406 sworn firefighters. That's up slightly from a few years ago, when numbers dipped into the high 300s, but down considerably from more than a decade ago; in 2001, the department had 473 firefighters.

But the number of firefighters ready and able to respond to calls is actually lower. Departures and retirements pushed the staff size down to a low of 376 in July, and Fruetel told the council that includes more than 20 firefighters who are off duty because of injuries.

He said he could use 418 firefighters, rather than the 406 proposed in the mayor's budget.

"I think we need to have more depth in the department," Fruetel said. "I don't have the depth right now to take care of the impact of injuries."

Cost of claims has surged

Department statistics show the number of firefighter injuries actually has been on the decline for the past few years, dropping from 264 in 2009 to 176 last year. But in that time, the cost of workers' compensation claims has surged; Fruetel told the council that claims have doubled since he took over as fire chief in 2012, now reaching \$2.4 million annually. While the number of fires in the city is on the decline, the department's overall call load continues to grow. Five years ago, firefighters responded to 32,165 calls. By last year, that was up to 38,133. This year, officials expect the number to be higher than 41,000. Fruetel noted that more and more of the department's calls are for medical emergencies, rather than fires. And more often than not, they're for people who have fallen and need to be pulled out of the kind of tight spots that can leave a rescuer with a serious back injury.

"It's not like I get called in and it's a little, 100-pound woman passed out on the floor," said fire union president Mark Lakosky. "It's usually a 400-pound, hairy naked guy, wedged between the toilet with a needle sticking out of his arm. And it's the top-floor apartment at the end of the hallway."

At the same time, Fruetel says his department's average age is on the increase.

With a smaller staff to handle the work, Fruetel has relied on firefighters working overtime shifts, and those costs have more than doubled since 2009, to nearly \$2 million in each of the past two years.

"We are, without question, doing more with less," the chief said.

Fruetel is hesitant to draw a direct link between staffing and response times; he said obstacles like traffic, poor weather conditions and rigs out of position for training exercises have a more direct impact on those statistics.

But Lakosky, with the union, said the city's level of investment is directly related to how well the department does its job, and how quickly firefighters can provide help. He said decisions made several years ago to reduce the number of rigs and lower the required number of firefighters assigned to equipment are now becoming more clear.

Trying to meet standards

By one measure, of how fast the department gets 14 firefighters on the scene of a structure fire, the department has remained close to the national standard over the past decade, even slightly surpassing it during the first half of this year.

But by another, which measures how often the first responder gets to any type of emergency in 5 minutes or less, Minneapolis has struggled. The National Fire Protection Association target is for departments to

meet that goal at least 90 percent of the time. Over the past five years, the department's percentages have been dropping, from more than 86 percent to 78.7 percent last year to just over 75 percent in the first half of 2014.

Maps provided by the department show firefighters have met the standard less than 50 percent of the time in 10 Minneapolis neighborhoods, most of them in the outer reaches of the city. Lakosky, who tussled with Hodges on staffing issues during last year's mayoral campaign, said officials aren't doing enough to plan for the future. "They tout the growth of the city ... but tell us, how many runs is enough to where you add back to this Fire Department? How bad do our response times have to be?" he said.

In a statement, the mayor defended her staffing plans, including proposals for new classes to fill behind retiring firefighters. "The investments I proposed for 2015 for cadet classes and recruitment are the best tools for building a pipeline of new firefighters to support the Fire Department's long-term workforce plan and to ensure the department continues to be strong into the future," she said.

Yang, chair of the council's Public Safety Committee, said he's not sure where other cuts could be made to expand the Fire Department's budget. But he said he's concerned that the current funding doesn't go far enough. "I certainly think they need more staffing than what they have now," he said. "My understanding from that conversation with the chief in council chambers was there's a sweet spot we need to reach, and we're not there."

Erin Golden • 612-673-4790

The Star Tribune Company

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PEWeekly

Firefighters offer high praise for new vehicle ; The 'quint' enables local firefighters to reach higher spots with its ladder capability.

MICHAEL WILLIAMS

MICHAEL WILLIAMS STAFF WRITER

768 words

25 September 2014

The Orange County Register

OCR

n/a

English

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Lake Elsinore's million-dollar baby - a 2014 custom-built, state-of-the-art, fire-engine red firetruck - is finally ready for action.

Ordered more than a year ago, the "quint" firefighting vehicle, so named because it offers five major functions, is now parked at the city's Rosetta Canyon Fire Station. It should have been pressed into service after it went on public display before the Sept. 9 City Council meeting.

The primary advantage of the quint is that it amalgamates the functions of a ladder truck and a pump engine into one vehicle, while adding a variety of other features.

Essentially, it's the Swiss Army Knife of fire engines.

Aboard the quint, said Capt. Joe Taylor, "We're like a big multipurpose toolbox on wheels."

With their advanced capabilities, quint trucks are becoming more of the norm these days in the firefighting industry. Other nearby jurisdictions such as Perris and Menifee already have them. Murrieta likes its vehicle so much the City Council decided Sept. 2 to order another one.

But for now, Lake Elsinore's first quint, built by the Smeal Fire Apparatus Co. in Snyder, Neb., is the classiest model around.

"This is the best there is," said the vehicle's driver, fire apparatus engineer Daniel Beeson.

County fire officials recommended that the city obtain the quint to coincide with the opening of the Rosetta Canyon station in part because of the lack of one or an aerial ladder truck in the immediate area. City Council members agreed to the request, though they put off ordering it until they were assured the station would open, which happened in July 2013.

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Columns

How your fire tax dollars are being spent

Jim Goodworth

771 words

20 September 2014

Citrus County Chronicle

CITRUS

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Most people don't give much thought to their fire department until they're in an emergency and need help. When that time comes, the citizen dials 911 and they have certain expectations of the fire department. Citizens expect the fire department to be on scene quickly and firefighters to be well trained and equipped to handle every emergency. As your fire chief, I want to make sure that we not only meet but exceed these expectations. Now that the proper funding mechanisms are in place, we have the benefit of having a cost-effective and financially stable means of funding the department not only for today, but into the future.

One of my first tasks after being given the honor of leading the fire service was to develop a comprehensive long-range strategic plan addressing the priority needs of the department.

The first priority was to redistribute our current staff in order to provide protection to areas of our county that had little to no fire protection, such as Floral City, Sugarmill Woods and DeRosa. These stations had a limited number of available volunteers. Other priorities included hiring additional staff, apparatus replacement, equipment replacement and upgrades to our stations.

In regard to staffing, the Municipal Services Benefit Unit, or MSBU, has allowed us to hire career firefighters to make up for the decline in volunteer ranks. Over the past decade there has been a significant reduction in volunteer firefighter recruitment, not only in Citrus County but nationwide. One of the contributing factors to this reduction is the time and training it takes to become a certified volunteer. This training has increased dramatically. Currently volunteers are required to have more than 250 hours of training before they are certified. Federal and state standards enacted to save firefighters' lives have unintentionally created a barrier to volunteer service. Citrus County is comprised mostly of senior citizens, and as our volunteer firefighters have retired, there are fewer young people here in the county to take their place.

Since implementing the fire MSBU, Fire Rescue has made significant improvements which have enhanced the service to the citizens and improved the safety of our firefighters. In looking at the first five years of the strategic plan, we've developed a comprehensive budget which determined the necessary rates for the fire MSBU in order to address the deficiencies within the department. It is important for citizens to know how their money is being spent. In the first year of the additional funding, we have purchased two new fire engines which replaced a 19-year-old engine and a 20-year-old engine. We have added additional personnel, allowing us to staff the Citrus Springs fire station with career firefighters, and added three firefighters to the Inverness station. We have been able to replace the firefighters' bunker gear that was expired. We are also updating the equipment that is carried on our engines, along with upgrading some of our stations that are more than 50 years old and were not designed to staff firefighters for 24-hour coverage.

Our firefighters put their lives on the line each day protecting the citizens of this great county; they deserve to have the proper equipment and resources to fulfill their mission. Although the fire MSBU may not have been popular to some, it was necessary in order for us to meet citizens' expectations and provide adequate public safety.

We have assured the citizens we will be fiscally responsible with their tax dollars. Since the inception of the fire MSBU, we have rolled back the millage rate on the ad valorem fire tax from .8014 to .6926, which equates to a savings of approximately \$1,720,207 returned to the taxpayers. I would also like to share the costs our surrounding counties pay for their fire MSBUs. As you can see in the accompanying chart, the citizens of Citrus County pay much less for fire protection than our surrounding counties in terms of fire MSBU assessment rates.

The fire MSBU is necessary in order for us to meet citizens' expectations and provide the highest level of public safety. We will continue to ensure that all residents receive outstanding fire services within Citrus County. Your support is greatly appreciated by those who work in Fire Services. Chief Goodworth has spent the last 31 years serving the citizens of Citrus County. He began his career with CCEMS in 1983 as a field paramedic, eventually becoming EMS chief. In 2006, he was hired as deputy fire chief and in 2012 was appointed fire chief.

Media General, Inc.

Document CITRUS0020140921ea9k00014

O'Fallon Fire and Rescue featured in magazines

By Robyn L. Kirsch
Progress Staff Writer

809 words

11 September 2014

Belleville News-Democrat (IL)

BLND

English

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After obtaining new trucks in the beginning of the year, O’Fallon Fire and Rescue has been featured in industry manufacturer’s magazines and websites for its high quality equipment, according to Craig Schmidt, O’Fallon assistant fire chief and engineer.

“To our knowledge our department has never had the honor of making an appearance in a magazine before, especially one that gets distributed everywhere,” Schmidt said. “...this is a big step for our department, especially considering the way technology is changing.” Schmidt said O’Fallon’s new trucks also will be featured in the manufacturer’s annual calendar, but is unsure of further details at this time.

“For us to be making two magazines like that is pretty impressive, and it’s putting us on the map, and quite a few other departments who are looking into buying new trucks are stopping by as time goes on to ask questions and see them,”

Schmidt said. “When a firefighter goes to another firehouse, the first thing they do is want to look at the trucks because a lot of departments don’t have the ability to upgrade to the better quality trucks, but we did.”

“It’s really exciting for O’Fallon to be able to get our department’s name out there in the fire service community, so to speak—we feel honored in a way,” Schmidt added.

The department’s most recent three arrivals act as another step towards its goals of uniformity. Schmidt said uniformity regarding equipment in his line of work is key for the firefighters and for the department as a whole for a multitude of reasons.

“All of our trucks are basically the same, but the trucks (purchased) in 2009, 2010 and 2013 models, as well as the latest are all from the same manufacturer,” Schmidt explained. “It’s a big thing in fire service. Years ago, in the late 1980s we had some twins, identical trucks that were made at the same time, and with the way things change over time it’s not uncommon to have trucks that are from different manufacturers, but

we’ve been making conscious efforts since 2006 to stay with the same manufacturer.”

Schmidt went on to say, “It works better for ease of training and operation with tools and equipment being in the same spot, as well as for the maintenance part of it—we are able to stock maintenance parts in bulk so that one item can fit six trucks.”

O’Fallon Fire and Rescue now has four engines, two ladder trucks, two brush (grass-fire) trucks, one tanker for hauling water, two command vehicles, two utility vehicles and one maintenance-style vehicle.

“Based on the annual reports, we look at an average of about three fire calls per day, so we have a great selection of equipment vehicles to keep up with our growing community,” Schmidt said. “Some days we have none, and other days we may have six or two.”

Schmidt said the three trucks were acquired at the same time in January, with one being a 100-foot aerial platform truck with an 800-foot ladder and the other two Smeal Custom Midship Series Pumper trucks without ladders.

According to Firehouse.com’s report of O’Fallon’s two new Smeal pumper trucks, they were built on a Spartan Metro Star chassis.

Moreover the trucks are equipped with a 450-hp Cummins ISL9 engine, Allison 3000 EVS transmission, 2,000-gallons per minute (gpm) Hale Qmax pump, 600-gallon UPF poly water tank, 50-gallon poly foam tank, Hale 5.0 foam system, ROM roll-up doors, Code 3 LED light bar, Code 3 rear rotator warning lights and Whelen 600 Series LED warning lights—

Schmidt said the department is welcoming to technological upgrades. Alan Petrillo, an Arizona-based writer and member of the Fire Apparatus & Emergency Equipment editorial advisory board, who also served for 22 years with the Verdoy, N.Y., Fire Department, including the position of chief, said in an article recently that Smeal Fire Apparatus built the 100-foot rear-mount aerial platform quint with a 1,500-gpm and a 400-gallon water tank on a tandem-axle chassis.

O’Fallon Fire and Rescue department is still actively working to bring the community a new fire house off Porter Road near the O’Fallon Family Sports Park, which is still in its planning and design phase of the project, Schmidt added.

“That’s our next big project that’s really moving along now,” Schmidt said.

For more information visit, <http://www.firehouse.com/article/11534458/new-apparatus-deliveries>[<http://www.firehouse.com/article/11534458/new-apparatus-deliveries>] and, <http://www.fireapparatusmagazine.com/articles/print/volume-19/issue-4/features/quints-continue-to-find-a-place>

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News

New thermal imaging cameras for CK firefighters

BLAIR ANDREWS CHATHAM THIS WEEK

395 words

10 September 2014

Chatham This Week

CHTHTW

Final

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English

2014 Sun Media Corporation

The Chatham-Kent Fire Service has two more thermal imaging cameras thanks to a donation from Enbridge Green Energy.

The cameras help with search and rescue operations and can also reduce potential property loss from fires.

"Through heat differentiation, we're able to locate anything warm or is at a different temperature than the ambient temperature," said Bob Davidson, Chatham-Kent assistant fire chief.

After a fire is brought under control, the cameras are also used to find the seat of the fire, ensuring that it has been extinguished.

"We're able to locate where the fires are without tearing down walls unnecessarily, so that reduces property loss in a fire situation," said Davidson.

Besides firefighting, thermal imaging cameras can be used in ice and water rescue operations.

One unit is going to Fire Station #2 in Chatham and the other will be placed in a volunteer station.

"It would be very nice to have every station have a camera; we're not there yet," added Davidson. "That's certainly a goal for us and we're trying to get to that some time in the future."

Officials from Enbridge Green Energy were in Chatham on Aug. 29 to present the fire department with a \$13,500 donation to cover the cost of the cameras.

The funding is from the company's Safe Communities program that donates money to local first responders in areas where it operates. In Chatham-Kent, Enbridge Green Energy operates the Talbot wind farm near Ridgetown and a solar farm in Tilbury.

"The money can be used for equipment, training purposes or education," said Ian MacRobbie, general manager.

The funding for the thermal cameras is Enbridge's third donation to the Chatham-Kent Fire Department through its safe communities program. It also gave money to the department's safety education trailer and for equipment related to fire extinguisher training for public and school demonstrations.

The three donations total close to \$35,000.

Blair Andrews/Chatham This Week \ Chatham-Kent firefighter James Labombard demonstrates a new thermal imaging camera to Ian MacRobbie, general manager of Enbridge Green Energy, and John Bridges, site supervisor of Enbridge's Talbot wind farm. The company donated \$13,500 to cover the cost of two new cameras for the fire department on Aug. 29. \

Sun Media Corporation

Document CHTHTW0020140910ea9a0000u

PELocal

Firefighters offer high praise for new vehicle ; The 'quint' enables local firefighters to reach higher spots with its ladder capability.

MICHAEL WILLIAMS

MICHAEL WILLIAMS STAFF WRITER

768 words

9 September 2014

The Orange County Register

OCR

n/a

English

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Lake Elsinore's million-dollar baby - a 2014 custom-built, state- of-the-art, fire-engine red firetruck - is finally ready for action.

Ordered more than a year ago, the "quint" firefighting vehicle, so named because it offers five major functions, is now parked at the city's Rosetta Canyon Fire Station. It should be pressed into service next week after it goes on public display before tonight's City Council meeting.

The primary advantage of the quint is that it amalgamates the functions of a ladder truck and a pump engine into one vehicle, while adding a variety of other features.

Essentially, it's the Swiss Army Knife of fire engines.

Aboard the quint, said Capt. Joe Taylor, "We're like a big multipurpose toolbox on wheels."

With their advanced capabilities, quint trucks are becoming more of the norm these days in the firefighting industry. Other nearby jurisdictions such as Perris and Menifee already have them. Murrieta likes its vehicle so much the City Council decided Sept. 2 to order another one.

But for now, Lake Elsinore's first quint, built by the Smeal Fire Apparatus Co. in Snyder, Neb., is the classiest model around.

"This is the best there is," said the vehicle's driver, fire apparatus engineer Daniel Beeson.

County fire officials recommended that the city obtain the quint to coincide with the opening of the Rosetta Canyon station in part because of the lack of one or an aerial ladder truck in the immediate area. City Council members agreed to the request, though they put off ordering it until they were assured the station would open, which happened in July 2013.

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Freedom Communications, Inc

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Focus

Much more than fires to fight

Richard Willingham reports.

2676 words

9 September 2014

The Age

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www.theage.com.au[http://www.theage.com.au]

Firefighters deal with accident and murder victims and are often first on the scene at horrific road smashes. Many suffer post-traumatic stress, but that's not the only danger they face. Richard Willingham reports. The ghost gum stands tall and proud in the backyard, a picture of urban serenity. Beneath its branches sits a green and white painted wooden chair, the kind of seat that would not be out of place on your grandparents' verandah. Glen Cavanagh still can't get it out of his mind. This was the chair upon which the young woman stood to climb up into the branches of the tree. She was still hanging there when Cavanagh arrived.

All this time later, the veteran firefighter recalls this as the moment his descent began.

A firefighter of 30 years, Cavanagh stops several times as he talks, to hold back tears, apologising as he relives the moment the girl's father arrived home to be met by a fire crew. "He was on the floor in the foetal position, then he was up dry retching, he was hanging all over me, he was crying."

You want to cope, says Cavanagh - you want to get on and do your terrible job.

"But it's not the dead body. It's the family. It takes chunks off your soul."

A day in the life of a firefighter.

Children dream of growing up to become one. But the reality is that many people would struggle. The modern firefighter's job is far from the celluloid image of pointing hoses and rescuing cats from trees.

Murdered babies, drug overdoses, suicides and the clean-up from train and car accidents - these are the day-to-day realities of the job. And like soldiers returning from war, many firefighters carry mental scars, including a number who, like Cavanagh, live with post-traumatic stress disorder.

For decades firefighters have avoided talking about the emotional burden of their work - reluctant to seem vulnerable (even to themselves) and afraid that this vulnerability might be held against them in the workplace. But slowly this is changing. As evidence grows about the cost of these stresses, mental and physical, firefighters are speaking out.

Firefighters have their own neat metaphor for what can happen when you do the sort of work they do: they talk about a bucket. Each of them carries one, and over time it fills up with the things they have seen, the things they have had to do. Sometimes the buckets overflow. For 54-year-old Cavanagh, the bucket that had started to fill as soon as he saw the dead girl in the tree, began to overflow years later in the middle of a road. A fuel truck had T-boned a car, rupturing its tank and incinerating the car and its driver. The details are too grim to go into here but Cavanagh remembers them all. It took the crew a long time. These days Cavanagh worries a lot about his family. He worries each time they drive away to work or school or wherever they are going. He knows that it is irrational.

Firefighting has always been a tough job, far tougher than many imagine but the gig became a whole lot tougher in the late 1990s when the Metropolitan Fire Brigade began to phase in a new set of responsibilities, the emergency medical response, known simply as EMR, to firefighters' roles. Where previously ambulances would have been the first on the scene, now fireys trained in emergency first aid were dispatched to triple-0 calls including for heart attacks and drug overdoses. These days fire crews often arrive before paramedics and start working to save the patient. And often they are charged with cleaning up the mess.

As reforms go, the introduction of EMR has been a significant success. Fire crews have much quicker response times than ambulances. But it has come at a cost to the firefighters who are at the frontline of the state's emergency services. Veteran firefighters say before the introduction of the EMR people could go years without seeing a dead body. Now it can happen on a near weekly basis for some crews. Then there is the "biological wash-down". This clinical-sounding euphemism describes the task that falls to firefighters after fatal car crashes, after disasters, after someone steps out in front of a train. Basically they get to scrape up the pieces and spray away the gore. It often happens after dark. Some fireys now refuse to work night shift for this reason. "They are sick of picking up body parts," says one senior firefighter who helps counsel struggling colleagues.

Post-traumatic stress disorder is better known as PTSD. Symptoms include flashbacks, nightmares. Sufferers will try to avoid situations that might trigger an attack. They become anxious, short-tempered, easily aroused. Hyper-vigilant. Always prepared for the worst. Some self-medicate with alcohol and other drugs.

Different people respond differently. For some it is an instant reaction to a traumatic event. For others it might take years after the initial event before the symptoms surface. For others there is no one event, just a culmination of years of service.

International studies have shown that firefighters are at a greater risk of PTSD than the general population due to their line of work. The director of the Australian Centre for Posttraumatic Mental Health, David Forbes, says they are also at particular risk of entrenching the problem. "If you have PTSD and you are a firefighter and your job is to continue to fight fires, it's really continuing to expose you to something that can continually reactivate these triggers."

Alongside PTSD sit other risks. Forbes says work-related depression is as widespread as PTSD among emergency services workers. Anxiety is common. Substance abuse is also a problem. The ripples keep expanding. In 2013, a report from Newcastle University's Centre of Full Employment and Equity (commissioned by the powerful United Firefighters Union) found that "given the psychological impact of firefighting - higher prevalence of PTSD . . . depression, anxiety and alcohol or drug use - there is a probability that firefighters may be more likely to commit suicide".

Unsurprisingly, the families of firefighters often share the burden. Brian O'Connell has been a firefighter for 25 years. Like Cavanagh, he has battled PTSD. (The trigger for him was when a colleague was seriously burnt during a fire.) In the end, he says, he could not think straight. He was easily agitated, his mind a washing machine. He remembers one day staring out the window, drinking coffee, thinking about "absolutely nothing". His young son asked him to play, then, getting no response, started to plead. O'Connell was shocked at the anger that rose up in him. Anger that had nothing at all to do with his son, but that affected the boy even so.

Every firefighter approaches trauma differently. Some share their work experience with loved ones, others deliberately keep work and home life separate. For most, de-briefing with colleagues is the easiest. But in the end, there is a growing recognition that sometimes this is not enough. At 58, Danny Ward has been an affable and popular member of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade and the firefighters' union for more than three decades. Like most firefighters he loves his job. He speaks passionately about his pride in what he and his co-workers do - and about the bonds that build among the largely male officers, as well as between their families. But he also knows the toll that the job can take. Sleepless nights and mood swings began to affect his marriage. Bouts of severe

anxiety gnawed at him. For years he suppressed his problems. He acknowledges now that there was a stigma about seeking help.

"They [older firefighters] never spoke about things like we speak about now. It sort of just built up inside you. You didn't speak about it, you were this macho man and you were a fireman, you were invincible."

Finally he reached out. First he saw a GP about his anxiety. But it was a psychologist who really provided the relief. "It was a weight off my chest," Ward says.

It is a decision he says has improved his life and that he hopes others will follow - before their buckets become too full. "It has to have a build-up. I don't care how strong you are, you can't keep doing the job that we do without feeling something inside."

Ward was referred to the psychologist by a worker from the MFB's peer-support program, a 24-hour, confidential service staffed by firefighters. It is just one of the services the brigade offers. Andrew Zammit, acting deputy chief officer South-East Metro, says the MFB has been working for 20 years to boost support services.

As well as peer-support - and associated external referrals - the brigade offers an employee assistance program and chaplaincy to help officers with personal and work-related issues. Then there is the so-called critical incident debriefing that is made available whenever an officer attends a potentially traumatic scene. There are also training programs that promote personal resilience and educate managers on how to recognise and manage stress in their teams.

The first problem is that the services rely on members coming forward, sometimes after being told by colleagues that their behaviour is unusual. "The key thing is they actually have to put up their hand to self-present," Zammit says.

The second problem is that often they don't. Or won't. Many workers say they are reluctant to accept this sort of help, some because they fear that their admissions of trauma or mental fragility will be used against them by management during pay negotiations.

It is an allegation rejected by the MFB officials and those who run the programs, who insist support is anonymous and confidential. The brigade says it is well aware that the work can be risky and stressful, and says the health and welfare of its employees is a priority.

Some fireys say it is not enough of one.

Damian O'Toole has seen a lot in his 26 years with the MFB. He joined the brigade at 23, thinking the job would just be fighting fires. Now he is one of Melbourne's most qualified firefighters, an expert in urban search and rescue and high angle rescue, a skill that can see him hanging from

Melbourne's tallest structures, sometimes rescuing people who are trying to die, sometimes securing parts of damaged buildings that might fall on people below. He is now also one of a handful of fire investigators at the MFB.

O'Toole speaks slowly, wrapping the chord from the microphone around his fingers. He has seen some of the worst in human behaviour. He has seen murdered babies. On his first week on the job, he was sent to a triple car crash in which a four-year old was killed and a driver decapitated.

As far as he is concerned, he and his colleagues need more help than they are getting. Yes, he says, there has been some improvement in the level of support firefighters receive after major traumatic events. But it is not enough, nor is it consistent, he says. This week he attended a murder trial of an infant. The paramedics he was with had peer support workers there alongside them. He did not. It was only the next day that colleagues asked how him it had gone. While he appreciated their concern, he notes that the support was informal and given in the spirit of camaraderie.

Firefighters have also called for more financial support. In Victoria they can make a work insurance claim for PTSD, but many complain the process is arduous.

There is a push to follow the lead of some Canadian provinces where PTSD has been recognised as a side-effect of the job and laws have been made to remove the onus of proof on emergency service workers if they develop the disorder have been introduced. The Canadian experience has fuelled a conversation among their emergency services workers about their mental health. Edmonton Fire Rescue Service chief officer Ken Block says the laws, introduced in Alberta a year ago, have led to a high level of awareness of the condition and to early intervention. This, in turn, has meant quicker recovery for firefighters and a speedier a return to work.

The Victorian Labor Opposition has pledged that if it wins this year's state election on November 29 it will launch a two-year \$200,000 trial of specialist one-on-one counselling for firefighters battling PTSD. But for the state's firefighters, it is not just the past that haunts them. Increasingly it is the future.

Studies have shown that firefighters are at much higher risk of developing specific types of cancer, often due to the thousands of chemicals they are exposed to in blazes. It is not just large industrial accidents that pose a threat. Regular house fires also release hundreds

of harmful substances that can be absorbed through clothing, despite the best designed protective equipment.

A University of Cincinnati study in 2006 - based on 110,000 firefighters - found that firefighters were twice as likely to get testicular cancer as non-firefighters and had "significantly higher" rates of prostate cancer and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. MFB staff report concern from firefighters about cancer is "massive". Nearly every firefighter knows a colleague who has battled cancer. Not just older workers. Young men too. It preys on the mind.

It was a Wednesday afternoon in August 1991 and Chris Cleary had been a fireman for just over 20 months. He was out driving with his mother when they saw the plume of black smoke billowing from Melbourne's docks. The thick toxic smoke - which prompted authorities to evacuate a local primary school and warn people to stay inside with windows and doors closed - was spewing from a chemical fire at Coode Island.

For days, firefighters, including Cleary, battled the blaze, seeing the world through a coloured haze, boots often mired in a toxic sludge. When Cleary, now the father of two young kids, looks to the future, he can still see toxic clouds, and not just those from the big fire.

Change is coming, but slowly.

In 2011, the federal parliament, with the backing of all parties and independent MPs, passed laws removing the onus of proof on firefighters in the ACT and at major airports to show that 12 types of cancers were caused by their work. Governments of differing political persuasion in Western Australia, Tasmania and South Australia have since followed suit.

So far, Victoria has not.

Victorian Greens MP Colleen Hartland is pushing for the state to provide easier cancer compensation for firefighters. The Labor Opposition backs the idea and has promised to introduce some type of protection should it win office on November 29.

The government, however, have blocked attempts to introduce the plan, arguing it wants more evidence.

Damien O'Toole fears it is just a matter of time. Two of his best mates have already contracted cancer on the job. "We've all been exposed to the same jobs, in the same truck, going to the same call. When is it my turn?"

O'Toole has four children and, along with his wife, dedicates much of his spare time to his local football club, South Croydon. He loves his job, but

family is what he lives for. It is his outlet away from work. How will he look after them if he is not here?

"By the time I retire I will have given 37 years to this. How many times have I been exposed - and what have I got?"

For help or information call Suicide Helpline Victoria on 1300 651 251 or Lifeline on 131 114, or visit beyondblue.org.au

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New firefighting equipment offers more protection

By Bianca Cain Johnson, The Augusta Chronicle, Ga.

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Sept. 01--Augusta firefighters are enjoying a pleasant adjustment to new uniforms and turnout gear, correcting what many felt was a wardrobe malfunction.

Before a recent change, the uniforms featured a poly-blend fabric that had the potential to melt to a firefighter's skin.

The new cotton uniforms are not the perfect solution but offer more protection and a sharper appearance, Deputy Chief Sterling Jones said.

The fire department chose to change blends last year, but the new uniforms didn't arrive until early 2014.

"It's a step in the right direction," Jones said.

He hopes in the future to see firefighters in a Nomex fire-resistant uniform. While no material is 100 percent fire resistant, he said, Nomex is close.

The department had been taking steps to improve equipment for more than a year. Boots have also been ungraded. Firefighters said the older ones were only useful at keeping their feet dry, but newer heavy-duty ones have some protective properties.

"All this stuff has a cost associated with it, but it's money well spent," Jones said.

For the first time, firefighters are now equipped with two sets of "turnout" gear, which includes gloves, hood, suspenders, jacket and pants that are worn when responding to a fire.

Sgt. Anthony Cadle said most people don't realize how dirty jackets and pants can get as they respond to calls. Water, dirt and sweat often splatter on or soak the material.

While each fire station has its own washer and dryer specifically for turnout gear, there isn't always time to get clean before going to another call.

It can result in cross-contamination and even injuries for the firefighters. Cadle said a firefighter can develop steam burns if he walks into a structure fire with soaking wet gear.

"We really don't hear the complaints we used to," Jones said. "They've pretty much dried up. No one says they don't want a second set of turnout gear."

Turnout gear has an expiration date of 10 years. Jones said the clock was steadily clicking on stacks of gear that was in warehouses waiting on new hires.

"Why have it sit on a shelf when you could use it?" he said.

It costs almost \$15,000 to fully outfit a firefighter with turnout gear and work and dress uniforms, but firefighters won't be outfitted all at once.

Firefighters are first provided turnout gear, then given a \$400 annual allowance for clothing. In the first years, the officers stack up their everyday work uniform of shirts and pants they wear when they aren't in burning buildings.

It isn't until later years, James said, that firefighters begin to explore getting a dress uniform, which is only worn for funerals or other special events.

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10 Ways to Prep Candidates for the Fire Academy

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Your department has recently brought on new members, and they have arrived at your fire station. New faces that are anxious to join the ranks of the future leaders of the service we have come to embrace and respect. Some enter through a testing and hiring process, some join the ranks through a recruitment drive, and some come aboard through a friend's suggestion and incentive.

No matter how they arrived, they all have one thing in common, as we did when we entered; our first exposure to the service comes from the fire station. This initial period of exposure to firehouse life can be extremely influential on the candidate. Moreover, new members may be going through some in-house training before the start of a new recruit class. It is critical that some vital information be passed unto them before they enter the academy doors. Here are a few points of wisdom for consideration:

1. Your personal protective equipment (PPE) will save your life -

Nationwide, studies show that most injuries can be traced back to the user not wearing all of their PPE, or wearing it incorrectly. So, experienced firefighters and officers should make good use of this valuable time and train the members in how to properly wear their PPE (see Photo 1). By the time they get to the academy, knowing what their gear is used for and how to don it quickly will improve their safety on the training grounds as well.

2. Learn to control your emotions - There will be times during the recruit class that the candidate will be pushed to the limit, both physically and emotionally. It is all part of the process to prepare them for working on the fireground. They will be seeing the citizens they protect having one of the worst days of their lives; being able to keep their emotions in check will aid in providing for a confident and efficient response to their emergency.

3. Find a mentor within the department - Being a candidate within the service usually provides more questions than answers. Having an experienced firefighter to help show them the way towards success will pay dividends; not only will it improve their confidence at the academy, it will help to develop a better "product" at the end of the training process, and the department will directly benefit from it.

4. Work on conquering your fears - Candidates will have significant apprehensions before arriving at the academy, but some fears are more significant than others. Specifically, candidates that are afraid of heights, or are claustrophobic, can have debilitating effects on the success of the candidate. Starting the process of having the candidates climb ladders and wear their self-contained breathing masks will begin to build the confidence they need.

5. Get your hands on the power tools - Many academy classes involve training with power tools, fans, and hydraulic powered equipment. These units require some strength and skill to start, operate and control (see Photo 2). Moreover, most academy lessons will not provide an adequate amount of time for students to become as proficient as needed on the unit. Getting some hands-on time in-house will help to build efficiency and proficiency.

6. Setbacks are common, do not get discouraged - Most of the skills and techniques that are taught at the academy are new to the candidate; the fact is that everyone makes mistakes. This is exactly what the time at the academy is for... practice. Candidates should take as much opportunity as they can to focus on the hands-on skills that they feel they are weakest at (see Photo 3). The training setting is supposed to be designed to anticipate errors and miscues from the onset, and provide for remediation to an efficient skill level for the candidate.

7. Embrace the "team efficiency concept" - In his book, *Engineering Practical Rope Rescue Systems*, Mike Brown speaks about this concept as a way to maximize operations while limiting inefficient practices. While the book is mostly based upon rope rescue practices, the concept can be applied to much of what we do in the emergency services. A perfect example of this concept is the practice of stepping off the apparatus upon arrival with a tool or hose in the hands of the firefighter as they start to operate on the scene. Every step on the operations arena is taken with team efficiency in mind, from stretching lines to throwing ladders, and more (see Photo 4).

8. Focus on the training, not the gadgets - Walking the floors of the emergency service trade shows will introduce the candidate to the "latest and greatest" innovation to firefighting, or so it is said. While the tools of the trade are important to the trade, one fact remains constant: Success on the fireground is significantly dependent on having an adequate number of trained, efficient firefighters initially upon arrival. While the tools make doing the task easier, the most success comes from the user's knowledge about the task being performed, their ability

to perform it correctly, and how to incorporate the tool into the task in the safest, most efficient manner.

9. Ask when you aren't sure - The fireground can be a dynamic, chaotic scene within the first few minutes upon arrival, and can escalate from there quickly. Training during the academy process should prepare the candidate to not only know what to do, but also how and when to do it (see Photo 5). Many times on the scene, we hear of incidents that have gone wrong due to the poor performance or lack of performance of a company on the fireground. There is a term that we use in the fire service when a company operates outside the practices and procedures of the incident; it's called freelancing, and it is unacceptable. If one doesn't know, ask.

10. Listen! - I attended an officer development training seminar and I remember the speaker, a well known chief, continually stress to the attendees that he was born with two ears and one mouth, therefore it makes sense that listening is much more important than speaking. Efficient firefighters practice "tactical patience;" that is, they pause to absorb what they are seeing, hearing, or experiencing, and then formulate a plan of action based upon this information. Having the patience to see the entire picture will improve one's performance during any incident.

Conclusion

The probationary period for a new firefighter can be very influential, and that influence begins at the department level. Having someone to show the way for the new members has significant benefits; the safety of the firefighter is increased, their knowledge, skills and abilities on the fireground can be enhanced, and the end result is an efficient, competent firefighter that provides a service to the community they are sworn to protect. Not only does the community benefit, but the department directly profits from the initial investment they made in the candidate, which are long term with the right motivation.

Until next time, stay focused and stay safe.

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Station Design Supplement: Hot Zone Design: Contain the Contaminants

By Paul Erickson

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Why is it that emergency service professionals are so respected by the public at large? Is it because these men and women put their own personal well-being at risk by running into burning buildings, by cleaning up hazardous materials spilled on the highway or by controlling chemical fires?

Are they admired because they are always on call, 24 hours a day, to be there to help a loved one suffering a heart attack or to extricate a trapped victim in an upended vehicle on the highway?

Of course, the answer is yes to all of the above reasons and more. Yet, what is the cost paid by our emergency service professionals for the essential role they play in the well-being of our communities?

The risk

The human price of fire and rescue service is being increasingly recognized and voiced in studies that go beyond budget reports and staffing plans. Emergency service professionals are classified by the insurance industry as high hazard and demonstrate an alarmingly high incidence of heart attack, high blood pressure and cancer. According to work done by Cindy Ell, president of the International Firefighter Cancer Foundation, when compared to the general population, firefighters demonstrate:

- 100% higher risk of developing testicular cancer
- 50% higher risk for multiple myeloma, an incurable bone cancer
- 50% higher risk for non-Hodgkin's lymphoma
- 28% higher risk of prostate cancer
- Increases in brain, colon and thyroid cancers and malignant melanoma
- Increases in breast cancer

While scientific studies connecting what firefighters do with their health consequences is still in their infancy, common-sense observations and actions can be made about exposure to carcinogens, transport of the

cancer-causing agents back to the fire station and control measures to limit their impact. Recognizing sources and developing strategies to isolate carcinogens represents an important first step to improving the long-term health of our firefighters.

The source

Cancer-causing agents include chemicals like benzene, formaldehyde, butadiene, toluene, acrylonitrile, isocyanates and others. Many of these are encountered in emergency response to incidents, particularly those involving smoke. Regardless of the type of fire (structural, nonstructural, electrical or training), if smoke is involved, carcinogens are present. And anything brought into physical contact with the smoke, or surfaces that have been exposed to the smoke, become transporters of those carcinogens. That means that all gear, all tools and equipment, all apparatus and all vehicles exposed to smoke collect and transport carcinogens from each incident back to the station.

As the 24/7 living and working quarters for a professional crew, the typical fire and rescue station is staffed continuously throughout the year. As such, fire stations are virtually unique; very few other building types reflect this requirement for continuous and occupied operation. The traditional view of the neighborhood fire station is the base from which emergency services are delivered, which is still an accurate view. However, in the face of the health information above, that view is not enough. An expanded view and understanding of a fire station must be developed by both the design professionals and department leaders to address the role of the same fire station as a receiving and distribution depot for cancer-causing chemicals.

The response

Illustrations 1 and 2 represent the traditional viewpoint for a well-designed, highly functional and efficient fire and rescue station. The plans for this new HQ Fire and Rescue Station for Willingboro, NJ, are color coded to demonstrate the functional adjacencies of various program components of the station. The organization of the building is easily understandable in the zoning of similar spaces within the building, the distribution of shared functions, the organization of different users around separate entries, the placement of public spaces near entrances and corresponding placement of private spaces in more secluded or protected locations within the building.

One of the design's underlying philosophies is to provide direct and unobstructed paths of travel into the apparatus bays; all corridors flow efficiently with minimal turns towards the bays. On the second floor, the design creates privacy with individual bunkrooms encircling a shared

core of private toilets and laundry room. Again, multiple paths of response to the bays are direct with two stairs and a sliding pole to the level below.

Illustrations 3 and 4 represent a completely different way to view the same design. This strategy focuses on controlling the entry and handling of carcinogen-contaminated personnel and equipment in the building. This strategy employs the idea of creating and then managing three levels of exposure to contaminants: HOT Zone (red) for high hazard, TRANSITION Zone (yellow) for moderate hazard and COLD Zone (green) for low hazard.

The color-coded plans for the same fire station now clearly demonstrate a different organization strategy. Central to the success of the strategy, all spaces exposed to carcinogens are grouped in one concentrated area of the building, the HOT Zone. Likewise, all living and working spaces intended for extended occupancy and use by the station's personnel are grouped together in a distinctly separate area of the building, the COLD Zone. The area of contact between the two zones, the interface, is designed to be as limited and simple as possible, in this case, a single straight common wall. Personnel movement between the two zones is focused by limiting circulation to three strategically placed corridors forming the TRANSITION Zone.

Implementing HOT Zone design thinking

In order to optimize the ability to address the arrival of carcinogens in the building, and prevent the inadvertent migration of contaminated materials within the structure, design thinking and departmental protocols must work together. Strategies include the following:

- Contain the contaminants. All spaces that house apparatus, tools, equipment or personal protective equipment (PPE) used in emergency responses belong in the HOT Zone. All decontamination areas and wash-down procedures should occur in the HOT Zone in readily accessible, easy-to-use and easy-to-clean spaces. Other spaces consolidated in this zone include apparatus bays, apparatus equipment storage, EMS storage, workroom, self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) storage rooms, PPE storage room, decontamination area with commercial laundry and extractor, dedicated janitor closet and cleaning supply storage, hose storage, dedicated toilet and training mezzanine.
- Separate occupants from contaminants. This consists, essentially, of creating a healthy living and working environment by consolidating all occupied spaces in the COLD Zone. Functional adjacencies can be optimized and circulation arranged to serve individual functions without

concern for contamination within this safe portion of the building. Program areas for this zone include all administrative spaces, offices, workrooms, library/study, meeting rooms and associated storage spaces. Additionally, all public spaces like lobbies, community rooms and public toilets are included. Finally, all living and sleeping spaces like the day room, dining room, kitchen, exercise room, bunkrooms, lockers, toilets, laundry and dedicated janitor closet are included.

- Focus on the highest hazards. Wash down and cleaning of apparatus, equipment and PPE returning from an incident is standard industry practice and essential to the control of contaminated materials.

Departmental protocols should require decon processes as standard best practices upon return from every incident. However, is the station designed to make these processes self-evident and easy to execute? Further, are these spaces located in the building in a way that reduces the likelihood of spreading the contaminants?

In the illustration, the decon room is located in the intermediate bar of support spaces conveniently serving all eight apparatus bays from a central, visually apparent and readily accessible location. It is outfitted with an eyewash and shower area, a large two-compartment stainless-steel sink with sideboards and foot-pedal controls for equipment washing and large commercial washers and extractor for gear and bay-related items.

The PPE storage room is likewise located in this central bar and provides ready access with pass-through circulation to each wing of apparatus bays. Because the PPE represents a primary point of exposure to carcinogens in the field which are then regularly off-gassed by the gear back in the station, best practices dictate that the gear is concentrated and stored in an enclosed room that is served by a dedicated mechanical system with non-recirculating air supply and direct exhaust.

Common practices of storing the gear in open racks in the apparatus bays should be eliminated. Not only does that practice increase the exposure of the gear to further degradation by UV exposure and increased contamination by apparatus exhaust, but it also allows the off-gassing of carcinogens into an open work environment, possibly including migration of the vapors into the living quarters. In the illustrated design, the enclosed PPE storage room will be exhausted directly to the roof. Additionally, the room is located remotely from the living quarters of the COLD Zone to further reduce the likelihood of transfer of contaminants within the station, including the possibility that the

exhausted air from the room will be captured and recirculated by the air intake systems of the mechanical units serving the living quarters.

Control crossover between zones. To limit the exposure to contaminants within the HOT Zone, reasons and opportunities for personnel movement between the HOT and COLD Zones should be controlled.

This emphasizes separation and generates an element of autonomy or self-sufficiency for each zone. For example, including a dedicated full toilet with shower in the HOT Zone area eliminates the need for a crew member to leave the apparatus bays and enter the living quarters to use the toilets found there. This reduction in crossover visits directly reduces the frequency and opportunities for a crew member to inadvertently carry contaminants into the living quarters of the COLD Zone.

Further extension of this concept leads to creating separate laundries for personal and professional uses. The personal laundry located in the COLD Zone keeps personal clothing and articles within the zone while the professional laundry located in the HOT Zone provides washing/cleaning ability for items that are kept in that zone. Other possibilities to limit crossover include separate janitor closets in each zone (keeps housekeeping efforts from being, ironically, the vehicle of cross contamination) as well as providing appropriately sized storage rooms for supplies that are used in each zone.

Inadvertent air-based crossover can also be managed by isolating the contaminants with separate mechanical systems for HOT and COLD Zones. Never let any single heating, ventilating and air conditioning (HVAC) system serve both zones.

Pay attention to transitions. The passages, doors and corridors between the HOT and COLD Zones should become an area of decontamination with hand sinks, hand sanitizers and recessed walk-off floor mats. The HOT Zone side should be provided with clear signage directing personnel to wash or sanitize hands before entering and prohibiting any PPE/gear from the area. Further, the mechanical systems should be designed to provide positive air pressure from the COLD to the HOT Zone.

The results

While scientific studies have yet to be conducted to quantify results, the common-sense approaches of HOT Zone Design offer the possibility to dramatically reduce the incidence of cancer within the firefighting community for generations to come. Is there a goal more worthy?

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Station Design Supplement: Best Practices In Fire Station Design

By Ed Ballam

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When it comes to building fire stations, experts agree there are many do's and don'ts that fire departments should take into consideration when designing their buildings. Fire departments should never install anything that takes a lot of maintenance or is difficult and time-consuming to clean.

For instance, fire departments should always buy the best-quality appliances for the kitchen and not skimp on the countertops. And with a high degree of unanimity, fire departments should "go green" wherever and whenever possible.

To help educate those in the fire service about best practices for building and designing fire stations, Firehouse[®] Magazine interviewed experts in the field and is sharing their thoughts. For this article, Firehouse[®] spoke with Louis Baker, a city-employed architect with the City of Las Vegas, NV, who has designed many new stations for Las Vegas Fire & Rescue; Chief Alan Benson of The Woodlands Township, TX, Fire Department, who was part of the team that designed a grand-prize-winning fire headquarters for his community; and Johnny Fong, an architect who is also a fire engineer and operator with the Reno, NV, Fire Department, who is a several-time judge for a prestigious station design awards competition.

Maintain control

First up to discuss his particular point of view on station design is Louis Baker.

Baker is employed as an architect for the City of Las Vegas in its architectural services department. In his capacity, he has helped design and build several award-winning fire stations as well as renovate and maintain several others.

"I take care of new construction of fire stations from cradle to grave," said Baker, who works with Public Works employees to develop designs. "We do designs in house. It allows a little more control so we can get

exactly what we want." Baker understands that not every department has that luxury, but it is something he recommends when possible. Over the years, Baker has been involved in the design and construction of 15 new stations and many more remodeling projects. While fire stations may be complex buildings, Baker advocates they be designed as simply as possible to keep costs down. Keeping the roof lines simple will not only keep initial costs down, it will make maintenance easier and more affordable, Baker said.

Roof slopes are important in Las Vegas, Baker said. "If we can get a slope on it, it works out best for us," he said, noting that his department prefers metal roofs or single-ply membranes. In all cases, he recommends very high-quality roofing material as that is not a place where communities should skimp.

Baker also advocates using quality, durable materials and components in the kitchen. He said departments should avoid using plastic laminates on kitchen surfaces and recommends stainless steel instead. Even granite doesn't stand up as well as stainless steel in the kitchen, experience has taught Baker.

There had been a trend to make sleeping quarters more homey by using carpeting, but that is over, Baker said, noting that with all the emergency medical calls being run by fire departments these days, communities have to be worried about things like methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) and other viruses. Carpeting is too difficult to keep clean and safe. And, on top of that, carpeting stains no matter how careful station occupants are and whatever is dragged in is difficult to remove. Instead, the trend for almost any floor surface in fire stations is heading toward gray-mottled, large-size porcelain tiles with non-porous epoxy grout.

"Vinyl composites are out," Baker said, adding the life cycle for that type of flooring is too short and it's not durable and requires waxing to look good. The porcelain tiles require only damp mopping to look good and keep clean, Baker said.

Baker said his city builds its fire stations to achieve at least a Silver level of certification for Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED). One station achieved a Gold certification and moving forward, Vegas has made it a goal to be awarded Gold certification for future fire stations.

One innovative way in which Las Vegas works for better LEED certification is using natural gas-fired, four-cylinder engines to power the buildings' heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) units. The

units have separate natural gas meters with more favorable rates that are variable on demand, which saves the city money in the long run. Building controls are web based and can be controlled and monitored remotely to ensure efficiency and to alert staff when something isn't working properly. It's a practice Baker said will be used on all future buildings.

To continue with the energy-efficient design, Baker said the exterior walls of Las Vegas fire stations feature foam insulated poured concrete. The concept is like coffee in an insulated Styrofoam cup. Light Emitting Diode (LED) lights, both inside and for exterior lighting, help keep electric costs down and the LEED rating up, Baker said.

When it comes to the apparatus bay floor, Baker said Las Vegas used to prefer epoxy-coated floors, but the city found they didn't hold up as well as one might expect and were very expensive, additionally, any time the floors needed to be "dug up" for plumbing or other reasons, it was difficult to re-epoxy the affected area. Instead, Las Vegas went to smooth-troweled concrete floors with a sealer. Baker said it's easy to maintain and is not ridiculously expensive.

For the walls within the apparatus bay, Baker said they are masonry with drywall. For additional protection from moisture and water from truck washing, aluminum tread plate is installed on all wall four feet up from the floor. Silicon is used to completely seal out moisture. "It works very well for us," Baker said.

There are a variety of amenities Baker would recommend for any fire station that make life a little easier, cleaner and safer for the occupants. Some of those include opening windows in the fitness room for air circulation and a large, high-quality, stainless-steel washer with a steam cycle and dryer for Class B uniforms so firefighter don't have to take potentially contaminated clothing home for cleaning.

Even the sleeping quarters, or dorms, are a little different than found in other stations, Baker said. Firefighters are provided separate dorms and a three-tier locker system for security of personal belongings. The city has also gotten away from gang showers and bathroom facilities, opting for private spaces with locking doors. "Gang facilities don't really work fundamentally," Baker said.

When it comes to sleeping, Baker ensures personnel get as much as possible with the least amount of interruption. Alerts for alarms are effective without being startling and red light is used for illumination for easier adjustment to the light and not interrupting the sleep of others who don't need to respond.

Even though power needs have been reduced, the department decided to go with large generators for emergency power, Baker said, noting the decision was to have the fire stations fully operational. "We want at least the fire stations fully functional," Baker said. "We can be the host buildings." He added there's sufficient fuel in tanks to have the stations operate for days.

Another novel power source is solar covers over the parking area. Being in a hot, sunny climate, it was important to have areas for private vehicles to be shaded. That cover area is a perfect place for solar panels and some stations generate up to 30% to 40% of the stations' electrical needs, Baker said.

And Las Vegas has begun installing three-by-four-foot LED display signs on fire stations for public service announcements. It's something Baker said he hasn't seen much of in fire departments. The idea is to provide the public with information they might need about an open house, or a meeting or event. The displays can also illuminate the date and time. And better still, the public information officer can change the signs wirelessly through web connects.

Baker said the department is thinking about applying for grant money to put the public service boards up throughout the city. "It raises our profile a bit and gives us a way to communicate with the public we serve," Baker said.

Choose quality components

Johnny Fong, a firefighter/engineer with the Reno Fire Department, is also an architect and has been a judge of many station design competitions. He's also helped his department build new stations. Like Baker, Fong says fire departments should use the best-quality items and materials possible. Not only do they perform better and last longer, they save money over the years.

"You'll always want things that are easy to clean and hold up well," Fong said. "It's better to spend a little more up front than to try to go cheap." That philosophy is no more important than in the kitchen, Fong said. "The kitchen is the one place you really don't want to go cheap," Fong said. "Firefighters are notoriously hard on appliances and the kitchen is the place where just about everything happens. Shift changes happen there too. You just don't want to go cheap on the kitchen."

When it comes to kitchens, Fong says it's a good idea to provide each shift with its own food pantry and refrigerator. "Nothing can divide a firehouse more than one shift eating another's food," Fong said. "Firefighters get possessive about their food."

Individual sleeping quarters is also more than just a good idea.

“Having individual dorms solves a lot of issues,” Fong said, noting that more women are joining the fire service every year. Snoring and other sleep-impairing behaviors are another issue that is eliminated with individual dorms.

Fong says another good practice is having closet areas that are accessible not only from the dorm area, but from the closets as well. That avoids having different shifts interfering with sleep or resting by others who need access to their personal belongings.

Fong is also a proponent of “green” stations and understands it takes some effort to get decision-makers who want to save money during their elected terms to be sufficiently progressive to spend more upfront for the green equipment.

“Spending a little more now will save a lot more later,” Fong said.

Fong also says fire departments have responsibilities to lead by example. For instance, he said fire stations should have sprinkler systems installed. There’s no reason not to do it, he added, with the exception of money and that’s not good enough for a fire department.

“We know sprinklers save lives,” Fong says. “So, if you’re going to require sprinklers, you better put them in your fire station. You don’t want fire departments to be hypocritical.”

As an architect who happens to also be an apparatus engineer, Fong says departments need to be very thoughtful when it comes to the apparatus bay area design.

“If you can’t get the apparatus out safely, you’re out of business,” Fong says.

That’s why he is an advocate for drive-through bays, with doors on both ends of the apparatus area. That eliminates the requirement that apparatus back up into the stations.

One of the biggest reasons more fire departments do not have drive-through apparatus bays, Fong believes, is because of a lack of storage in the building. Reserve apparatus and equipment are often stored in the back of fire stations. To avoid that problem, Fong suggests an extra apparatus bay be constructed for reserve apparatus and equipment. It will also pay off if the station ever expands with more apparatus. There will already be built-in capacity for additional equipment.

“You should always plan for expansion,” Fong says.

Fong says departments should always also deal with exhaust emission from the apparatus as part of the station design.

“I don’t care how you do it, but you should address it,” Fong says, acknowledging there are many ways to deal with the issue.

Air quality in the workout/fitness room is also important, Fong says, noting departments should provide adequate air circulation in such rooms. He adds it is critical that fitness rooms be placed where people will naturally be passing during normal business at the station, just in case something happens to an individual who may be using the facilities.

“Having a fitness room tucked way out back in a corner isn’t such a good idea,” Fong says, adding that if a medical emergency happened, it might take a long time to discover a person in distress.

As a station-design competition judge, Fong says he is always surprised to see the number of fire stations that are not compliant with the federal Americans With Disabilities Act law.

“Although that may mean adding another \$60,000 to \$80,000 to the budget to install a passenger elevator, fire stations are not exempt from accommodating the visually, hearing and physically impaired,” Fong says. He added that it doesn’t matter if a local building department says compliance isn’t necessary because, as a federal mandate, they have no jurisdiction in the matter. “It’s a federal law enforced by the Department of Justice,” Fong said.

Involve contractors from start

In The Woodlands Township, the fire department does things a little differently when it comes to designing and building fire stations.

Alan Benson, the chief of The Woodlands Township Fire Department, says when his community built a new, award-winning Central Fire Station, which was dedicated in 2013, it did not use the standard sealed-bid process.

Instead, the community used an “alternative process,” that had the general contractor right on board from the start, including the design phase, Benson says.

Benson says when the township was ready to build a new fire station, it sought out a construction management group with which the municipality’s representatives were comfortable and included the company as the design and building plans were being developed.

“Making them a part of the team at the very beginning helps you get the very best price,” Benson says, adding the township was given a guaranteed maximum price and anything that came in below that price was given back to the community.

The Woodlands Township Fire Department’s Central Fire Station was the Gold Place station design winner in 2013 awarded by Fire Chief magazine, Benson said.

Benson says the Central Fire Station is a “pretty typical” two-company firehouse with emergency medical services units, fire administration, dispatching and emergency operations center.

“The station is going to be around for 50 years or more and we wanted to design it and build it for future expansion,” Benson says, adding that his community “spent the money” and did everything the right way using the best materials and practices possible.

One of the biggest reasons for using the best materials is The Woodlands Township is in an area prone to hurricane strikes, Benson says, adding the community wanted the building to withstand storms and remain operational.

The Woodlands Township took a lot of effort to design and build an open concept kitchen and day room area that is a focal point of the station’s interior.

The kitchen area is open and large, with a breakfast bar and is integrated with the dayroom, becoming a congregating area for all firefighters.

Firefighter comfort was a big part of the design for the new central station. There are 12 individual dorms for on-duty crews. There are also covered porches on each side of the building for firefighters to congregate and relax. One side has a barbecue grilling area and the other has comfortable patio furniture.

Benson says the fire station also has a critically important mission to fill in the community. As it is only 80 miles from the coast in a hurricane prone area, emergency power is vitally important. That’s why the station has a massive 450,000-watt generator and a 4,000-gallon fuel tank to keep it going for sustained periods of time. The station also has battery backup that will keep equipment running for up to three hours.

And, because of the hurricane threat, the department decided to do something a little different with the apparatus bay doors, Benson says. The department decided to install bi-fold doors rather than the traditional overhead doors.

Benson says the doors are visually appealing and can withstand a Category 3-rated storm. “They are very heavy, but they work so smoothly,” Benson says. “And they look nice too.”

Another attractive feature is an ornamental fire pole the station has in its front lobby, Benson says, noting it’s a great public relations feature, melding the old-time traditional icon with the modern functional station.

“Whenever we had school groups in, the first things the kids asked were where the pole is and where is the dog,” Benson says, adding the new station has the pole prominently displayed.

And, by happenstance, the department acquired the second requisite accessory, a 6-year-old Dalmatian named Riley.

“She has already learned to do ‘stop drop and roll’,” Benson says, noting that the mascot has great public relations value.

Benson says his department also wanted an appropriate memorial for the front of the station and sought to do something “that has never been done before.”

Borrowing a page from the Las Vegas Strip, Benson says he and his firefighters came up with a water feature that has a constant flame symbolizing the last alarm. Natural gas is flowed up through the water and ignited, giving the impression that the fire is floating on the water. Benson says it is important for fire departments to marry their wants and needs to come up with something that is workable for the community. To achieve that, Benson says he included many people and different divisions within the department, including the information technology (IT) people right from the start.

In designing and constructing a 21st-century building, Benson says he knew bringing the IT team on board early would be important to make sure the building was fully function when it was dedicated and well into the future.

To make the building technologically accessible, WIFI is available throughout, including in a conference room that is available to the public.

Benson says he is very happy with the building and plans to incorporate many features in future projects. He also knows that no project is perfect and processes can always be improved upon.

He suggests fire departments determine what they want and include all interested parties early on in the project. Determining a budget is also among the most important first steps and then keeping on budget throughout will make for a better project in the end, Benson says.

“There is no such thing as a perfect construction project,” Benson says. “There are always little things that can come up and bite you, but if you know what you want going in and pay a lot of attention to design and documentation, you’ll get what your community needs.”

Cygnus Business Media

Document FIRHSE0020140801ea8100002

A

Fix emergency communications

By Bruss, Steve

755 words
 25 July 2014
 Greenville News
 GNVL
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 12
 English
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The fragmented nature of emergency communications in communities across the United States was laid bare on Sept. 11, 2001, when first responders to the terrorist attack at the World Trade Center had difficulty communicating with one another. Those difficulties, according to some sources, almost assuredly led to increased fatalities in the devastating attacks. Even though many communities have updated their communications since then, the system for different agencies and different jurisdictions to communicate with one another during emergencies remains broken.

That is the case in Greenville. In a recent report in The Greenville News, reporter Ron Barnett recounted a recent incident in which 8,000 pounds of sodium hydrosulfide caught fire at a chemical plant near Interstate 85. Units from the Gantt Fire Department and the Greenville Fire Department responded, but because they operate on different radio frequencies, firefighters from the two agencies could not coordinate their efforts to fight the fire or evacuate the surrounding neighborhoods. That incident was a timely reminder that emergency responders need to be able to communicate efficiently. Had the chemical fire instead been more serious, perhaps something on the order of the Graniteville train derailment but in a highly populated residential area, for example, lives would have depended on quick and efficient communication. In that incident, a train carrying chlorine gas derailed in the middle of the night, killing nine people in the small town.

In Greenville County, the fragmented communications system is pervasive. The Greenville Fire Department and the Sheriff's Office have dispatchers in the same building, but units from the departments cannot communicate with each other on emergency channels, according to Barnett's report. Most of the 14 fire departments in the county cannot communicate directly with one another. In Greer, the city fire department and the city police department cannot communicate on the radio with one another.

"It's a very, very dangerous environment for firefighters when every firefighter on the scene does not have the ability to communicate with one another," Greenville Fire Chief Stephen Kovalcik told The News. The most significant factor in firefighter deaths is poor communication, he said.

The fragmented communications system also affects individuals who are reporting emergencies. It takes an already stressful time and makes it potentially more stressful or confusing. In two fire districts in the northern part of the county, for instance, calls actually have to go through North Carolina. Throughout the county, people who call 911 for emergency medical or fire service sometimes need to be transferred to another dispatcher at another location to describe their emergency a second time.

All of this costs time, and in an emergency, when time is lost people can die. It's as simple as that.

The county's law enforcement and first responder agencies could create a seamless system that would allow them to communicate more easily with one another. The biggest obstacle is money. A new system cannot be simply put in place using existing equipment. The transmission backbone alone would cost between \$14 million and \$20 million, according to the newspaper report. On top of that, every local jurisdiction would have to buy new radios that work with the system.

Given the tight budgets that already exist for some departments in the county, that is a significant obstacle.

Jurisdictions throughout the county need to have a conversation about this problem. Given that Greenville County is rapidly urbanizing and that law enforcement and other emergency agencies are increasingly collaborating when they respond to incidents, it is increasingly vital to fix this system even though it would come at a significant cost. Many agencies in the county are nearing the time when they have to replace aging communications systems anyway, however, and this could be the right moment to create a multi-jurisdictional system.

Local, county and state leaders need to examine potential funding sources — new taxes and new fees need to be part of that discussion, despite the county's aversion to those things. Granted, such discussions need to account for the many needs this growing county and state are facing. But the conversation also needs to consider that this is vital to the health and welfare of state residents, and thus clearly within the responsibilities of governments.

We have seen what happens when first responders cannot communicate effectively. We understand that Greenville County's

system is inadequate and does not offer seamless multi-jurisdictional communication. This is a problem that needs to be addressed before it contributes to a disaster.

Gannett Co., Inc. - Newspaper Division
Document GNVL000020141225ea7p0088g

Local firefighters get training about oilfield industry

220 words

18 June 2014

Energy Monitor Worldwide

ENRGYMEN

English

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GRANVILLE

Springfield Township Fire Chief Matt Gebhardt wants 100 percent of the volunteer Springfield firefighters to participate in an oilfield training program.

Already there are 14 of about 62 Springfield firefighters with the training under their belts. But because of the influx of oil and gas industry here, he believes it's important for all the firefighters to have - and it's free education.

"It was a very well put together program," Gebhardt said.

The Ohio Oil and Gas Energy Education Program's Responding to Oilfield Emergencies Training Workshop is fully funded by Ohio's natural gas and crude oil producers and is free to Ohio firefighters.

Lt. Raymond Davis and firefighter Dustin Davis, father and son, of the Springfield Township Fire Department and Boardman firefighter John Berardi participated in the two-day, hands-on program in May.

OOGEEP's program has had more than 1,100 firefighters from Ohio and seven other states in attendance since it began 13 years ago. Each participant received a certificate of attendance to go toward continuing education units as well as an optional college graduate credit.

The program teaches firefighters in the classroom about the oil and gas industry and the equipment used.

Read more about the program in Wednesday's Vindicator or on Vindy.com.

Global Data Point Ltd.

Document ENRGYMEN20140618ea6i000f7

Innovative Rigs on The Street: Mulvane's Medium-duty Rescue

By Ed Ballam

639 words

1 June 2014

Firehouse

FIRHSE

English

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When the members of Mulvane Fire Rescue[<http://www.mulvaneemergencyservices.org/>] went shopping for a new medium rescue vehicle, they decided they needed something that was going to grow with the department and the community they serve well into the future.

The community of more than 6,300 people, located just 20 minutes from Wichita and 15 minutes from McConnell Air Force Base, is also home to the Kansas Star Casino. That means the city that was founded in 1879 as a railroad/agricultural community more than doubles in population on any given day as "seasonal" people visit the expanding complex.

Mulvane is bracing itself for several years as future plans include high-rise hotels and large expansions to the casino/resort.

That's why last year the department contracted with Toyne, Inc., a fire apparatus builder in Breda, Iowa, to build the city a new \$282,262 rescue truck. The truck was delivered late last fall, months ahead of schedule.

The apparatus, which is built on an International all-wheel drive, four-door cab and chassis, is now in service as the department's rescue, hazmat and mobile air and lighting rig. The department designed the unit to accommodate additional equipment needs as the community grows. Rescue 410 responds to injury motor vehicle crashes, assists with emergency medical service calls, specialized rescue incidents, as well as structure fires. Being in "Tornado Alley," the department is also responsible for storm watch and response if disaster strikes.

One of the unique features on the apparatus is an additional \$19,000 Tri-Max 30 compressed air foam system (CAFS) prefabricated by K.C.A.F. Technologies. The system, which is bolted into the passenger side rear compartment, carries 30 gallons of solution to produce up to 600 gallons of finished foam, enough to reduce risk from flammable liquid spills or fire hazards during rescue operations. It is attached to a Hannay reel with 100 feet of one-inch hose.

The department said Toyne salesman Bryan Rosner worked closely with them to build and modify the truck to their request with many suggestions coming from the manufacturer to make the final product more efficient.

The apparatus is powered by an International MaxxForce 9 330-hp engine and an Allison EVS3000 automatic transmission.

The 18-foot aluminum body has 48-inch deep compartments, with the exception of the over axle compartment, which provides space for interchangeable shelves and roll out trays by SlideMaster. All compartments have LED lighting.

Electric power is provided by an Onan 25,000-watt PTO generator with a hot shift and a Fire Research FROG power monitor. It supplies power for a 9,000-watt Will-Burt NightScan light tower, four 1,500-watt Optimum scene lights and a Hannay 120-volt cord reel.

Other equipment includes an ASA camera system, a 14-foot retractable awning for firefighter rehab, a 100-foot Hannay hydraulic reel, an 8,000-pound Ramsey winch with mounts in the front and rear, Whelen warning lights, Hurst Jaws of Life extrication tools, air bags, cribbing and hand tools.

Mulvane is served by three staff officers who are assisted by more than 30 volunteers, eight fire reservists and four resource personnel. The community is proud of its ISO Class 3 rating.

ED BALLAM is the product and industry editor for Firehouse, a captain with the Haverhill Corner, N.H., Fire Department, and a National Registered EMT. He is also a Deputy Forest Fire Warden for the New Hampshire Division of Forests and Lands. Professionally, he's been a journalist for over 30 years working for a variety of publications, including employment as managing editor of a national fire service trade journal for more than a decade. You can contact him at ed.ballam@cygnus.com.

Cygnus Business Media

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FIRE

By Harvey Eisner

1353 words

1 June 2014

Firehouse

FIRHSE

English

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As a fire chief and editor-in-chief of Firehouse[®], I have visited or been invited to numerous apparatus factories around the country. Seeing the latest types of apparatus with new features is certainly a benefit when attending conferences and expositions around the country. Where else could you view, evaluate, discuss and inquire about possible options, additions and required items on new apparatus? These opportunities are vital to apparatus committees seeking to make a purchase in the near future.

Coming up the ranks within the fire service, I have been involved with purchasing in different ways. During my tenure of more than 20 years, our fire department purchased two engines, two ladders, a squad (half engine/half rescue), renovated a heavy rescue and purchased a pickup truck and several SUVs. Anyone involved in this process picks up the small and major details along the way. Here are some of the tips I have picked up and can share with anyone who is going to serve on an apparatus purchasing committee.

1. The need

Advise the people with the purse strings that you need a new piece of apparatus well in advance. You can't walk in today and say you need a new piece of apparatus that costs hundreds of thousands of dollars and expect them to give their approval tomorrow. The first thing I remember when I took over as fire chief in 1988 was having to prepare an operating budget, a capital budget and a 10-year plan. That's when I read about giving plenty of notice about very large purchases. It doesn't always work out when it comes to the fire department agenda and the municipal budget. When our new mayor was elected, he was advised that the fire department needed a new pumper. He wanted a new artificial-turf soccer field. Guess which item was purchased? His agenda was more important than ours.

2. What are you going to buy?

Do your homework. Make sure you look at several types of models and different manufacturers and visit the departments near you to talk with the people who specified the apparatus, operate them and maintain them to see what their comments are. Take the time to ride on the rig and see how it performs and how the apparatus is set up for a ladder and pumping for an engine. Look at all the aspects of the items they had

specified or added, especially if it is a specialty unit such as a heavy rescue.

3. What are your specific needs?

Discuss your varied ideas with the manufacturer's representatives and find out all the options they offer before the process begins, not after you see the finished product in the factory. We had a rescue truck undergo a renovation mainly for the problems with the chassis and body. Nobody had ever mentioned all the added extras that were available until we saw them on other rigs in their factory and plant. If we had only known about these items, it would have streamlined the renovation, not adding them at the last minute.

We purchased a new aerial ladder with an extended cab. The cab was going to have about 12 more inches in length, four for the driver and eight for the jump and flip seats. I wanted to make sure that even if the manufacturer had to cut into the through compartment that ran from side to side of the apparatus that the firefighters in the flip seat had space to don their self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA). The builder said that might cut into the compartment, robbing space. I said I needed the firefighters to wear the SCBA 100% of the time. Maybe we would use something from the through compartment 5% of the time. It was about what we needed, not what they wanted to give us.

4. Saving time, but doing it right.

Make use of available technology. This allows you to go online and review, add or change the specifications immediately, thus refining a process that was cumbersome and lengthy. What takes a few minutes today used to take weeks of mail going back and forth between you and the apparatus representative.

5. They can add it. Can you afford it?

Price out all the items you want. Can the manufacturer provide 10 of these items? Yes, but there is always a cost. Ten times \$750 equals \$7,500. Does your budget allow that or can you operate reasonably with two? Can the funds be used in a better way to provide something else?

6. Review

Go over the specifications with a fine-tooth comb. Once they have been awarded, what's in the contract becomes the letter of the law. If the manufacturer cannot make something work, they will come back with a compromise.

7. The small details – make sure they understand

Pre-build meetings are important, just like every other aspect of the project. Discuss your thoughts and ideas about how you envision the operations and procedures to work so the manufacturer can help you build exactly what you want. Many apparatus could not fit into a firehouse because someone forgot to measure the height of the apparatus door the rig would need to fit in. You are going to use the apparatus for 10 to 30 years, depending on where you are located. Be smart, and do it right the first time.

8. Final check

Factory visits made before paint and final inspection will allow you to physically check each line item in the specification, detail and location of each piece of equipment and make sure they have been installed in the right place and that they work. No matter how long it takes on your inspection visit, you have to make sure everything is according to "spec."

9. The sale after the sale

Much effort goes into putting an apparatus committee together. These many steps include: Investigating the various types of rigs that are available and right for your operation. Visiting and talking with other departments who operate these units, working with the manufacturers, writing the specifications, putting it out for bid, the acceptance process, awarding the bid, pre-build meetings, inspecting the rig and accepting the rig and training on the new apparatus. Some departments, depending on use, replace their apparatus every 10, 12, 14, 20 years or more. To maintain the rig for all those years is what some manufacturers call "the sale after the sale." Continual maintenance and upkeep are much more of an effort than the initial process mentioned above. Make sure you have a manufacturer or place where the rigs can be maintained that is fairly close by and has emergency service.

10. Purchasing a safe, effective apparatus to last a long time

Many fire departments can only afford to operate and replace apparatus that are 20 or 30 years old. The changes made in recent years through the use of technology are light years ahead of the older, "antique" rigs we had been using only a few years ago. Engines, transmissions, lighting, seatbelt warning systems and warning devices are just a few of the items that have made new apparatus "state of the art." Don't skimp

on time or energy to get the best piece of apparatus you can afford that will serve your department and the citizens you protect with the best that it can be for many years and responses to come.

HARVEY EISNER is editor-in-chief of Firehouse[®] and a retired assistant chief of the Tenafly, NJ, Fire Department, which he joined in 1975 and served as chief of department for 12 years. He also was a firefighter in the Stillwater, OK, Fire Department for three years while attending Oklahoma State University. Eisner is an honorary assistant chief of the FDNY and program director for the Firehouse Expo and Firehouse World conferences. He has covered many major fires and disasters and interviewed numerous fire service leaders for Firehouse[®]. He edited the books WTC – In Their Own Words and Hot Shots, published by Cygnus.

Cygnus Business Media

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A

Fire departments look to youth

By Beth LeBlanc

PortHuron PortHuron

955 words

19 May 2014

Times Herald

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English

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Fourteen-year-old Jacob Platzer comes from a long line of firefighters, including his grandfather and mother.

"I couldn't be the black sheep," Platzer said.

The Fort Gratiot boy gets an early chance to follow in his family's footsteps through Burtchville Township Fire Department's Explorer program — a program that allows boys and girls ages 14 to 20 to train with the fire department.

Burtchville Township started its program about a year ago, and it's not alone — Algonac and Clay Township fire departments are working to get similar programs off the ground.

Burtchville Township Fire Chief Mark Harrington said the department's Explorer program is similar to the cadet programs that are starting in Clay Township and Algonac.

"They work alongside of us when we're doing some basic trainings, they pump water, they put on air packs," Harrington said. "It's a chance for them to get their feet wet in the firefighting arena to see what it involves. "Its training, but it's not certified training like a cadet program would be."

Pam Baunoch, a firefighter with the Burtchville Township Fire Department, is advisor for the department's Explorer program. She said the program is an inside look at rescue operations for people considering a career in firefighting.

"I think it shows them responsibility," she said. "And it's also a job shadow."

Baunoch's 16-year-old son, Chris, was one of four explorers Sunday that were able to train in Mustang suits — immersion suits used for cold-water rescues — on Lake Huron.

"This will help them to know (the job) ahead of time, or be familiar with it at least," Baunoch said.

The Algonac Fire Department begins its firefighter cadet program today, about two weeks after the city council approved the program.

The Clay Township board of trustees also approved a cadet program at the township's fire department, but the department is anticipating a later start for the program, according to Clay Township Fire Capt. Dean Folkerts.

"What we hope to achieve with our cadet program is to create within the youth of our community basically an enthusiasm for community service," Folkerts said. "We want to give them the opportunity to not only see what we do here, but take a hands-on approach."

Algonac Fire Department begins once a week training for its cadets today. The program will be limited to five cadets this first year, most of them family or friends.

Algonac Fire Chief Joe Doan said the five openings already are filled. "To get it up and running, we're going to cap it at five members," Doan said. "We'll evaluate the program next year and see if we want to expand the numbers."

Folkerts said the Clay Township program will be open to about 20 cadets. The department has received about 10 applications so far. Both cadet programs are for girls or boys ages 14 to 18. The programs include once-a-week training, and some experience on scene at non-hazardous operations.

"We'll utilize them on certain calls for support," Doan said. For example, if a tree falls in a public area, the youth might help set up a perimeter; or, at a structure fire, they could help change out air bottles or gather equipment, Doan said.

Doan hopes the voluntary program sparks an interest in area youth, who would be eligible to attend a state certified academy at the age of 17. At 18 and upon completion of the academy, the youth would be eligible for hire by a fire department.

"Our goal would be to spark an interest and use them for future recruiting," Doan said.

"We used to have one years ago, and then it was dissolved. We have an interest to bring it back to get some youth involved."

Folkerts said the demands for experience and training for firefighters is strenuous, especially for volunteer departments whose firefighters usually have other jobs.

"The ever increasing demand for training and meeting the minimum requirements is tough," Folkerts said. "Recruiting has become somewhat of an issue, and that's not unique to Clay Township, that's across the United States."

To participate in the cadet program, the students must maintain a good academic record.

Folkerts said he's working with area schools to promote and recruit for the program.

"I've been in contact with the administration at the high school," Folkerts said. "We hope to establish our interview process at least prior to the end of the school year.

"We already have about 10 applications in the process right now, and we expect to see more here soon."

People interested in the Clay Township Fire Department cadet program should call the department at (810) 794-9347, or stop by the station at 9620 Ainsworth St.

Pam Baunoch said the Burtchville Township Explorer program also is open to more members.

People interested in the Burtchville Township Fire Department Explorer program should call the fire department at (810) 385-4443.

Contact Beth LeBlanc at (810) 989-6259 or eleblanc@gannett.com.

Follow her on Twitter @THBethLeBlanc.

CLAY TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT CADET PROGRAM

To apply for the Clay Township Fire Department cadet program, call the department at (810) 794-9347, or stop by the station at 9620 Ainsworth.

BURTCHVILLE TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT EXPLORER PROGRAM

To participate in the Burtchville Township Fire Department Explorer program, call the fire department at (810) 385-4443.

ALGONAC FIRE DEPARTMENT CADET PROGRAM

To learn more about the Algonac Fire Department cadet program, call the fire department at (810) 794-3431.

MORE ONLINE

Check out Burtchville Township Fire Department training at www.thetimesherald.com [<http://www.thetimesherald.com>].

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News - City & Region

Another tool for a rescue

By SARAH TOMKINSON; stomkinson@thehawkeye.com

650 words

6 May 2014

The Hawk Eye

HAWKI

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English

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Mediapolis firefighters receives new equipment for grain bin rescues.

MEDIAPOLIS -- Hours after the body of a rural Genoa, Illinois, man was pulled from a grain bin on a family farm, Mediapolis volunteer firefighters were training in an effort to prevent similar deaths locally.

The Mediapolis Fire Department received life-saving grain bin rescue equipment Monday through a donation from Farm Credit Services of America.

The equipment included a 10-panel tube system, a slide hammer and other accessories.

Monday night, Mediapolis firefighters were joined by crews from Danville and Yarmouth as they learned to use the new equipment.

Dale Ekdahl, owner of Outstate Data, the Minnesota-based company that manufactures the tube system, was on hand to train the rescue crews.

The tube system consists of two sets of five curved panels. Each panel weighs roughly 20 pounds and can fit through a 20 inch opening, a standard size for a grain bin.

Once in a grain bin, the panels can be locked together to create a tube and supply steps for people to hold.

In a grain bin rescue, firefighters would position the panels around the trapped person and help scoop enough grain out of the tube to allow the victim to wiggle free and climb out.

If a person is stuck closer to the middle of the bin, firefighters are advised to use bottle crates to create a path to reach the trapped person.

Ekdahl said the new tools are proven lifesavers.

"In Greeley, Iowa, in May 2011, I did the same training and three weeks later a gentleman got pulled down into a grain bin all the way to the door, and we were able to save him," said Ekdahl, who noted he has saved three people with the equipment.

After Monday night's training at Sperry Union Elevator in Mediapolis, where firefighter replicated grain bin conditions in the back of a grain truck, Mediapolis Assistant Fire Chief Andy Kerr said he is thankful for the equipment donation.

"We are an agricultural community with two large grain elevators," Kerr said. "I think it's beneficial."

He also said it helps put his mind at ease after hearing about the events in rural Genoa, where DeKalb County Sheriff's office said crews pulled 73-year-old Leon Madey from the grain bin Monday afternoon.

Chief Deputy Gary Dumdie said police received a call earlier to report Madey missing.

Sheriff's officials said Madey had been working with others to dislodge hardened corn inside the bin to prepare it for transport.

Dumdie said firefighters cut several holes in the corn bin to locate Madey, while others rappelled into the bin to look for the missing man.

Amy Hasenclever, an insurance specialist with Farm Credit Services of America, said a similar situation spurred the company to donate the equipment.

"We had a customer in an accident like this, and it raised our awareness," she said. "So we are thankful to be able to give this to them."

Mediapolis Fire Chief Jeff Kerr said his crew already was raising funds to purchase its own equipment when the donation was announced.

"I was kind of shocked we were getting it for free," he said. "It takes a financial burden off us."

Normally, the tube kits cost \$3,000 to \$5,000.

Burlington and Mount Pleasant already own grain rescue tubes. Hasenclever said Farm Credit Services of America chose Mediapolis because it wanted make sure the equipment was close by when needed.

"We wanted to spread out who got the tubes, because we don't want one too far away from an area that needs them," she added.

Jeff Kerr said as thankful as his crew is for having the new equipment, firefighters hope they never need to use it.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

Harris Enterprises, Inc.

Document HAWKI00020140514ea5600014

Solar Under Fire

By Tom Zind, Freelance Writer

2740 words

20 March 2014

Electrical Construction & Maintenance

ECMN

Electrical Construction and Maintenance

English

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Festering fire service worries over the hazards of working around rooftop photovoltaic (PV) installations are beginning to see the light of day.

They're being reflected in notable revisions to the National Electrical Code (NEC) and a renewed push by state and local authorities for laws addressing the design, operation, and installation of the increasingly popular renewable energy technology.

In a major change spearheaded by firefighter interests, the 2014 edition of the NEC now includes a new rapid shutdown provision (see [SIDEAR: Gearing Up for Shutting Down](http://ecmweb.com/fire-amp-security/solar-under-fire?page=2)[http://ecmweb.com/fire-amp-security/solar-under-fire?page=2]). Wording in Sec. 690.12 spells out requirements for de-energizing PV system conductors to a point where the voltage is at a level generally considered to be safe.

Meanwhile, in the wake of attention-getting fires in buildings equipped with rooftop PV systems, lawmakers are stepping up efforts to address PV system safety through building code revisions. Cities and states with comparatively high rates of PV installations are looking at greater setbacks for PV arrays aimed at giving firefighters more room to

navigate, and they're passing more stringent requirements on clear labeling of structures that are outfitted with PV systems.

Firefighters are hailing the changes as welcome and long overdue. As more systems are installed, they say, more personnel are sure to encounter electrical hazards that lie in the path of tactics commonly used to fight structure fires. Having lobbied successfully, they're now optimistic about prospects for securing even tougher requirements for PV systems down the road.

But as they celebrate victories they claim will increase the margin of safety for those forced to navigate rooftops clogged with energized PV arrays, some PV industry interests are sulking. Some in the system and components design, manufacturing, and installation sector complain the new regulations were hastily drawn up. New requirements criticized as vague, unclear, and difficult to implement quickly, they complain, could throw formidable roadblocks into solar's path. Critics concede safety is a valid and important concern, but they charge the risk-benefit trade-off hasn't been fully explored.

Fires bring attention, action Yet recent fires involving structures with rooftop PV arrays have helped vividly illustrate the potential dangers and how the mere presence of PV systems can affect firefighting tactics. For instance, a rooftop PV array consisting of some 7,000 panels likely hampered efforts to fight a warehouse fire in Delanco, N.J., last September. Responders chose not to follow the standard protocol of rooftop venting and other procedures, fearing the energized panels and factoring in the already-heavy involvement of the roof when they arrived on the scene. Firefighters ended up fighting the blaze, which destroyed the building's contents but claimed no lives or injuries, for more than a day.

Last May, firefighters in La Farge, Wisc., battled a blaze at a company headquarters building that had a roof covered with more than 100 solar panels. Their presence and fears of personnel coming into contact with electrically charged equipment and wires spooked Fire Chief Phil Stittleburg. He reportedly elected not to send firefighters up to the roof to vent the fire — a decision that may have contributed to the fire's duration and ultimate damage toll.

The quickening pace of PV installations on houses and buildings raises the likelihood that similar scenarios are bound to be repeated. Those with a stake in the safety of firefighters and their ability to fight fires with a full arsenal are responding more aggressively.

In New Jersey, second only to California in the number of PV systems operating, laws targeting more transparency and safety took effect

January 1. To boost firefighter awareness and preparation, buildings with PV systems must now be so labeled. Key system details and specifications must also be filed with local fire departments.

In Stamford, Conn., city officials are considering regulations that would require rooftop panels to be spaced in a fashion that would give firefighters room to safely move around a structure's roof. Wider pathways between arrays would allow firefighters to steer clear of energized panels and leave room for venting.

A requirement for clearer roof pathways was the subject of debate in Boulder, Colo., last fall. The city was set to adopt the 2012 International Fire Code, which requires solar panels to be spaced to allow 3-foot-wide paths from gutter to ridge line and along the ridge line. Solar industry parties balked, however, saying the requirement could harm solar's efficacy and derail growth. The two sides compromised, and 30-inch pathways were approved.

Education, training flourish Meanwhile, fire service-safety advocates, particularly those in regions where PV systems are more commonplace, have been working to address the problem with wider dissemination of educational and training resources to fire personnel.

Matt Paiss, a fire captain with the San Jose, Calif., fire department, has taken a special interest in helping firefighters learn how to be safe when working around PV systems. He started a consulting practice, Energy Response Solutions, specifically to boost knowledge of PV systems and train fire personnel to work safely around them.

"The fire service is generally aware of the challenges of working around PV systems, but as is often the case when new technologies are deployed, not all of the stakeholders are aware of it and their understanding of key concepts and concerns, like the issue of rooftop disconnect systems (which alone aren't sufficient to remove system voltage) for instance, is limited," says Paiss. "Education is the key point here; that will help make the development and adoption of new codes and permitting requirements that address safety less bumpy."

Rodney Slaughter, a deputy in the California State Fire Marshal Office's fire training section, has continued agency efforts that began in the early 1990s to keep the PV safety issue on the radar. He's helped develop and regularly update a training curriculum for fire agencies in the state, certain that firefighters are going to come face-to-face with more systems in the future. Like Paiss, Slaughter views education and awareness as the linchpin of efforts to widen the margin of safety.

"This is a technology that's evolving and changing, and being safe starts with awareness and pre-planning," he says. "The permitting process

needs to better feed back into the fire station, and in California we've been able to take away, through regulations, the ability to put panels on a roof that doesn't allow for venting points. But the fire service needs to come to terms with these things being on building roofs."

The push to de-energize That's clearly the thinking that led fire service interests to push for new safety provisions in the 2014 NEC. They were amply represented on the Code-Making Panel that debated and ultimately pushed through changes targeting firefighter safety around solar systems. They prevailed in the face of pockets of opposition, making the case that an extra measure of safety was worth concessions on design and installation requirements that could impede solar's growth and profitability.

The noteworthy addition to the 2014 NEC (Sec. 690.12) mandates that PV system circuits in or on buildings incorporate a function to reduce voltage to 30V and 240VA within 10 seconds of activation. Only conductors more than 5 feet in length inside a building or located more than 10 feet from an array are affected. It also requires that equipment performing the rapid shutdown must be listed and labeled.

The new "Rapid Shutdown of PV Systems on Buildings" requirement was inspired by the desire to give fire responders — or anyone else for that matter — a quick and reliable way to bring DC power residing in the PV system down to a level considered safe enough to work around. The standard recognizes that DC ranging from 300VDC to 600VDC is typically present in array wiring, combiners, and other exposed system components even after a building's main AC power is shut down. It's that electricity, generated by the solar panels and transformed to usable AC through inverters, that could badly shock firefighters as they walk on or hack through roofing in close proximity to panels and associated wiring and components.

"It will definitely improve safety, and the things firefighters are concerned with are covered in the new requirements," says Bill Brooks, owner of solar engineering and consultancy Brooks Solar, who chaired the Firefighter Safety Task Group that advised NEC Code-Making Panel No. 4 as it formulated the rapid shutdown provision last year. "Being able to de-energize the main PV output circuit from the array to the inverter is significant. It's not everything they (fire service interests) wanted or asked for, but it's a step forward from where we are currently."

Settling for less Firefighter advocates started out seeking a bigger margin of safety through a module-level shutdown requirement. That would have required systems to incorporate a method of de-energizing the components comprised of solar cells that capture the sun's energy,

and which themselves make up the solar panels that are configured into larger arrays.

Solar industry interests effectively pushed back against that proposal, citing the prospect of prohibitively higher costs for designing and building systems on a much more "micro" level. But the price for its defeat was output-circuit shutdown.

"Module-level shutdown was the original intent, but it would have required a lot more manufacturer adjustments to meet the Code," says Todd Stafford, senior director with the National Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee (NJATC), another member of the Firefighter Safety Task Group. "Hopefully, we can get to that point in the future because, personally, I think the Code needs to go farther."

Assessing the requirements Whether it does will depend on how the new requirements, which apply to new systems and possibly existing ones that need repair, maintenance, or upgrading, play out in the real world. Numerous solar industry representatives on Code-Making Panel 4 voiced concerns. They ranged from a lack of clarity on how to engineer systems for compliance and the costs involved in doing so, to whether the changes would appreciably enhance safety and whether they are a harbinger of even more onerous requirements.

Drake Chamberlin, owner of Athens Electric, an Amesville, Ohio electrical contractor whose services include solar installations, worries that the rapid shutdown provision wasn't well thought out. Labeling it a "cart-before-the-horse" scenario, he sees the requirement coming ahead of a clear strategy for how to design such a system.

He cites a previous Code change dealing with AC arc fault branch circuit protection that was post-dated in the NEC to allow time to adapt. With the new rapid-shutdown change, it also may take time to develop equipment that meets the standard. In the meantime, inspectors following the Code might be forced to hold up approvals for systems that might otherwise sail through or reject installed systems.

"The problem is that there's no 'listed' way to meet the new requirement now for string and central inverter systems," he says. This could severely limit the feasibility of using one popular new SMA string inverter that produces backup power without batteries.

This, he says, may also present a problem for large arrays and difficult roofs, which now might need to have a microinverter under each module or require the use of AC modules to meet the new requirement. Inverters are far more likely to fail than modules, so designers often prefer not to use microinverter technology where access is difficult.

“Installers might be able to cobble something together, but the problems are: 1) inspectors may not accept what we do and 2) it might be cost prohibitive to do it in a way that is acceptable,” he says.

But another member of Code-Making Panel 4 counters that some systems do have listed components capable of meeting the requirement. Jim Rogers, an electrical inspector for Oak Bluffs, Mass., who represented the International Association of Electrical Inspectors (IAEI) on the panel, points to micro-inverters, which connect to individual solar panels. Though not widely used — San Jose Fire’s Paiss guesses only 30% of rooftop systems have them — their inclusion makes it possible to disable DC power automatically when a structure’s main AC power is cut.

Looking ahead Rogers concedes, however, that the language in 690.12 needs more work. He credits it for advancing safety, but the new requirement would benefit from more clarity regarding the mechanics of shutdown. That would help address the issue of Code interpretation and approval and also ensure shutdown procedures are foolproof. He’s less worried about blocked installations because the NEC gives inspectors some discretion in waiving requirements and considering work-arounds. “We need to fix this because the Code is nondescript on how to initiate a shutdown, where the device is, and who does it,” he says. “But we do want to make sure the technology is available, and there has been some movement there. There are some new DC-combiner designs coming out that incorporate string-level fuse protection and rapid shutdown technology.”

While the debate over this new Code requirement appears sharply divided on the lines of first-responder interests and those of the solar industry, there is some overlap. Brooks, the solar consultant and chair of the firefighter advisory group, speaks to it. He likes the idea of improving safety but shares some industry concerns over interpretation and implementation. But for all its flaws, he comes down on the side of the requirement, believing it can be met without undue pain.

“Maybe 15 years ago this would not have been a good thing for a developing industry, but I don’t think this is an industry-killer now,” he says. “It’s a logical progression of safety requirements and not a big burden we’re throwing down. The fact is we have to be responsive to firefighter concerns. The last thing we want as an industry is to have a firefighter killed by coming into contact with an energized PV system.”

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SIDEBAR: Gearing Up for Shutting Down Push for safer PV systems could spur ingenuity, new designs

The new NEC requirement for rapid shutdown of designated PV system conductors could spark a new round of innovation in product and system development.

System designers and suppliers appear to have a free hand in fashioning mechanisms and architecture for reducing DC power on-demand. That’s maddening to those who want more clarity, but liberating to others.

“It’s purposeful that there’s not a lot of detail,” says Bill Brooks, owner of Brooks Solar and a member of NEC Code-Making Panel 4 that authored the requirement. “We didn’t want people to overly focus on the nuts and bolts of it. The problem with detail is you can overly constrain options.” Rapid shutdown is within reach of systems designed with AC modules, DC-to-DC converters, and micro-inverters. Those without them may have to incorporate them or employ other means of isolating and reducing DC power.

One alternative could be contactor combiner boxes, which incorporate load-break contactors into a device that combines the output of multiple strings of PV modules. Another strategy for large installations could involve doing away with large ground-level inverters in favor of a collection of smaller rooftop inverters that would replace combiners. And the ultimate solution for smaller residential systems may be micro-inverters for individual modules.

“The jury is out now on where the market is gravitating in terms of solutions,” says Brooks. “The ultimate in safety would be the ability to shut off an array completely, and that technology exists. But the question becomes what systems would be needed to do that and at what point it would be too costly.”

For even as the industry wrestles with how to meet the new requirements of Sec. 690.12 of the 2014 NEC, a push for module-level shutdown requirements in the 2017 Edition of the NEC looms.

Deliberations on that will probably begin within the year.

“There will be new products needed to accomplish shutdown better, faster, and cheaper,” he says. “It will be interesting to see if manufacturers deem it worthy to begin designing in changes to come into compliance.”

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