

FIRE LINK

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Great People Doing Great Work

by John Mullin, President

As I write this, it is May 23rd and I am in St. Charles, Missouri where I will be attending the International Association of Fire Chiefs Mutual Aid Stakeholder meeting. Down the road a piece, the city of Joplin has just been ripped apart by a tornado. At last report, 89 have died and that number may rise. As a CNN camera pans the area, I see the tremendous amount of destruction. The area being shown on TV is completely devastated and the reporter is saying that it is impossible to recognize landmarks. Of course, there is something that is completely recognizable. At the epicenter of this disaster, you can see firefighters digging through the debris and searching for survivors.

The firefighters of Joplin will not have to deal with this disaster by themselves. Today, the day after the storm, there are reportedly 40 agencies already in the

city and lending a hand. In addition to Missouri Task Force One, I'm sure that many of those agencies are MVD fire departments. I am proud of the Joplin Fire Department and the Missouri Valley Division. In times of stress, we continue to roll up our sleeves and work together.

I am looking forward to seeing you at the Missouri Valley Conference in Wichita, where Chief Ron Blackwell and his talented staff have put together a great program for us. At this Conference, we will welcome Chief Sandy Schiess as she takes the lead of this fine Division. I'm confident that Chief Schiess will bring enthusiasm and energy to her presidency. Congratulations also to Chief Chris Riley, who will be taking over as 1st Vice President and to Chief Gary Curmode who runs unopposed for 2nd Vice President. I want to thank both Chief Schiess and Chief Riley for their

support during my tenure as president. I also want to thank Division Director Chief Richard Carrizzo for his mentoring and Division Secretary Mike Merwick for keeping me on track.

I want to thank you for allowing me the honor of serving as your President for this year. It has been a great adventure. I have enjoyed meeting you at your State meetings and Conventions. Thank you for sharing your challenges, your stories and for your gracious hospitality. I have learned a good deal from you. This experience has confirmed a belief that I have always held about our Fire Service – you are great people doing great work.

Stay safe and take care of one another. ■

Safety Information on Apparatus

by Gary Curmode, Fire Chief, Sedgwick County Fire District #1, Kansas

When doing PMs on your fire apparatus, (Preventive Maintenance), there is a potential fire danger that we have been seeing in our jurisdiction on Apparatus with Heat Shields, underneath the pump compartment. When servicing apparatus, we noticed an excessive grass accumulation inside the pump compartment area and grass forming around the DPF (muffler), this causes a potential fire hazard.

Exhaust temperatures on these apparatus can exceed 1500 degrees, so rea-

sonable and prudent efforts should be made on all apparatus with heat shields—this hazard should be removed on a routine basis and checked after each grass fire or off-the-road event.

To remove the hazard, simply allow the apparatus exhaust to cool down, remove the heat shield plates, and clean the debris from the pump compartment area, then re-install the shields.

Keep it safe! ■



Calendar of Events

Wyoming Chiefs Meeting
June 15, 2011 • Landow, WY

MVD Conference
July 13-15, 2011 • Wichita, KS

Accreditation Workshop
July 18-20, 2011 • Lakewood, CO

IAFC - FRI
August 23-27, 2011 • Atlanta, GA

Kansas State Chiefs
October 20-23, 2011 - Wichita, KS

Colorado Leadership Challenge
November 30-December 2, 2011
Keystone, CO

Firefighters Feel the Squeeze of Shrinking Budgets

In small and large cities alike, firefighters have gone from heroes to budget bait.

by Jonathan Walters | January 2011 *Governing* magazine

As a matter of political gospel—and survival—firefighters are sacrosanct. No matter the depths of a municipality's budget crisis, neither the firefighters' ranks, pay nor benefits are touchable. There are no reductions in force for firefighters. And yet, in cities all across the country, that's exactly what has been happening. The men and women in red are becoming as vulnerable to budget cuts as other municipal employees.

The new landscape has clearly been shaped by the brutal fiscal conditions in localities. In an era of such severe economic uncertainty, high-level municipal officials—elected and otherwise—have not been shy about portraying firefighters as a group that has vacuumed up more than its fair share of municipal resources—whether it's for salaries, equipment and firehouses, or for some of the most generous retirement packages offered by local governments today.

But other factors have contributed to the new view, and one is a question of efficacy. There's a growing discussion about whether—in a world with fewer fires and more emergency medical-related incidents and automobile accidents—firefighters are deploying resources to maximum effect.

The Cost-Efficiency of Firefighters

Right now, the cost of paying a firefighter is foremost on city officials' minds. Take San Jose, Calif. Over the past decade, the cost of firefighter wages and benefits in the big California city has increased 100 percent, while city revenues have only risen by 20 percent, according to Michelle McGurk, a spokeswoman for the mayor's office. The average firefighter, she says, now costs the city more than \$180,000 per year. Moreover, the highest-paid employees in San Jose aren't high-level city managers—or even the city manager—but upper-level members of the city fire service. Firefighters with 30 years of service can retire as early as age 50, with 90 percent of their salary.

That was just the beginning of the tough line that the San Jose mayor's office took

when it handed out pink slips to 49 firefighters last fall, a decision that the city laid directly at the feet of the San Jose firefighter's union, Local 230. "Let me be very clear," McGurk says, "we didn't have to lay off firefighters. It was the decision of Local 230. They could have come through with concessions."

With an open contract—the firefighter union's collective bargaining agreement expired in June 2009—the city asked Local 230, along with all other city unions with open contracts, to give back roughly 10 percent in wage and benefit concessions in a deal that would have saved the 49 firefighter positions. But Local 230 summarily rejected the idea, arguing that the city wasn't in as bad fiscal shape as it claimed and that firefighters were being asked to bear more than their fair share of cuts.

Painting firefighters as something of a pampered class—well paid with retirement packages that would be the envy of anyone in either the private or public sectors—would have been unheard of just a few years ago. Today, it's a widespread practice. Having spent a decade on a post-9/11 pedestal, the profession has been on the receiving end of more stringent scrutiny. Government officials and the public they represent appear to be taking a much harder look at exactly what they are buying when asked to spend bigger and bigger bucks on firefighters, firefighting equipment and emergency response.

In cities where firefighter layoffs haven't occurred, it has frequently been due to concessions wrung from unions—despite unions' reputation as tough negotiators. But it's not that the unions have caved in easily to city demands. In Jacksonville, Fla., for instance, the firefighters' union at first rejected a contract calling for a two-year, 2 percent pay cut, and that for the first time ever required single firefighters with no dependents to contribute to their health insurance. In the face of rejection, the city promptly followed through on its threat to lay off 15 firefighters, a messy process that involved bumping

another two dozen active firefighters to lower-level jobs.

The move was the culmination of several years of tough budgets for Jacksonville, says Misty Skipper, a city spokeswoman. In a city looking at escalating employee costs of 20 percent in the next five years, it means that every employee in government must sacrifice. It's part of a new reality. "In the past, our public safety sectors—police and fire—have essentially been held harmless," Skipper says. "This year we knew the gap couldn't be addressed just through nonpublic safety areas."

In the face of layoffs, the Jacksonville firefighters' union capitulated. Besides the 2 percent pay cut, single firefighters without dependents will now contribute 5 percent to their health-care coverage. While the 15 laid-off firefighters were reinstated with the recent ratification of the firefighters' contract, the city will still eliminate 15 fire and rescue positions through attrition.

"Obviously, a pay cut is never good, especially when you're already on the low end of the pay scale," says Randy Wyse, president of the Jacksonville Association of Firefighters. (Starting pay for fire and rescue personnel in Jacksonville is just more than \$34,000, with additional pay available for medical training, firefighting-related educational advancement and longevity.) "But my members understood the economic times and responded."

What irritates Wyse about the firefighter cuts—over and beyond the sacrifice his members are making—is that in his view, the city is spending millions to keep its professional football team, the Jaguars, happy, and to develop local amenities like a \$600,000 riverwalk. Given that, Wyse thinks the city has the cash for luxuries while it squeezes public safety. He is inclined to label the city's budget crisis "contrived."

Even if city resources may be somewhat constrained, he says, "there's no recession in demand for our services." The number of fire and emergency medical services (EMS) calls

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Go Team Deploys to Puerto Rico

by Chief Bill Bullock, IAFC and Jerry Rhodes, EMC Chair

During the first six weeks of 2011, the island of Puerto Rico experienced a tremendous increase in the number of outdoor/wildland fires. During the same time in 2010, they logged 976 fires, but in 2011, the number was 1,647. Several trends were emerging, including the concentration in the southern parts of the island, and many occurred at nighttime. Fire loss was now nearing \$2 million, and Fire Chief Carmen Rodriguez sought assistance from the IAFC through the Go Teams. They had learned of this capability when Sgt. Mario Diaz, the PRFD Inter-agency Coordinator, had attended the National Mutual Aid Stakeholder meeting in 2010. Working through their Intra-state Mutual Aid System (IMAS) technical advisor Chief T.J. Lyon (retired), they contacted the IAFC to make a special request for Go Team members with both Wildland and Investigator experience.

To help understand the magnitude of the event, you must understand the geography and demographics of the island. Puerto Rico has a population of nearly four million, with a population density of nearly 1,000 per square mile. This

makes it one of the most densely populated areas of the world. It is set on an island of 8,860 square kilometers, which is just less than three times the size of Rhode Island. As some of the fires encroached on more inhabited areas, the potential for death and injuries becomes a major concern.

On Friday, February 18, Chief Don Taylor from Salida, CO and Chief Dan Qualman from South Metro Fire/Rescue Centennial, CO headed to San Juan where they met with Chief TJ Lyon and the Puerto Rico Fire Department staff. Over the first couple of days, they met with the island's two Wildland Fire Brigade Commanders and visited a number of the previous burn sites. With the increase in fires, the limited investigative staff was taxed in their ability to cover the requests. With the help of the Go Team, they began to research the existing data from the stations and regional offices in the Ponce Zone and Mayaguez district of the Aguadilla Zone. One striking statistic was that 93 percent of the fires had been classified as "Unknown cause" up to this point. They were able to develop a

report that evaluated occurrence based on time of day, day of the week, and area clusters. A key piece of data determined that 34 percent of the fires evaluated started along a major roadway. They were also able to correlate the data to the weather conditions that had been derived from existing weather information.

On Sunday, February 27, they provided a report to Chief Rodriguez and her staff. This new data system is now being used by the PRFD to help catalog their fire response information. The IAFC has agreed to provide information on an educational component of Wildland Fires for the citizens on how to help them address several issues including outdoor burning, defensible spaces, and related topics. The group headed home on Monday, February 28, 2011. The entire report can be viewed at www.iafc.org/mutualaid.

Two of our Missouri Valley Division chiefs making a difference to another association member through an IAFC program. ■

News from Missouri

Storms Pummel Joplin, Missouri

The tornado that tore through Joplin, Missouri on May 22 has left devastation in its path. As of this writing, there are 116 confirmed dead and 17 rescued from debris. The number of missing is still being calculated but this will be one of the largest natural disasters in Missouri's history.

The statewide mutual aid system was activated and Search and Rescue teams, Heavy Rescue teams, and EMS Task forces were dispatched to the affected area from throughout the State of Missouri and Kansas. As the magnitude of the devastation in Joplin became clear, a request was made from the State of Missouri Emergency Operations Center for fire, rescue, and emergency medical assistance from the Statewide Mutual Aid System, made up of nine regions throughout the State. The Lee's Summit Fire Department serves as the regional coor-

dinating agency for Region A of the Statewide Mutual Aid System, which includes Platte, Clay, Ray, Carroll, Jackson, Lafayette, Saline, Cass, Johnson, Pettis, Bates, Henry, and Benton Counties.

Overnight Region A coordinated the deployment of heavy rescue equipment, ambulances and incident management support to the City of Joplin. Resources sent to Joplin included the Kansas City Heavy Rescue Team from the Kansas City Fire Department (KCFD) and Central Jackson County Fire Protection District, for technical rescue assistance, and 25 ambulances grouped into five "Strike Teams."

Regional departments providing ambulances include the following:

Kansas City Fire and EMS (KCFD)
Kearney Fire Protection District
Lee's Summit Fire Department.

Lawson Fire Protection District
Central Cass Fire Protection District
Warsaw/Lincoln Ambulance District
Harrisonville EMS
South Metro Fire Protection District
Belton Fire Department.
Johnson County MO Ambulance District
Grandview Fire Department.
Lake Lotawanna Fire Protection Dist.
Raytown EMS
Prairie Township Fire Protection Dist.
Liberty Fire Department.
Excelsior Springs Fire Department
Pleasant Hill Fire Department.
Kearney Fire Protection District
Johnson County Kansas Med-Act

This was the result of the activation of just one of the regional sites at the start of the emergency so by the activation of multiple sites many resources were sent to the Joplin area. ■

News from Colorado

by Chief John Bales

Greetings from Colorado where the weather has been very wet and soggy for most of the month of May. It is still snowing in the mountains and is a much-needed relief along the Front Range and eastern plains. Wildland fires have been in abundance during the first four months of the year. One particular fire, the Indian Gulch Fire, started just west of the City of Golden and moved north consuming approximately 1600 acres on March 20th. Numerous agencies from the western part of the United States and the Great Basin Type 1 Incident Management Team led by Rowdy Muir participated and had the fire under control by the 26th of March. Now that the immediate fire danger is on hold, our next concern is flooding from the late spring and summer runoff from the snowpack which is about 159 percent of normal. It should be an exciting summer for the Colorado Fire Service.

The Colorado State Chiefs wish to congratulate three Fire Chiefs for their service who have chosen to retire. Chief Bob Pistor, an active Missouri Valley participant and a great golfer, retired from the

Montrose Fire Protection District in May. Chief Jim Cloud, former Metro Denver Chiefs President and former Fire Marshal from Wichita, KS, has retired from the City of Westminster Fire Department. Also, Chief Jim Notary, following the legend of George Mazzotti, of the North Washington Fire Protection District retired in May. Not only are these men great chiefs, they are also good friends who have brought a lot to the fire service and the Missouri Valley Division. We wish them well in their futures and thank them for their many years of service to Colorado. Only North Washington has named a permanent replacement. The new Fire Chief is Pat Laurienti, who has served most recently as Deputy Chief. Good luck to Chief Laurienti and we hope to see you as an active Missouri Valley member.

The 2011 Missouri Valley Fire Chiefs Conference is just around the corner on July 13, 2011 in Wichita. I am personally excited about this year's conference. Wichita is my home town where I was born and went to school. I started my fire

service career there as a reserve firefighter with the Wichita Fire Department. While I don't miss the heat and humidity of July, it will be great to go home. I know Chief Blackwell and his staff have put together a great program and some fantastic entertainment. The theme is geared at Firefighter Health and Safety and Leadership. Please don't miss out on another great educational and networking opportunity.

The 20th Annual Fire Leadership Challenge is for November 30-December 2, 2011 at the Keystone Resort and Conference Center in Keystone, CO. We will also be offering the Company Officer Leadership Symposium—Level 2 from November 28-30, 2011. This year the focus will be on Crisis Management. For more information please go to www.colofirechief.org

I hope you all have a great summer. Please take some time with your family and friends and enjoy yourself. I hope to see many of you in Wichita. ■

The Need for a Prepositioned Equipment Program

by John Bruno

The Prepositioned Equipment Program (PEP) concept was born on the back of a napkin. The September 11, 2001 attack demonstrated that an incident of terrorism can rapidly deplete local supplies and equipment. While many state and local jurisdictions have purchased new equipment in the aftermath of September 11th, it is unrealistic to expect that all jurisdictions can be fully equipped to provide an adequate, sustained response to a major terrorist incident.

To meet this critical need, Congress established the Prepositioned Equipment Program. PEP consists of a standardized equipment POD (Package on Demand) that are prepositioned in select geographic areas to permit rapid deployment to states and localities.

National Coverage

Strategically placed throughout the country, ten Prepositioned Equipment POD sites are available to respond to an incident, in any area across the continental U.S. within 12 hours.

PEP provides for immediate ground or air transportation of the first POD, as well as a team of support staff. If circumstances warrant a greater level of support, FEMA may dispatch additional fully-equipped POD's. Highly specialized equipment and frequently used off-the-shelf items are stored in the POD's. This equipment is specifically tailored to sustain and reconstitute the capabilities of local and State first responders.

PEP Support Team: Each PEP site is staffed by personnel selected from the local emergency responder community.

The PEP staff manages the equipment set and performs associated logistics, including maintenance and calibration to the original manufacturer's specifications. A PEP Support Team (PST) is available to respond to emergencies 24/7.

PEP Equipment Set: Each PEP equipment set includes devices, tools, supplies, and additional material most likely needed by the initial on-scene responders to sustain their efforts. A PEP POD is sized to support the initial response to a major incident in a metropolitan area. Each site carries the necessary equipment to be self sustaining for the first 96 hours after arrival.

PEP equipment was created to replenish and reconstitute a minimum of 100 fire/HAZMAT, 20 emergency med-
(continued on next page)

News from Iowa

by Chief Don Dox

The Iowa Association of Professional Fire Chiefs held their annual Spring Conference in Ames, in April. Two Fire Chiefs from across the state were recognized for their upcoming retirements—Mark Wessel, Keokuk; and Mark Frese, Davenport. Fire Chief Mark Regenwether, Clinton, was also awarded a plaque for his past year for serving as our President.

MVD President John Mullin attended, from Colorado, and we greatly appreciated his presence and MVD communications. Russ Sanders, from NFPA, presented an overview of current legislation and the Home Builders' Association strategies for impacting our residential sprinkler initiatives.

The Spring Conference began with a pre-conference seminar, that was partially funded by the Missouri Valley

“Good Morning to all.

I just wanted to let everyone know that the Oskaloosa City Council last night in a 6-1 vote reversed its decision to mandate residential sprinkler systems in new 1-2 family dwellings and townhomes. Leading the charge to reverse the decision made in June 2009 were homebuilders, realtors, and lending institutions that flooded the council chambers. Once again we (the fire service) were “out gunned” by non-substantiated arguments of costs, economic hardship for the area, possible loss of tax base growth, and unknown complications of system operation. What I came out of the meeting with was a clear understanding of what I had always suspected but hoped I was wrong about; public safety will always suffer to the value of the dollar. The fire service must work harder to educate the public on the importance of residential sprinklers to move our agenda forward. While we lost this battle, the research information I obtained and presented to council will help my departments’ effort in the future. I am not aware of any other cities in Iowa moving forward with the sprinkler mandate but if any of you do please feel free to give them my contact information and I will assist them in any way possible.”

*Mark Neff, Fire Chief
City of Oskaloosa*

Leadership Educational Stipend which was greatly appreciated and recognized at the beginning of the seminar. Tim Sendelbach, member of the Charleston FD Review Panel presented “The Sofa Super Store Fire: Rising from the Ashes of Tragedy.” Over 75 officers from around the state attended.

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We are all looking forward to the conference in Wichita and the motorcycle ride to Kansas along with the scheduled biker “run” to kick the conference off. We will be meeting up, on the road, with some brother Kansas Chiefs to ride in together.

Another Iowa Accredited Fire Department. The City of Davenport, under the leadership of Fire Chief Mark Frese, was recently notified that they will be recommended for Accreditation at FRI and will be the third department, in the State of Iowa, to gain accreditation.

Sadly, to say, in the last newsletter, we recognized the City of Oskaloosa, for enacting the resi-

dential sprinkler ordinance only to have the area homebuilders rally against the code a few weeks later and get the city council to overturn their previous decision. The graphic is a notation from the Oskaloosa Fire Chief regarding the HBA's actions. ■

Prepositioned Equipment Program (continued from page 4)

ical, and 25 law enforcement personnel conducting emergency re-sponse operations in a CBRNE environment. The equipment maintained and carried on these POD's include Personal Protection Equipment, Detec-tion, Decontamination, Communication and

Search Equipment, along with Medical Equipment and other Supplies.

The expansion of this vital FEMA program into all hazards program has allowed them to be put on alert or deployed to incidents such as: Hurricane Katrina, Hurricane Rita,

Hurricane Alex, Spy Satellite shoot down, Hurricane Ike, Hurricane Earl, United Nations, Haiti, Atkins, South Carolina Train Derailment.

Contact: John Bruno 816-452-7781; email john.a.bruno@saic.com ■

News from Nebraska

Ralston Fire Chief Attends Landmark National Volunteer Fire Service Summit

by Kyle L. Ienn, Fire Chief

Ralston Fire Chief Kyle Ienn was selected to serve as a national representative to the National Volunteer Fire Service Summit hosted by the International Association of Fire Chief's Volunteer and Combination Officers Section (VCOS) March 17-19.

The goal of the Washington, D.C.-based summit is for fire and emergency service leaders to address the challenges facing the volunteer fire service today and explore ways to move volunteer and combinations departments forward in the 21st century—inclusive of volunteer, on-call and part-time personnel. Chief Ienn is one of just 125 fire and emergency service leaders from the U.S. and Canada who will participate in an unprecedented three-day gathering of public safety and other government officials.

"It was an honor and a learning experience participating in this Summit," said Chief Kyle Ienn. "As we discussed the problems volunteer Fire Departments are having across the Country, it was obvious to me that some of the issues we encounter at Ralston Fire are the same ones seen across the Country but I'm confident the progressive approach the Ralston Fire Department has taken in various areas will ensure the City of Ralston will continue to be protected by an adequate number of trained, professional, and dedicated volunteers".

"Many volunteer fire departments are at a crossroads: the economy, the increasing demand for local and regional emergency services, new roles in national preparedness and response and changing social norms are creating shifts in the way we do business," said Chief Tim Wall, Chair of the IAFC's Volunteer and Combination Officer's Section. "These changes aren't necessarily good or bad in-and-of themselves, but it's clear that if we are dedicated to continuing our tradition of service and excellence, we need to bring the community together look at what works in

this new environment and what new ideas are out there."

Among the topics that were addressed in the summit are the impact of the new economy, recruitment and retention, firefighter health and safety, local government relations, and national legislative issues impacting volunteers. Participants, who were largely nominated to attend by state and national fire service organizations, will spend the majority of the time in small group work sessions which tasked them with developing recommendations that will be incorporated into a national report issued by VCOS.

Ralston Fire Department Receives SAFER Grant

The Ralston Volunteer Fire Department will be able to continue its programs to Recruit and Retain Volunteer Fire Fighters and EMS members with the assistance of a \$228,000 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grants (SAFER) Grant awarded this week from FEMA. Ralston Fire just completed a successful four-year SAFER grant program they received in 2007 which provided over 70 new members and more than doubling the number of volunteers on the roster from just over a year ago.

Ralston Fire Chief Kyle Ienn is optimistic that the national trend of declining Volunteer Firefighters will not be the case at Ralston Fire Department. The department recently had 118 applications submitted during the recent Marketing Campaign the department promoted during the past 60 days. Chief Ienn states "This will provide the funding to continue to increase our membership and retain our current trained members which in turn will reduce response times, and provide safer and more efficient incident scenes giving the citizens of Ralston more ade-

quate protection with the savings of a Volunteers answering the calls."

The Grant will allow the department to continue its Recruitment program consisting of marketing the department's need of volunteers through TV, Website, and Print. The new grant will also allow them to retain their Retention programs including Lost Wage reimbursement while members are attending training, Medical Health Screening for new members, contributions into a Service Awards Program and College Tuition reimbursement.

"These programs are essential to our Recruitment and Retention programs and with this new four-year grant, we can continue to build upon what we have accomplished with the previous grant and insure the citizens of Ralston are protected by a trained and staffed volunteer fire department." ■

South Dakota News

by Mike Maltaverne

South Dakota Fire Chiefs Association will hold a business meeting on June 10, 2011 during the State Fire School in Aberdeen.

Watertown Fire Chief Nick Swinhart has resigned after just over two years as Chief to become Chief of Camas, Washington, to move closer to family and friends. Chief Swinhart had been serving as President of the South Dakota Fire Chiefs Association.

Chief Donn Hill of Sioux Falls is retiring after 29 years of service. Good wishes to both Chiefs. ■

Firefighters Feel the Squeeze (continued from page 2)

is increasing every year. Firefighters are, he says, “becoming the first line in someone’s health care.”

Fire Departments Around the Country Feel Budget Restrictions

If Jacksonville—a consolidated city/county government experiencing less budget pain than most large municipalities—is forcing cuts to fire and rescue, it’s easy to predict what’s going on in the rest of the country. The litany of cuts, compromises, give backs and service reductions is astonishing.

In the wake of losing 23 firefighter positions in the summer of 2010—an almost 25 percent reduction in manpower—Lowell, Mass., is now counting heavily on mutual aid from surrounding towns for fire suppression services. Firefighters in Muskegon, Mich., ratified a three-year contract that allows the use of more part-time firefighters. In Baltimore, firefighters were given the option of taking five to eight furlough days or risk losing 100 positions. In Elgin, Ill., a Chicago suburb, firefighters agreed to a “no raise, no layoff” contract for 2011 that also reduced its minimum staffing level from 36 to 34, saving the city a reported \$750,000 a year.

In Newark, N.J., firefighters joined in a court challenge at the end of last year to contest a city budget that called for laying off hundreds of municipal employees, including two dozen firefighters. San Diego instituted a “rolling brownout” system, whereby certain firehouses are temporarily closed—an initiative that takes more than one-tenth of the city’s fire and rescue complement off the street each day, saving the city nearly \$12 million per year. Meanwhile, New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg recently unveiled a plan to significantly reduce municipal manpower—a plan that includes closing some fire stations at night. He is also embracing a proposal by the New York Fire Department to charge motorists up to \$490 to respond to accidents and car fires.

“It’s one of the most challenging times I’ve ever seen,” says Tom Wieczorek, former city manager for Ionia, Mich., and now director of the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) Center for Public Safety Management. In the past, police and fire support staff might have gotten cut, Wieczorek says, but usually front-line police and fire were kept whole. “We’re now seeing commu-

nities that have been cutting budgets for the past eight years,” he says, “but you can only cut parks and recreation so much.” Given that 40 to 80 percent of municipal budgets go to public safety, it was inevitable that cuts would eventually hit uniformed services.

One of the big questions right now is whether the fire service is actually learning anything amidst the constant threat of cuts, especially about smarter ways to deploy resources in an era of shrinking budgets and departments. While police departments, especially in larger cities, have embraced a more sophisticated and data-driven approach to the work they do—allowing them to maintain relatively high performance levels—there’s been less willingness on the fire service’s part to embrace data as a way to revamp how fire suppression, EMS and other calls are handled.

For the most part, firefighting is still based on geographically distributed, fixed stations staffed by a set number of personnel who stand by and wait to be dispatched when needed. For the fire service to continue to perform in these leaner times, Wieczorek says, it is now going to have to actively embrace change—and that’s not something that comes easily to the fire service. “The old saying in the fire service,” Wieczorek says, “is ‘100 years of tradition unimpeded by progress.’”

One of the most significant and widely recognized changes in the fire and rescue service is that on average, most calls to fire departments now are for medical emergencies and not fires—running about 80 percent EMS to 20 percent fire in most jurisdictions where the fire service handles both. At the same time, most calls are either false alarms or not particularly serious. Yet too few fire departments have adapted very well to these realities. For example, San Jose still sends an attack pumper with a full complement of four firefighters to all emergency medical calls.

Tying up four firefighters and a rig for what usually winds up being minor medical emergencies doesn’t make any sense, says Bruce Hoover, chief of the Fargo Fire Department in North Dakota. Fargo’s protocols used to mirror San Jose’s exactly. But now Fargo fire trucks only roll if “there’s bleeding, breathing complications or trauma,” Hoover says. “We now only respond for true medical emergencies, and that’s cut our run-

count back by 1,000 a year, and has kept apparatus and manpower in place for real emergencies.”

But asking tough questions about manpower and deployment is difficult for many municipal officials who don’t feel confident tangling with the community’s best and bravest. A way to do that, however, without going toe-to-toe with the fire service, Wieczorek says, is simply to ask departments for solid, up-to-date data on demand, along with what measurable results a city is getting for its fire service dollars.

What most municipalities will find when they start to ask good questions about budgets, deployment and service demands is that there aren’t many answers to those questions. “We are routinely called into communities to look at manpower and deployment,” Wieczorek says. “We find across the board in small and large jurisdictions that data is either nonexistent or totally wrong.”

What drives firefighting in the U.S., for the most part, is long-standing practice, not good, current information on what’s actually happening on the ground, including number of calls, response times, seriousness of the incident, geographical distribution and time of day, all measured in relation to the geometry of fire service manpower, equipment and deployment.

For example, in one jurisdiction that asked the ICMA to come in and do a thorough analysis of demand, resources and deployment, the ICMA team looked at the busiest five minutes the fire department had in a year. What did the team find? Even at its busiest moment of the year, the city still had seven idle units standing by ready to respond, with 28 available firefighters. Those are just the sorts of analyses—in combination with the current budget crisis—that have emboldened policymakers and budget writers to start asking tougher questions about what fire departments really need and how they do business—and asking them to either hold the line on budgets or cut back.

Looking at both budgets and at more creative and data-driven ways to handle staffing and deployment are key. “Don’t get caught up in the hysteria trap of believing that if you pursue things like brownouts and budget cuts that children are going to die and senior citizens will burn up,” Wieczorek says. “That might happen, but only if we keep doing business in the same old ways.” ■

Missouri Valley Division

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The Missouri Valley Division of Fire Chiefs is dedicated to supporting professional development of its members through educational, leadership, and networking opportunities, while serving as a liaison between State Chiefs' organizations and the International Association of Fire Chiefs.

NEW MEMBERS

A BIG WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST MEMBERS

Fire Chief Tim Hay - Wellington, KS
 Chief Dave Frazier - Manchester, MO
 Fire Marshal Kent Newcomb - Brownville, NE
 Chief of Department Eric Tade - Denver, CO
 Company Officer Jeffrey Wood - Laramie, WY
 Training Officer Tom Chavez - Denver, CO
 Fire Captain Michael James - Clayton, MO
 Fire Chief Pete Igel - Conifer, CO
 Division Chief Mark Krapf - Lakewood, CO
 Battalion Chief Sid Newby - Wichita, KS
 Chief Mike Eads - Neosho, MO
 Deputy Chief Kendall Warnock - Lincoln, NE
 Deputy Chief Rob Kirk - New Century, KS
 EMS Chief Wayne Zygowicz - Littleton, CO
 Firefighter Shane Cuttlers - Raymond, NE
 Assistant Chief Dennis Clinton - Rogersville, MO
 Chief Dave Scott - Hillsboro, MO
 Chief Matthew Hilinski - Aurora, CO
 EMS Chief Jason Culberson - Rapid City, SD
 Captain Richard Gould - Admire, KS
 Division Chief Charlie Drennan - Denver, CO

Division Chief Steven Garrod - Denver, CO
 Division Chief Tony Berumen - Denver, CO
 Fire Chief James Bean - West Plains, MO
 Asst. Manager Heather Hodgkin - Bromfield, CO
 Battalion Chief Rex Fisher - Emporia, KS
 Captain Brian Giles - Lincoln, NE
 Fire Marshal Jason Webb - Urich, MO
 Chief Medical Officer Marvin Mantle - Grover, MO
 Captain Les Norin - Davenport, IA
 Community Program Steve Standridge - Centennial CO
 Administrator Gregory Greaves - Loveland, CO
 Fire Protection Jonathan Lund - Des Moines, IA
 Assistant Chief Jim Tacha - Kearney, NE
 Battalion Chief Mike Sandry - Grand Forks, ND
 Battalion Chief Craig Dodson - Saint Charles, MO
 Division Chief Elizabeth Snow - Wichita, KS
 Safety & Emergency Tricia Toussaint - Commerce City, CO

IAFC / FRI Atlanta

The International Association of Fire Chiefs

FRI Atlanta Conference is scheduled for

August 23-27, 2011.

The Missouri Valley Division Hotel is the Hilton Garden Inn which is located two blocks from the Convention Center.

Division members should make your room reservations ASAP to ensure availability.

Atlanta is a great place for the FRI Conference.

The MVD luncheon will be on Thursday and tickets can be purchased from your State Director after June 1, 2011.

2011 Missouri Valley Fire Chiefs Conference
July 13-15, 2011
Hyatt Regency Hotel
Wichita, Kansas



Blackbear Bosin (1921–1980)
WICHITA, MY SON, 1965
Gouache on illustration board
Wichita Art Museum, Gift of Mr. and Mrs.
Henry A. Humphrey
1965.3

Featured Speakers

I. David Daniels, *Fire Chief and CEO of the Woodinville (WA) Fire and Life Safety District*

Dr. Gerald Graham, *R.P. Clinton Distinguished Professor of Management, Wichita State University*

Bobby Halton, *Editor in Chief of Fire Engineering magazine*

Check out our conference website at
<http://www.wichita.edu/conferences/myfc>

Exhibitor/Sponsor Registration is now open

Attendee Registration will be available April 1.



2011 Missouri Valley - July 13 - July 15, 2011

Early Registration must be postmarked by: June 15, 2011. Please type or print clearly.

Name _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____ City: _____, State: _____ Zip _____

Home Phone: _____ Business Phone: _____

Badge Name _____ E-mail address: _____

Are you a first time Attendee? yes no Are you an IAFC Member? yes no

Please check all that apply:

IAFC Member Full Conference Registration \$375.00 (\$425.00 after 6/15) \$ _____
 Non IAFC Member Full Conference Registration \$400.00 (\$450.00 after 6/15) \$ _____
 IAFC Life Member Full Conference Registration \$150.00 (\$200.00 after 6/15) \$ _____
 Walk-in Registration (Day of Conference) \$475.00 \$ _____

IAFC Member One Day Conference Registration \$275.00 (\$325.00 after 6/15) \$ _____
 Non IAFC Member One Day Conference Registration \$300.00 (\$350.00 after 6/15) \$ _____
 IAFC Life Member One Day Conference Registration \$50.00 (\$100.00 after 6/15) \$ _____

I will bring a guest to the Wed. Evening Indian Center Event \$20.00 \$ _____
 I will bring a guest to the Thurs. Evening President's Dinner \$70.00 \$ _____

Golf with Breakfast and Lunch (Wed- 7/13) \$80.00 \$ _____

Motorcycle Run with Breakfast and Lunch (Wed- 7/13) \$30.00 \$ _____
T-shirt Size: Small Medium Large XL XXL

Spouse Package (Wed- 7/13) \$10.00 \$ _____

I require vegetarian meals

Conference Polo (Must Pre-order-indicate quantity) \$40.00/each. \$ _____
Polo Size: Small Medium Large XL XXL XXXL

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED OR NOTED ON PURCHASE ORDER \$ _____

Payment method: Check Purchase Order
 Visa MasterCard American Express Discover

CC#: _____ Security Code: _____ Expiration Date: _____

Name as printed on the card: _____

Signature: _____

Please return this form along with payment information or purchase order to:

Office of University Conferences
Wichita State University
1845 Fairmount, Campus Box 136
Wichita, Kansas 67260-0136
or fax to: (316) 978-3064

For questions regarding your registration, please contact Jennifer Harry at (316) 978-6724
or e-mail: Jennifer.harry@wichita.edu