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**Around Montana**

**Heath Fire Conducted Their Annual Meeting And Awards Dinner Monday Evening**



With well over 70 in attendance, information was provided, members were recognized and officers were instated.

Volunteer hours for the department per member generally ran from 45 to 94 throughout the year.

Board members and Chief Weichel provided members for the current and future needs and health of the department.

Well done!

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### **FSTS Is Asking For Your Help On A Research Project**

FSTS is conducting a research project on bunker gear contamination after structure fire operations and the resulting fire fighter exposure to harmful chemicals on the bunker gear. Part of the research is to determine current fire service practices related to cleanliness of bunker gear. Below is a link to a brief survey that will help us understand what fire departments are currently doing to keep bunker gear clean. Your participation in this survey is greatly appreciated. FSTS will produce a full report that will characterize contamination of bunker gear after being in a structure fire and suggest methods to reduce fire fighter exposure to the contaminants.

Thank you.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RTTMT9W>

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### **A Day With Gordon Graham Still Has Vacancies**

**When:** Feb. 19, 2015

**Where:** Holiday Inn -- Bozeman, MT

**Time:** 08:00 -- 16:00

**Registration:** **RSVP by Feb. 11, 2015**

**Cost:** **Free**

**Contact Person:** Tim Crosmer MT DNRC w- 406-535-1908 C-406-366 - 4527  
Email: [tcrosmer@mt.gov](mailto:tcrosmer@mt.gov)

*Gordon Graham is a 33 year veteran of California law enforcement. His education as a Risk Manager and experience as a practicing attorney, coupled with his extensive background in law enforcement, have allowed him to rapidly become recognized as a leading professional speaker in both private and public sector organizations with multiple areas of expertise. Throughout the years Mr. Graham has expanded his efforts to assist public safety organizations. In 2002 he helped develop FireFighterCloseCalls.com which is now recognized as "the source" for information about fire fighter safety. This effort led to his assisting the International Association of Fire Chiefs with a similar effort--and the development of their*

*FireFighterNearMiss.com safety site. In 2005 the IAFC awarded Gordon with the Presidential Award for Excellence for his lifelong work in improving firefighter safety and performance.*

**Topics of Discussion:**

1. *Why Things Go Right, Why Things Go Wrong*
2. *Organizational Risk Management*
3. *The Top 10 Things That Get Fire Fighters In Trouble*

*For more information or RSVP contact: Tim Crosmer, MT DNRC W- 406-535-1908,  
C- 406-366-4527 email: tcrosmer@mt.gov*

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**Date Change For Montana Mutual Aid; Move Up 1 Week Earlier!**

Join NIST Fire Protection Engineer Dan M for a day and a half talking about the latest in fire dynamics research and fire ground operations.

Save the date - Saturday February 28(10:00am start time) and Sunday, March 1(8am-12noon)

Agenda to follow.

Thank you Sue Mergenthaler and the Eastgate crew.

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**Great Falls Firefighters Always Striving To Be Better**

<http://www.greatfallstribune.com/story/news/local/2015/02/03/great-falls-firefighters-always-striving-better/22823841/>



When Shane Klippenes first became a firefighter, he thought he'd be putting his life on the line every time he was on duty.

But after 14 years with Great Falls Fire/Rescue, he said most of his time is spent on service calls.

"A lot of it is non-glamorous and non-emergent," Klippenes said.

Klippenes, a firefighter and a paramedic on C platoon, is a captain.

GFFR will celebrate its 100th birthday in 2018 and though firefighting is steeped in tradition, science is becoming a more integral part of fighting fire.

"It's amazing how fast this profession has advanced," said Tyler Osweiler, who's been with GFFR for 10 months.

The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) is an agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce and has been studying how to make firefighting more effective and safer for the people who do the job.

But science isn't typically what a firefighter is thinking about before walking into a blaze. That's when training and experience kicks in.

"You don't have time to think, 'I'm going into a burning building,'" said Chass Perkins.

"There's so much going on before you even get to the door to go in that you don't have time to think about it."

Perkins spent time in the U.S. Marine Corps and for the last 18 years, he's been with GFFR. He said dispatchers often give them a sense of whether a situation is going to be dicey or if it's a false alarm. When it's the real deal, adrenaline also kicks in, Perkins said.

Klippenes said that in major fires, "you're making a zillion decisions spontaneously based on experience."

C platoon was on duty the night the group home for people with disabilities on Treasure State Drive caught fire.

Firefighters from three of the city's four fire stations responded and rescued residents and put out the fire all in subzero temperatures.

"The environmental conditions on that fire were significantly against us," Klippenes said. The situation was also different than what they were initially dispatched to. That's when all the training that's packed into the early career for firefighters and the experience they develop kicks in.

"When this is happening in front of you, you're able to just do," Klippenes said.

Once the fire is out and people are safe, Osweiler said, "then you think, 'How could we do better?'"

The sheer physical demands of the job often require firefighters to stay in shape. Klippenes said he and Ron Martin, GFFR deputy fire marshal, consider firefighters as "industrial athletes."

Battalion Chief Jamie Jackson says he wanted to be in good enough shape that if he makes a mistake, he can fix it, Klippenes said.

Osweiler said it hit him early in training that he would have to work harder.

"I learned it quick," he said. "I thought I was in shape, but not in firefighting shape."

The physical test at the Montana Firefighters' Testing Consortium consists of the following tasks completed in 10 minutes and 20 seconds: stair climb, hose drag, equipment carry, ladder rise and extension, forcible entry, search, rescue, ceiling breach and pull.

When Perkins started with GFFR, firefighters met for beer more often and more of them smoked.

Now, they drink less and none smoke anymore.

A few years into his career, Klippenes had a thought.

"If there's a fire in my two-story house, would I pick me to do the job to get my wife and kids out?" he asked.

At the time, there were a few guys ahead of him.

"I decided that wasn't good enough," he said. "I want to be the guy I would pick. If I'm not willing to do that, it's time to hang it up."

Workouts are now built into their 24-hour shifts and the fire stations have small gyms. Staff at Benefis Health System have created workouts that are posted on the gym wall at Fire Station 1 downtown.

The 24-hour shift was approved by the City Commission in April 2014. The shift is one 24-hour shift, followed by 48 hours off then one 24-hour shift followed by 96 hours off. The city is testing the shift for two years and then will evaluate whether to extend the shift.

Spending 24 hours together at a time forces the firefighters to work together.

"You learn personalities," J.D. Kulbeck said. He's been with GFFR for seven years.

They get on each others nerves at times, but Perkins said they talk about it and get over it since they have to work together regularly.

"You learn to read each other," he said.

Overnight, firefighters sleep on beds from the old Columbus hospital that date back to 1954.

Air conditioning in Station 1 rarely works and there's black mold in the walls. Tight budgets in recent years haven't allowed for renovations or major improvements.

Throughout their shifts, they work out, train, clean, check fire engines, equipment, hang hoses and other tasks. Kulbeck said the firefighters also try to do as much work themselves as they can to keep the stations in working order, such as landscaping, mechanical, electrical and other minor maintenance.

The city's four fire stations were built in 1969, but the city has expanded since then with no additional fire station. When the stations were built, firefighters said they were running about 800 calls per year. Now they're running about 6,000 calls per year, with the same number of stations and firefighters.

For structure calls, Engine 1 from the downtown station responds no matter which district the fire is located in. For major calls, like the Treasure State Drive fire, three engines responded, leaving much of the city uncovered for awhile.

GFFR works closely with Great Falls Emergency Services to ensure rapid patient care and transport.

Most firefighters are EMTs and some are paramedics. GFFR tries to have a paramedic on every engine, meaning four per shift, but that doesn't always work based on scheduling and manpower, Kulbeck said.

On medical calls, GFFR typically arrives first since the stations are located throughout the city. GFFR does the initial patient assessment and GFES and the firefighters give them a report and help load patients into the ambulance if transport is needed.

Many residents ask why fire engines go on medical calls and GFFR officials said they take the fire engines in case they get called to a fire or crash extraction while on a medical call.

A fire engine is a "humongous roving toolbox," Klippenes said.

Those tools can be used to enter a building if doors are blocked or extracting patients from vehicles or other structures.

If they take a smaller vehicle to a medical call, they run the risk of not having all available tools and spending extra time returning to station to swap vehicles.

The firefighters spend their days making sure Great Falls is safe, but know it can affect their families.

Perkins said his wife worried in the beginning, but now trusts that he'll come home after each shift.

For the firefighters on C platoon, they said their family's worst fears are seeing the battalion chief's red truck showing up at their door.

Despite the stresses, challenges and risks, "we're wired for what we do," Klippenes said.

It's a good career and "beats being behind a desk," Osweiler said.

And once you become a firefighter, "you're here for it," Perkins said.

Kulbeck knew in college that he didn't want to sit behind a desk.

Life as a firefighter is always changing, "no day is ever the same," he said. "It's a pretty hard job not to love."

#### **To learn more**

To learn more about the National Institute of Standards and Technology fire fighting research, go to [www.nist.gov/fire/fftactics.cfm](http://www.nist.gov/fire/fftactics.cfm).

To learn more about the Montana Firefighters' Testing Consortium, go to [www.mtfiretesting.org](http://www.mtfiretesting.org).

#### **What should you do?**

Great Falls Fire/Rescue has a policy to stop at all red lights and stop signs, even on the highest emergency level calls.

The policy prevents fire trucks from striking vehicles in intersections, but some drivers see the truck stop and pull in front of the fire engine.

On the highest level calls, fire engine drivers can go 10 miles over the speed limit, but that's based on road and weather conditions, said Acting Fire Chief Steve Hester.

"Drivers use experience to determine what's a safe speed within that limit and sometimes it's not even safe to go the speed limit," Hester said.

Drivers should pull to the right when emergency vehicles are approaching, said Dirk Johnson, GFFR fire marshal. But sometimes, that's not an option, so Johnson and Hester ask that drivers be alert to emergency vehicles and move out of the way.

"Help us get to that emergency faster," Hester said.

Johnson said that if a fire engine is going with lights and sirens and then abruptly shuts down the lights and sirens, it means they were radioed that the call was a false alarm, didn't warrant as high speed a response or didn't need as many trucks to respond.

"We don't train going through the streets with lights and sirens," Johnson said. "So if they're going, it's a real call."

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## Around the Nation

### N.Y. Commuter Train Smashes Into SUV Killing Seven

[www.firehouse.com/news/11830507/ny-commuter-train-smashes-into-suv-killing-seven](http://www.firehouse.com/news/11830507/ny-commuter-train-smashes-into-suv-killing-seven)



A Metro-North Railroad passenger train smolders after hitting a vehicle in Valhalla, N.Y., Tuesday, Feb. 3, 2015. (AP Photo/The Journal News, Frank Becerra Jr) NYC METRO OUT, TV OUT, MAGS OUT, NO SALES

**Photo credit:** The Associated Press

VALHALLA, N.Y. (AP) — A crowded commuter train slammed into a sport utility vehicle on the tracks at a suburban New York crossing and burst into flames, killing seven people, seriously injuring nearly a dozen others and sending hundreds of passengers scrambling for safety, authorities said.

The collision involved a Metro-North Railroad train and a Jeep Cherokee on Tuesday evening in Valhalla, about 20 miles north of New York City. Authorities said the impact was so forceful the electrified third rail came up and pierced the train.

Killed were the SUV's driver and six people aboard the train, Gov. Andrew Cuomo said, making this crash the railroad's most deadly.

Westchester County Executive Rob Astorino said the front part of the train was "completely charred and burned."

"I am amazed anyone got off that train alive. ... It must have been pure panic, with the flames, the third rail and the smoke," he said.

Astorino said 12 people were injured, 10 of them seriously.

Authorities said the SUV's driver had gotten out of her vehicle momentarily after the crossing's safety gates came down around her. She then got back in and was trying to drive forward when she was hit, they said.

"You have seven people who started out today to go about their business and aren't going to be making it home tonight," Cuomo said Tuesday at the crash site.

The northbound Metro-North Railroad train left Grand Central Terminal in Manhattan around 5:45 p.m. and struck the SUV about 45 minutes later.

It was unclear how fast the train was going, but the maximum would be 60 mph, a railroad official said.

The train shoved the SUV about 10 train car lengths. Smoke poured out of the scorched front rail car, its windows blackened.

"This is a truly ugly and brutal site," Cuomo said.

Witnesses said they saw the flames shooting from where the crash occurred, in a wooded area near a cemetery.

Ryan Cottrell, assistant director at a nearby rock climbing gym, said he had been looking out a window because of an earlier, unrelated car accident and saw the train hit the car, pushing it along.

"The flames erupted pretty quickly," he said.

Passengers described a bump and said they smelled gasoline from the vehicle.

Around 650 passengers likely were aboard the train, including Justin Kaback, commuting home to Danbury, Connecticut.

"I was trapped. You know there was people in front of me and behind me, and I was trapped in the middle of a car and it was getting very hot," he told ABC News. "All the air was turned off so there was no circulation so it was definitely scary especially when people are walking by on the outside and they said, 'The train's on fire. There's a fire.'"

Passenger Stacey Eisner, who was at the rear of the train, told NBC News that she felt the train "jerk" and then a conductor walked through the train explaining what had happened. She said her train car was evacuated about 10 minutes later using ladders to get people out. The other rail passengers were moved to the rear of the train so they could get off. Buses picked them up and took them to other stations.

All railroad grade crossings have gate arms that are designed to lift automatically if they strike something like a car on the way down, railroad safety consultant Grady Cothen said.

The arms are made of wood and are designed to be easily broken if a car trapped between them moves forward or backward, he said.

Officials didn't comment on whether the gates were working properly.

Rick Hope said he was stopped directly behind the SUV and said he started to back up to give her room, but instead she pulled forward.

Hope told WNYW-TV the crossing signals were working properly, and the gate was down and bells were ringing. He said the gate lowered and struck the SUV, and the woman got out looking a bit confused.

He said the woman "kind of" wiggled the gate. He said the SUV was at the track line when she pulled forward.

The National Transportation Safety Board said a team was being sent to investigate. Metro-North is the nation's second-busiest railroad, after the Long Island Rail Road. It was formed in 1983 and serves about 280,000 riders a day in New York and Connecticut. Service on its Harlem Line was suspended between Pleasantville and North White Plains after the crash.

Metro-North has been criticized severely for accidents over the last couple of years. Late last year, the NTSB issued rulings on five accidents that occurred in New York and Connecticut in 2013 and 2014, repeatedly finding fault with the railroad while also noting that conditions have improved.

Among the accidents was a Dec. 1, 2013, derailment that killed four people, the railroad's first passenger fatalities, in the Bronx. The NTSB said the engineer had fallen asleep at the controls because he had a severe, undiagnosed case of sleep apnea.

Last March, the Federal Railroad Administration issued a stinging report on Metro-North, saying it let safety concerns slip while pushing to keep trains on time. Railroad executives pledged to make safety their top priority.

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### **III. Police Officer Charged with Arson, Burglary**

<http://www.firehouse.com/news/11830037/edwardsville-cop-charged-with-arson>

EDWARDSVILLE -- Madison County authorities announced Monday that additional charges have been filed against Edwardsville police Officer Brian Barker, who was charged in December with a dozen counts of burglary, one count of residential burglary and aggravated unlawful possession of stolen firearms.

Prosecutors filed nine new charges on Monday against Barker, 41, including one count of arson that caused damage to a multi-unit office building at 101 South Pointe Drive in Edwardsville and five counts of burglary related to that property. Among the offices damaged in the fire was that of state Rep. Dwight Kay, R-Glen Carbon.

Barker also was charged Monday with burglarizing a business on Center Grove Road in Edwardsville and the Edwardsville Township building.

The ninth new charge was for money laundering for allegedly trying to sell stolen automobile parts and electronics in person and on the Craigslist.

Last week, a Madison County Grand Jury indicted Edwardsville police dispatcher Keri L. Knight, 41, with obstructing the investigation into Barker's actions. The indictment alleged that Knight stole cash related to the investigation, provided false information to investigators and concealed evidence in the case.

Knight was released on \$15,000 bond.

The charges were the latest in a string of problems for the Edwardsville Police Department, which saw its own police chief, James Bedell, indicted and sentenced to 18 months in federal prison in 2013 for embezzling \$140,000 from the city.

Barker's alleged burglary spree was exposed in December after he was identified through security equipment at the Reality Salon and Spa in Edwardsville. Barker, in uniform and on duty, was suspected of stealing \$450 from the cash register there.

Barker and Knight are on administrative leave without pay.

Barker was being held Monday in the Madison County Jail in lieu of \$300,000 bail.

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**Md. 911 Dispatcher Tells Teen: 'Stop Whining'**

<http://www.firehouse.com/news/12041497/anne-arundel-county-md-911-dispatcher-tells-teen>

A Md. 911 operator is off the air after telling a distraught teen reporting a fatal car crash to 'stop whining.'

The girl called 911 after her father and soon-to-be stepmother were struck by a vehicle while changing a tire on the Baltimore-Washington Parkway.

Her father was killed, and his fiance was seriously injured.

Here's an excerpt of the conversation obtained by [WRC](#):

"OK, let's stop whining. OK, let's stop whining. It's hard to understand you... two people were struck, correct?" the operator said.

When the teen describes that her father and his fiancee are motionless and lying on the ground, the operator asks to talk to someone else.

"Is there someone else there I can talk to, because it's so hard..."

The teen then explains the only other conscious person is her young brother.

[Listen to call](#)

Russ Davis, a spokesman with the Anne Arundel County Fire Department, told the media the dispatcher used a poor choice of words.

On Wednesday, he told local reporters the dispatcher has been assigned duties where he will not interact with the public.

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**Firefighter Fitness Requires More than Pumping Iron**

<http://www.firehouse.com/news/12040952/sarah-apgar-firefighter-fitness-isnt-just-weight-lifting>



Sarah Apgar demonstrates one of the exercises designed specifically for firefighters.

**Photo credit:** Susie Nicol/Firehouse.com

On any given day in firehouses across the nation, you'll likely see firefighters pumping iron in gyms.

But, are those exercises really gearing them up for the various tasks associated with firefighting?

Most likely not, Sarah Apgar, a certified trainer and tri-athlete told students at Firehouse World.

The demands of firefighting require specialized training as certain parts of the body are impacted.

Proper exercising is known to reduce firefighter injuries. Apgar said she's astounded at the NFPA report that showed 65,880 firefighters were injured on duty in 2013.

She has created specific circuits that coincide with the jobs associated with firefighting such as ventilation techniques, hose handling, ladder and gear operations and search.

While all are important, she emphasized that it's vital that firefighters have the cardio and pulmonary effort required to do the job.

"When the alarm sounds, you're expected to go from 0 to 60 in minutes," she said, adding that it's a strain on the heart if not prepared.

Heart attacks have been the leading cause of death of firefighters for the past decade, she told the group.

"It's important you get a good cardio workout. Get the blood pumping," she said.

When throwing ladders, glutes get a workout as stability is essential.

She demonstrated various workout exercises while handling hoses and tools, and students were recruited to help.

Using a pike pole to pull a ceiling can cause severe injury if the firefighter isn't prepared for the repetitious work.

Forcible entry also places a strain on shoulders and forearms as the firefighter grips the tool.

And, crawling through a structure doing sweeping motions during a search requires focus on other parts of the body.

Apgar, an Army veteran and volunteer firefighter, has been working with FDNY academy instructors to teach rookies the skills.

"Fireground injuries are preventable."

Apgar said she hopes future fitness competitions involving firefighters will incorporate some of the skills actually used on the job. "It's not just about weights."

Low motion, weight load and cardio bursts must be kept in mind when firefighters train.

The only way to reduce the number of firefighter deaths and injuries is to train for the job – which, Apgar said, is more than pumping iron.

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### **Professional and Administrative Positions (\*\*Denotes New Posting)**

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#### **Fire Chief West Fargo Fire Department - West Fargo, ND**

The West Fargo Fire Department, West Fargo North Dakota, is accepting applications for the position of Fire Chief due to retirement. The City of West Fargo is one of the fastest growing cities in the state with a population estimated at over 30,000 residents. The West Fargo Fire Department is a combination department consisting of the Fire Chief and three paid Fire Inspection/Prevention Officers and 40 volunteers operating out of two stations. Our coverage area includes 15 square miles within the City of West Fargo and three townships surrounding the City.

Salary range is \$65,000-\$90,000, DOE, with an attractive benefits package. Applications will be accepted until Friday February 27, 2015 at 4:00 PM. Job description and application can be found at [www.westfargofire.org](http://www.westfargofire.org).

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#### **FSTS Regional Fire/Rescue Trainer Position**

**Regional Fire/Rescue Trainer** – NORTHEAST, 0.25 FTE. Position: conducts training sessions for fire fighters throughout the northeast region, and occasionally statewide; contributes to the development of comprehensive fire service training curriculum to meet the current and evolving community needs and certifications standards, coaches and mentors other fire service leaders; develops the strategic, tactical, and technical skills of fire/rescue service members and trainers; oversees the management of training services including supervising staff, contractors and volunteers, marketing the program, evaluating trainers and trainees and performing other duties as necessary to ensure that fire and rescue organizations are successful. This position requires extensive travel throughout the northeast part of the state and occasionally statewide, and handling and operating a variety of demonstration and educational equipment. For complete information and to apply, visit: <http://jobs.montana.edu:80/postings/1111>

**Screening begins January 9, 2015 and will continue until an adequate pool is established.**

For questions regarding the application process contact:  
Mary Fran San Soucie  
MSU Extension

PO Box 172230  
211 Culbertson Hall  
Bozeman, MT 59717-2230  
[maryfran@montana.edu](mailto:maryfran@montana.edu)

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**Apparatus & Equipment Exchange**

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**Cooke City Engine For Sale**





1978 Ford 900, 8.8 litre-gas Bean Automotive, price negotiable. Contact Chief Dale Dempsey 406-838-2077

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**1977 Tender for Sale**



cab over cargo star IH 1977

det. 6V92 deisel engine

auot trans. single axle, dual wheel. short wheel base makes turning around in small areas a snap!

aprox. 1800 gal. baffled water tank

also ext. ladder on pass. side, and a portable 1500gal. folding tank on driver side (vinyl needs some patching)  
scene lights, emergancy lights, siren, & pa

pto pump 3- 2 1/2" discharges:1 frt.,1 pass. side, 1 rear

2 mid ship 1-1/2" crosslays

rear filled or top hatch

lots of storage cabinets on both sides of truck

8" round dump in rear

Slow mover, but gets there. great for helping protect your property & buildings from wild fires, or to fill stock tanks, or water arenas

10,000.00 cash obo

to be sold in "as is"condition.  
more pic's can be emailed

call Joe: 406-578-2061

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Do you have some unused turnout gear that could benefit another department in Montana? Let us know so we can help spread the word! There are many departments that are in need of turnout gear or anything else fire/rescue related. Contact us at:

[fstdailylatest@montana.edu](mailto:fstdailylatest@montana.edu)

To post your advertisement today! There is no cost associated to advertise in the Latest for Montana department members.

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