



In this Edition:

Around Montana

[City Of Bozeman Now Searching For 2 Chiefs As Fire Chief Set To Retire](#)
[The Location/Time Changed For The STICO Class In Butte This Weekend](#)
[Montana Mutual Aid Agenda For This Weekend](#)
[Car Smacks Into Great Falls Restaurant](#)
[IAAI Training Opportunity Coming to Great Falls](#)

Around the Nation

[Two Canadian Firefighters Hurt in Explosion](#)
[Miss. Firefighters Confess to Arson](#)
[Embattled R.I. Chief Terminated by Fire Board](#)
[Conn. Arsonist Gets Life for Blaze That Killed Three](#)



=====

Around Montana

City Of Bozeman Now Searching For 2 Chiefs As Fire Chief Set To Retire

<http://www.kbzk.com/story/28214647/city-now-searching-for-2-chiefs-as-fire-chief-set-to-retire>



BOZEMAN - The City of Bozeman will soon have two vacancies at the helm of its two public safety departments. Chief of Police Ron Price retired a couple of months ago, now we've learned the Fire Chief, Jason Shrauger is also retiring.

Shrauger has been Chief for 7 years and with the department for 20. His last day is May 1st.

The search for a new Police Chief is well under way. The search for a new fire chief will be similar. City leaders say that even though looking for two chiefs at the same time is unusual, they're not concerned.

"It is unusual without question, but we have good people that are taking the place temporarily and we've had great success in our previous searches whether its public works, police, fire or others. There's no reason to think this is different. We pay well, we're an attractive community to work in," said City Commissioner Chris Mehl.

Deputy Chief Greg Megaard will be the interim Fire Chief. Deputy Chief Rich McClane is the acting police Chief.

[Top of the Document](#)

=====

The Location/Time Changed For The STICO Class In Butte This Weekend

Location: Justice Center 3615 Wynne ave.

Times: 0900 start. Anticipate course completion approximately 1400 Sunday.

[Top of the Document](#)

=====

Montana Mutual Aid Agenda For This Weekend

Montana Mutual Aid
Command, Strategy and Tactics
& Large Incident Management
Training Symposium

Meeting Agenda for February 28th and March 1st, 2015

Thanks to Sue Mergenthaler and the Eastgate Fire Department Crew for hosting

Saturday, February 28th, 2015

1000hrs Call to Order – Moment of Silence and Pledge of Allegiance

Recognition of Eastgate Fire Chief Ken Mergenthaler (Eastgate Fire Trustees)

Thank you to Sue Mergenthaler

Introductions of Guests and Hosts and Session Notes

1020hrs Montana Mutual Aid – Purpose and Approach

Montana Fire Service Mutual Aid - History Review, Additions, SWOT

Montana Mutual Aid - High Line, Brandon Brunelle

Montana Mutual Aid - West - Gary Mahugh, Ed Burlingame

Montana Mutual Aid - East - Jerry Prete

Montana Mutual Aid - North Central – Joe Zahara

Montana Mutual Aid – Southern Zone –

Montana DES Update - Director Brad Livingston , MT DES(invited)

Montana Mutual Aid Communications – Ed Burlingame

Montana Fire Services Training School – John Culbertson(invited)

Montana State Fire Chiefs Association – Rich Cowger(invited)

Montana State Volunteer Fire Fighters Association – Bob Hanson(invited)

Montana Mutual Aid - MT DNRC - Greg Archie, Dave Hamilton(invited)

Montana Mutual Aid – Command Support Operations, Watch Desk, staffing

Montana All Threat Intelligence Center – Bryan Costigan – Open Source Briefing

Montana Wildland Fire –Fire Behavior Estimates, Fire Chief Sonny Steiger (ret.), Wolf Creek(invited)

1230hrs Lunch - MMA SWOT Inputs

1300hrs Command Strategy and Tactics and Smart Practices – Flex Block

Report on Fire Dynamics Research – Dan Madrzykowski, P.E.- Lessons Learned – Dan a fire protection engineer with the Fire Fighting Technology Group of the National Institute of Standards and Technology in Maryland. Dan has been a friend of Montana Fire Fighters for many years. We welcome him back to Montana.

Applying NIST Fire Dynamics Research – A conversation about fire dynamics, strategy, tactics and command - Dan Madrzykowski This will be a concurrent conversation integrated with the NIST Fire Dynamics presentation.

1530 Break

1545 **Fire Dynamics Research, Strategy, Tactics and Command, continues**
Madrzykowski

1830hrs Dinner(working)

1900hrs **Fire Dynamics Research, Strategy, Tactics and Command, continues**
Madrzykowski

2030 Adjourn

Sunday, March 1st , 2015

0730hrs Breakfast

0800hrs **Fire Dynamics Research, Strategy, Tactics and Command, continues**
Madrzykowski,

0930hrs Break

1100hrs Montana Mutual Aid – Watch Desk, Opportunities Ed Burlingame, Brian Crandell

1130hrs Good of the Order, Thank Yous and Closings - Thank yous to Sue and Crew -
Thanks for Showing Up. Snacks for the road (thanks, Sue and crew)

Next MMA meeting - November 7th and 8th, 2015 at Eastgate FD(starts at 1000hrs)

Fire Chief Ken Mergenthaler - UAL FLT 93 – NWA FLT 253

[Top of the Document](#)

=====

Car Smacks Into Great Falls Restaurant

<http://www.krtv.com/story/28215692/car-smacks-into-great-falls-restaurant>

GREAT FALLS -- A car smacked into the front section of Good Time Charlie's restaurant -- also known as the R&R Casino -- in Great Falls on Thursday evening.

The incident happened at about 5:30 p.m.

Initial reports indicate that an elderly woman either mis-judged the distance between her car and the entry section of the restaurant, or may have accidentally hit the gas pedal instead of the brake pedal.

No serious injuries were reported.

The dollar amount of damage to the restaurant is not yet known.

The restaurant is located at 3801 10th Avenue South.

The Great Falls Police Department is investigating the incident.

[Top of the Document](#)

=====

IAAI Training Opportunity Coming to Great Falls

Electrical Aspects of Fire Investigation

Instructor: Dave Cusatis IAAI-CFI, IAAI-CI

Where: Great Falls Fire Rescue Charles C. Carrico Regional Training Facility, 1900 9th Street South Great Falls MT, 59405

When: Thursday March 12th, 2015 8am-5pm Lunch Provided

Description:

This course addresses the critical skills essential to the effective investigation and evaluation of fires involving potential electrical causes. This course utilizes state of the art techniques, practices, protocols and standards to assist investigators to properly and effectively evaluate electrical systems and associated components to ascertain their role in a fire.

Students will be provided with a basic knowledge of electrical faults and failures of electrical components and circuits, as well as a working knowledge of the National Electrical Code (NEC) and how it applies to the fire investigations.

The use of 'Arc Mapping' will also be discussed and how it can be effectively used to assist in fire origin determination. Participants will also be able to demonstrate a general knowledge of electricity, electrical circuits, systems and arc mapping principles through a series of instructor led 'hands-on' practical exercises.

Register online at firearson .com

Click on training and certifications.

Scroll down to classes and events.

Click on Electrical Aspects of Fire Investigation

Or to register by phone call 1-410-451-3473

Cost:

Montana Chapter Members: \$100.

Montana Non-Members: \$200.

[Top of the Document](#)

=====

Around the Nation**Two Canadian Firefighters Hurt in Explosion**

<http://www.firehouse.com/news/12049359/explosion-at-oakville-retirement-home-injures-two-firefighters>

An explosion injured two firefighters in Oakville, Ontario, Thursday evening. Crews were called to an alarm activation at the Palermo Village retirement home shortly after 7 p.m.

Firefighters were investigating a smoke odor in a basement electrical room when the explosion happened, according to [CBC News](#).

- [See Photos](#)

Officials said power was out in the area after the explosion.

The Oakville Professional Firefighters Association later tweeted; "The outpouring of well wishes has been amazing. Thank u everyone. Two of our FF's were transported to hospital with minor injuries."

[Top of the Document](#)

=====

Miss. Firefighters Confess to Arson

<http://www.firehouse.com/news/12049102/itawamba-county-firefighters-charged-with-arson>



Photo credit: Courtesy of WTVA

Three Itawamba County volunteer firefighters were arrested and charged with arson. Officials allege that Dennis Howery, and Tristen Loague, both 19, and Collin Jones, 20 entered a mobile home around 1 a.m. Sunday and set several fires. "They didn't put a whole lot of thought into this," Itawamba County Sheriff Chris Dickinson told WTVA.com. Their goal was to "be the heroes of their station." Officials said the firefighters called 911 from their cellphone and left footprints. A deputy was nearby when the fire was called in and arrived to find several small fires in the home.

"He [the officer] obviously realized we had an arson on our hands right away."

Deputies said the three confessed when asked about setting the fires.

"It may be even luckier that they were caught on their first attempt." The judge set bond at \$10,000 for each and said they could face 20 years in prison, plus fines.

"You don't have to start a fire yourself and then go put the fire out to prove that you're capable of doing this job," said Dickinson.

[Top of the Document](#)

=====

Embattled R.I. Chief Terminated by Fire Board

<http://www.firehouse.com/news/12049260/coventry-ri-fire-chief-fired>



COVENTRY, R.I. — The Coventry Fire District board voted unanimously on Wednesday to terminate suspended fire chief Paul Labbadia, saying his contract was null and void. Timothy Williamson, the board's legal counsel, told the members that Labbadia's contract, signed in 2009 with the board, was for five years and automatically renewed, while state law, he said, allows only a three-year contract. Therefore, he said, the contract was invalid and could be terminated without notice or cause.

Thomas DeSimone, a lawyer for Labbadia, argued that the contract is valid. Labbadia was suspended with pay in November following a WPRI-TV report in October with undercover video that allegedly showed Labbadia drinking alcohol and playing golf during the work day, using his fire district vehicle for recreation and smoking marijuana at a party in Providence.

The board in November hired lawyer J. William W. Harsch to review the chief's conduct and contract. Williamson said that the question of misbehavior was not addressed Wednesday. On Dec. 16, as Harsch's investigation neared completion, the board voted that Labbadia's suspension would be without pay. He made \$72,000 a year.

In executive session on Jan. 13, the board received the report from Harsch's investigation but decided not to act on it immediately. A meeting was scheduled for Jan. 27, but the blizzard interfered.

The meeting was rescheduled to Feb. 10. Fire District Board Chairman Frank Palin said Wednesday that the board expected to meet with Labbadia, but Labbadia didn't appear. Instead, he sent a lawyer, John J. DeSimone, a state representative from Providence who is also House majority leader.

During the Feb. 10 executive session, Palin said, Harsch gave DeSimone a copy of the report, and DeSimone was advised that the board would meet Wednesday to take action on it. Wednesday's agenda was devoted to discussion and action on the legality, lawfulness and validity of Labbadia's contract dated Jan. 28, 2009; on the disciplinary status of Labaddia and the status of his continued employment with the Coventry Fire District, and on whether to release a summary of Harsch's report.

Labbadia also has problems in North Providence, where he served as a firefighter. Mayor Charles A. Lombardi in January accused Labbadia of serving less than 20 years and then taking town-paid retirement benefits such as health insurance and cost-of-living pension supplements that are only for retirees who log two full decades of service. Lombardi said then that Labbadia had not responded to North Providence's request to work out a payment plan for about \$180,000 in retirement benefits to which he wasn't entitled. On Wednesday, G. Richard Fossa, the mayor's chief of staff, said the town has retained lawyer Anthony Traini "to conduct pre-litigation analysis to determine Labbadia's liability" and to assess the town's chances of recovering any money. Traini is also investigating the existence of any other potential civil defendants, North Providence Solicitor Anthony Gallone said Wednesday.

[Top of the Document](#)

=====

Conn. Arsonist Gets Life for Blaze That Killed Three

<http://www.firehouse.com/news/11858148/conn-arsonist-gets-life-for-blaze-that-killed-three>

NEW HAVEN -- After the man who set fire to a Wolcott Street home in 2011, killing three people, was sentenced Wednesday to life in prison, the victims' loved ones stood outside the courthouse and said, "We got justice."

U.S. District Court Judge Janet Bond Arterton imposed the sentence on Hector "Boom Boom" Natal, 29, of New Haven. A jury in 2013 convicted Natal of setting the fire, allegedly in retaliation for another tenant's failure to pay a drug debt.

Three people died in the March 9, 2011, Wolcott Street fire, including Wanda Roberson, 41, her 8-year-old son, Quayshaun Roberson, and her niece, Jaqueeta Roberson, 21.

"It is very clear the public needs protection -- that is the primary goal here," Arterton said. Several of the victims' loved ones, including some who survived the fire, attended the sentencing, and they embraced each other afterward.

Jamaica Roberson, Wanda's niece, told the judge, "We have all been waiting for this day and for closure."

Margaret Roberson, Wanda's mother, said to Natal, "You stole three lives. I don't understand you. You killed my babies. You could have gotten your money some other way."

Lawrence Alexander, Quayshaun's father, was tearful at times as he spoke in court.

"I am not going to see my son ever again, and for what? Because someone owed somebody some money," Alexander said. "Money means nothing compared to people's lives."

U.S. Attorney Deirdre Daly, in a sentencing memorandum submitted to the court, had asked the judge to impose life imprisonment.

"Hector Natal set fire to his neighbors' home knowing that two large families that included older women and young children were inside," Daly wrote. "In his own words, he admitted to torching the house because someone in the building 'owe(d) (him) bread' making clear that his goal was to violently retaliate against a customer over a drug debt."

Meanwhile, in asking for leniency, Natal's defense attorneys, Michael Sheehan of New Haven and Assistant Federal Public Defender Paul Thomas, noted their client suffers from an intellectual disability. They argued the judge should consider this in formulating a just sentence.

Natal's defense attorneys claimed he did not intend any loss of life and the scope of the fire was completely unintended and unforeseen.

Natal poured gasoline on the stairs, hallway and door thresholds to the apartments, which made it impossible for everyone to get out safely, according to Daly.

Daly has said the drug debt in question was about \$20.

"Arson resulting in three deaths -- including the death of a child and two innocent women -- is as egregious a crime as is imaginable," Daly wrote. "Committing such a crime over a petty drug debt makes it all the worse."

Daly said in court the government recognized Natal has a "mild intellectual disability" and that is why it didn't seek the death penalty.

Daly described the horrific scene, with people frantically trying to get out, and jumping from upper floors to escape. The three youngest children in the house, who ranged in age from 1 to 2 years old, were dropped into the arms of people who had just escaped and were waiting below, court documents show.

Prior to her death, Wanda Roberson was running through the house, trying to get everyone out.

According to prosecutors, Natal was a drug dealer who sold cocaine, crack cocaine, pills and marijuana.

"Natal ran his drug business with an iron fist and was singularly focused on collecting drug debts," Daly wrote.

Natal set fire to the two-family house at 48-50 Wolcott St. in New Haven in the early morning hours, when his victims were "particularly vulnerable as most were asleep and all were completely unaware of his impending attack," according to the U.S. attorney's office.

Daly said 17 people, including three toddlers, two pregnant women and two grandmothers, were inside at the time.

According to Daly, this wasn't an isolated incident, and Natal was captured on video about a month after the fire threatening to beat another customer, a blind man with multiple health issues, if the man failed to pay a drug debt.

Eight months before the fire, Natal interrupted the Roberson's backyard celebration of a child's first birthday party by setting off M-80s in the street. According to the government, when the family asked him to stop, Natal refused, used profanity and threats and said he was going to get a gun, court documents show. Prior to the fatal fire, Natal was caught trying to set fire to carpet in the same residence, but was interrupted when children saw him, and he fled, documents show.

As recently as April 2014, Natal admitted to prison officials to being a "Latin King for 14 years," Daly wrote, in a government sentencing memorandum.

Sheehan and Thomas noted in a pre-sentencing memorandum that their client is intellectually disabled. Natal received government benefits because of this disability.

"The consequences of this crime were terrible, and three people died in a fiery inferno," Sheehan said in court.

Sheehan added that while Natal was an adult at the time, his intellectual disability had "profoundly held him back."

Sheehan claimed life imprisonment would be "unduly harsh."

"Certainly, this case involved horror wrought by senseless tragedy, but that does not change the fact that Hector is intellectually disabled," defense attorneys wrote. "Was Hector profoundly limited at the time of these crimes? The evidence is overwhelming and supports no other conclusion but that he was."

Sheehan indicated that mental health professionals who have examined Natal, including those responsible for government benefits, "have concluded that he meets all recognized standards of intellectual disability."

"And thus his fund of knowledge, his level of understanding, his capacity to comprehend are all impaired," Sheehan said, in court documents. "This cannot be ignored and must be recognized as a mitigating factor in formulating a just sentence here."

When given an opportunity to address the judge in court, Natal declined to say anything. Several city firefighters attended the sentencing.

Firefighter Dan Coughlin told the judge, "That fire will stick out in my mind because of the loss of life and intensity."

FBI Special Agent in Charge Patricia Ferrick said in a statement, "While today's sentencing cannot bring back those lives or lesson the pain of the Robersons' loss, we hope that it will bring closure and healing for both the Roberson family and the Fair Haven community."

In January, Arterton sentenced Natal's father, Hector Morales of New Haven, to 174 months of imprisonment, following his conviction on charges that he acted as the getaway driver and attempted to cover-up his son's involvement in the fire.

[Top of the Document](#)

=====