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**Around Montana**

**Chief Scott Waldron Retires From Hebgen Basin Fire District**

[http://www.westyellowstonenews.com/news/article\\_6169db50-be0a-11e4-b641-9bbb2c5bd28b.html](http://www.westyellowstonenews.com/news/article_6169db50-be0a-11e4-b641-9bbb2c5bd28b.html)





Saturday evening over 100 firefighters traveled to West Yellowstone celebrate Chief Waldron's retirement. Scott was presented with a commemorative plaque from Hebgen Basin Fire District as well as several retirement gifts. He was also roasted by several colleagues and friends. The highlight of the evening was when he was presented with a walker complete with light bar and siren for his future responses.

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### **Save The Dates: FSTS Spring Training Symposium With Captain John Ceriello, FDNY**

May 2-3, 2015

John Ceriello is a 27-year veteran of the New York City Fire Department, 14 of those years was spent in Special Operations Command. He is a Captain and currently assigned to Division of Training. He has been an integral part in the FDNY & NIST Wind Impacted Fires Project that introduced stairwell pressurization, wind control devices and high-rise nozzles into the field. He also was part of the implementation of new concepts of ventilation and flow-path control to the FDNY. John is on Underwriter Laboratories advisory panel for a number of projects including their most recent research on horizontal and vertical ventilation.

#### Summary of the presentation-

There has been a lot being said lately in the American fire service on the research of fire behavior. A tremendous amount of information has been streaming across fire publications and on-line sources. It's a lot for the firefighter and chief to be able to absorb and process. John Ceriello has been involved with this research since 2006 when the FDNY reached out to NIST to better understand the effects of wind when a high-rise structure is on fire. With John's knowledge and time in the field the attendee will have a unique combination of science

and practical fire-ground knowledge to tap into. He will be able to express the true essence of what the latest research means to all levels of the fire service from probationary firefighter to Chief of the Department. John will use a multi media presentation to show how and more importantly why it's so important to take heed in the latest research so intelligent decisions can be made on the fire ground where it counts the most.

Location: Montana State University, Strand Union Building, Bozeman, MT

Cost: \$75 (includes lunch on Saturday)

Times: 0900-1700 Saturday, 0800-noon Sunday.

\*Parking permit will not be required; ample parking available.

To Register, Please visit: <http://www.montana.edu/wwwfire/register.php>

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**Frenchtown Rural Fire Mutual Aids With Arlee Volunteer Fire For Hay On Fire**

<https://www.facebook.com/FrenchtownFire>



FRFD was called for a Mutual Aid response with [Arlee Volunteer Fire Department](#). A tender and engine responded to assist with a hay fire. Upon our arrival the truck with the bale on fire was removed from the barn and FRFD units were able to cancel shortly after arrival. This fire had a lot of potential to burn down the barn and everything in it, great save Arlee!

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## Montana State Volunteer Firefighters Association Is Now On Facebook



You can check them out here: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Montana-State-Volunteer-Firefighters-Association/817422958351383?sk=timeline>

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### Legislative Update - Week 8

#### The past week in review:

**HB483** (Raising pension benefit in VFCA) Had a hearing on Tuesday, February 24th, in front of the House Appropriations committee. The bill would raise the retirement benefit, for volunteer firefighters covered by the VFCA, to \$175 per month. The bill passed out of committee and then passed 3rd reading in the House of Representatives. The bill now heads to the Senate for a hearing. The Montana Fire Alliance supports the bill.

**HB504** (Revise laws related to consolidation of rural fire districts and areas) Passed out of the House of Representatives, on Friday, and has been transmitted to the Senate. This bill would allow fire districts to consolidate with fire service areas. The Montana Fire Alliance supports the bill.

**HB555** (Generally revise laws related to volunteer firefighters) Also passed the House of Representatives, on Friday, and has been transmitted to the Senate. The bill would raise the allowance, including a stipend or per diem, that a volunteer firefighter could earn, from \$300 to \$3,000 per calendar year. This bill only affects volunteer firefighters covered by the VFCA pension administered by MPERA. The Montana Fire Alliance supports the bill.

**SB352** (Create offense related to assault on healthcare and emergency providers) Had a hearing on Monday, February 23rd. The bill would provide for a felony charge against anyone assaulting a healthcare worker or emergency services provider. The bill was tabled in committee and is now probably dead. The Montana Fire Alliance supported the bill.

**SB47** (Increase assessments on classified forest land) Passed out of committee, on Tuesday, after being stuck for weeks. This bill is being brought by the DNRC in an effort to increase the

statutory caps on direct protection fees assessed on properties served by the DNRC. The Montana Fire Alliance supported the bill.

**Hearings and issues this upcoming week:**

The Legislature is on transmittal break and will reconvene on Thursday, March 5th, at 1:00 PM.

To follow the Montana Fire Alliance's "bills of interest" go to [www.mtfirealliance.org/legislative.html](http://www.mtfirealliance.org/legislative.html)

Respectfully Submitted  
Leonard Lundby  
Montana Fire Alliance - Legislative Liaison

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**Car Fire In Great Falls**

<http://www.krtv.com/story/28223196/car-fire-reported-in-great-falls>



GREAT FALLS -- Emergency crews are at the scene of a reported car fire in Great Falls. KRTV viewer Nelson Spivey shared a photo with us and says that it is along the 600 block of 4th Avenue NW.

There are no reports of injuries or damage to nearby homes.  
The cause of the fire has not yet been determined.  
We will update you if we get more information.

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(UPDATE, 2:45 pm) The fire broke out just before 2 p.m. in the apartment parking lot. No one was in the vehicle at the time and firefighters say the car was not running. A mechanical malfunction in the engine compartment is believed to be at fault.

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### **Open Burning Begins In Montana, DEQ Reminds People Of Burning Regulations**

<http://www.ktvq.com/story/28233549/open-burning-begins-in-montana-deq-reminds-people-of-burning-regulations>

HELENA - Open burning opened in Montana Sunday and the Department of Environmental Quality is reminding people about the regulations associated with open burning. Items permitted for burning include non-toxic materials such as plant life and wood. Not allowed is plastic, rubber, dead animals, and chemicals; just to name a few. Permits are required and depending on the county you live in, there might be specific rules you must follow before burning. Lewis and Clark County Sheriff Leo Dutton noted that abandoning your controlled burn could mean trouble for you and others. Dutton said, "If it starts a fire and burns someone's house down, you're liable. If it starts a forest fire, you're liable. And unfortunately we've had that happen but remember if you start the fire, you're responsible until it's cold and out." Counties requiring direct permission before burning include Cascade, Flathead, Lincoln, Missoula, and Yellowstone. For more information, you can visit DEQ's Air Quality page [here](#).

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### **Snowmobilers Rescued Near West Yellowstone After Becoming Lost, Stuck**

<http://www.kxlf.com/story/28220113/snowmobilers-rescued-near-west-yellowstone-after-becoming-lost-stuck>

WEST YELLOWSTONE - After spending several hours stuck and lost, a pair of snowmobilers were returned safely Thursday after being rescued near West Yellowstone. Gallatin County Sheriff's Search and Rescue in West Yellowstone and Forest Service Personnel responded to a report Thursday night of two snowmobilers from Georgia who were stuck and lost. Dispatch was able to retrieve location data from the 911 call placed by the men. Team members responded to the area of the GPS coordinates and were able to locate the snowmobilers. The men had been unable to build a fire because they lacked the supplies to do so. Team members then assisted the snowmobilers by extracting one of their snowmobiles and escorted them back to West Yellowstone.

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### **Lost Snowshoers Rescued In Hyalite Canyon**

<http://www.kpax.com/story/28236262/lost-snowshoers-rescued-in-hyalite-canyon>

BOZEMAN - The Gallatin County Search and Rescue team helped two snowshoers to safety Saturday night after the men found themselves lost in Hyalite Canyon. According to a news release, the backcountry search started at 8:56 p.m. after two men lost in the area of History Rock Trail called 911. The men, one in his mid-30's and the other in his early 40's, were visiting from out of state and left the History Rock Trailhead on snowshoes around noon. Around 4 p.m. they took a couple of snowboard runs and shortly after 5 p.m. started back down towards the trailhead. The men told deputies that somewhere along the way they strayed off course and ended up on a logging road. They decided to call 911 when darkness fell and they were without flashlights or headlamps. SAR volunteers rode in on snowmobiles and were able to locate the two men about 10:30 p.m. They were cold and law enforcement said the only "injuries" they suffered were slightly bruised egos.

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### **Around the Nation**

#### **Winds Fan 150-acre Fire in Spokane County**

<http://www.firehouse.com/news/11863680/winds-fan-150-acre-fire-in-spokane-county>

The fire season jumped out of the starting gate early Saturday afternoon with a 150-acre wildland fire near Downs Lake in the far southwestern corner of Spokane County. Gusty winds fanned the flames, making it difficult for Spokane County Fire District 3 firefighters to battle the blaze. The fire was contained to Miller Ranch, a hunting ranch located at 25010 W. Martin Road. "If it wasn't windy, it wouldn't have been that bad," District 3 duty officer Arron Hess said. The wind and dry conditions prompted the Washington Department of Natural Resources to declare a burn ban for this weekend in Spokane, Stevens and Lincoln counties. The cause of the fire is under investigation but early indications are that it may be related to shooting firearms, Hess said. Firefighters found no evidence of exploding targets, which sparked a massive fire near Fishtrap Lake last summer. Brush fires and wildland fires are typically rare this time of year, and a fire this large this early in the season is even rarer, Hess said. "The last two winters have been very, very mild," he said. "If things do continue this way it could be a very long (fire) season." Firefighters in Stevens County Fire District 1 also responded to a brush fire on Bluebird Way in the Suncrest area Saturday, though it was only about 2 acres in size. The district also responded to a small brush fire about two weeks ago, which caught firefighters by surprise. "This is the earliest anyone can recall," the district posted on its Facebook page after the first fire.

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## **Pa. Firefighters Find Kids Lost in Woods**

<http://www.firehouse.com/news/11863675/pa-firefighters-find-kids-lost-in-woods>

Two children lost in the woods in Hazle Township Sunday during a snowstorm were found by firefighters within 30 minutes.

Hazle Township Fire Chief Scott Kostician said the siblings -- ages 11 and 14 -- left their home in the Harwood section of Hazle Township and entered the woods south of Old Street, intent on ice skating on a frozen stripping pit. However, the youths lost their way and called for help. Firefighters from Hazle Township and Harwood Fire Company were dispatched around 2:30 p.m. and mobilized at the Harwood Fire Station on Old Street. They set out through the woods on quads and found the children about 30 minutes later, placing them on quads and bringing them to safety. The children were found about half a mile from the fire station, according to a firefighter who assisted with the rescue.

Kostician said the children reported having cold extremities and were evaluated by American Patient Transport Systems Inc. upon being released to their mother.

He also warned that skating on a stripping pit is extremely dangerous as the temperatures of the water may not be cold enough to ensure it is frozen through and could pose the risk of drowning.

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## **New Tenn. Department Emerges as Allegations Swirl**

<http://www.firehouse.com/news/11863641/new-tenn-department-emerges-as-allegations-swirl>

For the first time in 35 years, most of the fire calls in McMinn County Fire District 9 will not be handled by the Union Grove Volunteer Fire Department.

At its meeting on Feb. 23, the McMinn County Commission voted unanimously in favor of the formation of a new fire company -- the North McMinn Fire and Rescue Department. J.W. McPhail, county commissioner for District 2, said the resolution, which is currently in Nashville awaiting approval by the state's Department of Commerce and Insurance, will officially recognize the new fire department and dissolve Union Grove.

According to McPhail, the decision to form a new fire department came after reports of longstanding problems with Union Grove, as well as a need to upgrade the department's equipment and capabilities.

"The status quo up there is not acceptable," McPhail said.

McPhail said complaints included reports that Union Grove wasn't taking proper care of the county-owned firetruck in its care, which McPhail claims was often left outside. Coupled with a recent arson at Union Grove Chief Alvin Shoemaker's antique-car repair garage in Niota, Tenn. -- where the fire truck was kept -- and the indictment of Union Grove's secretary/treasurer for embezzling \$5,000, the county decided it was time for a fresh start.

"This is highly unusual for the county to step in and get involved," McPhail said. "We just want the best fire department that these people are entitled to up here."

McPhail said he and County Mayor John Gentry approached Shoemaker eight years ago with the complaints. He said Shoemaker told him he was unaware of any complaints, but would try to fix the problems. But, McPhail said, their suggestions went ignored.

Shoemaker, who established Union Grove with his father in the early 1980s, disputes the allegations. He said the firetruck received maintenance every week, and he remembers no such meeting with McPhail.

"He's dreaming," Shoemaker said. "He's never been up here. He doesn't even live in this district."

Despite Shoemaker's protests, the county took Union Grove's engine and brush truck away, moving them to a temporary location on County Road 285.

Until the new fire department is chartered, several area fire departments, including Union Grove, have been responding to calls. Shoemaker was offered the combination to the lock at the truck's new location, but he declined. He said he didn't want to be held responsible if anything happened to the truck.

Shoemaker and fellow Union Grove supporters didn't go down without a fight. They made a presentation at the Feb. 23 commission meeting raising concerns over the new fire department's location, which Shoemaker said has led to long response times. But, he said, the commission's decision had already been made.

"It was all cut and dry to start with," said Shoemaker. "They didn't listen to what we said." Al Bobich, who is the training captain for North McMinn Fire and Rescue, said there's no animosity toward Union Grove on his end, and said Shoemaker deserves recognition or at least a plaque for his years of service to the community. Bobich said he has even encouraged Union Grove members to join the new department, and said some have expressed interest. "We're trying to provide the community with an updated fire and rescue department," Bobich said. "Whatever the community wants, that's what we'll provide for them."

Once chartered, North McMinn Fire and Rescue will get the new \$250,000 firetruck once promised to Union Grove as an upgrade.

As for Shoemaker, 72, he says his firefighting days are over. While it's not the way he would have chosen to go out, he said, his wife has wanted him to give it up for health reasons anyway, and he's satisfied with his efforts.

"I've done this for 35 years, and I think I've served the community well," Shoemaker said. "But I'll be glad when it's over. It's a burden off my back. I wish the new department luck, 'cause they're gonna need it."

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### **Minn. City Rethinks Inspections After Downtown Fires**

<http://www.firehouse.com/news/11862881/string-of-business-fires-makes-winona-review-fire-inspector-position>

A trio of fires in Winona's historic downtown has worried some business owners and city officials who wonder whether the Fire Department ought to bring back its inspector. Over the past 18 months, three big blazes have erupted downtown. The first, in September 2013, destroyed the Winona Islamic Center and damaged neighboring buildings. The cause: electrical. Then fires burned at KidSport Gymnastics in September and at E. 3rd and Walnut streets in February. The causes of those two fires are still undetermined.

"It certainly concerns me," said Mayor Mark Peterson. "We don't know the cause of the two fires, yet. We don't know if we had more fire inspectors whether that would have prevented these fires."

But the City Council should consider reinstating a fire inspector position cut in 2009, Peterson said. "I think it's a discussion we should have."

At a February council meeting, Jason Theusch, assistant chief for fire prevention, announced that the department would step up its inspections, taking a look at all 703 properties that fall under its responsibility this year.

"We are going to try and get more aggressive with our inspections downtown," he added. After city budget cuts led to the elimination of the fire inspector, the Fire Department inspected far fewer buildings, data show.

The number of regular inspections dropped from 187 in 2008 to just 19 in 2009, according to the department's annual reports. In 2013, the department did 69 regular inspections. Re-inspections, too, fell dramatically. And the number of violations that were corrected dropped from 391 in 2008 to 64 in 2013 -- a decline of 84 percent.

"During the budget crunches we've experienced, typically the first place that gets cut is fire prevention," Fire Chief Curt Bittle said by phone last week. "I get it and I understand it.

"It's a lot easier to count firefighters on a truck at a scene."

But it "just isn't realistic" to hire new staff right now, Bittle said. The city doesn't have the funds to boost the budget of any department, he said. So he will dedicate more of the department's 21 full-time staffers' time to prevention. Theusch will spend two days each week doing inspections and firefighters will contribute, as well.

"We've adjusted how we do business ..." Bittle said, "and we're slowly creeping back up to that pre-2009 level."

Blooming Grounds Coffee House, next door to the Islamic Center, suffered smoke and water damage after that fire, reopening nine months later. Its owner, Amy Jo Marks, said the number of fires in recent months is "odd."

"One: OK. Two: coincidence, maybe," she said. "Three: What's going on?"

Older buildings in Winona's downtown district are "not less safe or more prone to catching on fire," Bruce West, state fire marshal, said by e-mail. "When a larger or older building starts on fire, it tends to draw more attention because the city is losing a part of its history or a noticeable building in its downtown.

"These fires are also larger because of the building's size and fuel load."

Mayor Peterson praised the Fire Department for containing the big blazes. It's remarkable, he said, that there were no injuries or fatalities.

But Peterson, who is also director of the Winona County Historical Society, said that because of his passion for historic buildings, "it's just painful when I see these buildings burn."

After going inside the site of the most recent fire at 151 E. 3rd Street -- home to the Mason Jar bar and, above it, apartments -- Peterson says he is optimistic that the building will be saved. The KidSport building, too, "has not been torn down yet." And the Islamic Center was a one-story building sandwiched by two-story structures. Peterson hopes an infill project will take place there.

"Three buildings are gone, for sure," he said. "But in the end, our downtown may be better."

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### **Entry Level Positions (\*\*Denotes New Posting)**



**\*\*[Firefighter](#)** Department of Natural Resources Conservation  
Lincoln, Montana  
Listed: Feb, 25 Full-time



**\*\*[Firefighter](#)** Montana Department of Natural Resources  
Kalispell, Montana  
Listed: Feb, 23 Full-time



**\*\*[Forestry Technician](#)** United States Forest Service

Missoula, Montana  
Listed: Feb, 19 Full-time



\*\*[Firefighter](#) Nampa Fire Department  
Nampa, Idaho  
Listed: Feb, 22 Full-time

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