A strategy for protecting lives and saving money!

Fire Services

TRAINING ADVISORY COUNCIL

Remember the recent fire seasons?

Here's an opportunity to minimize such cost!

EXHIBIT 20
DATE 2/8/2005
HB

Montana Fire Services Training Advisory Council

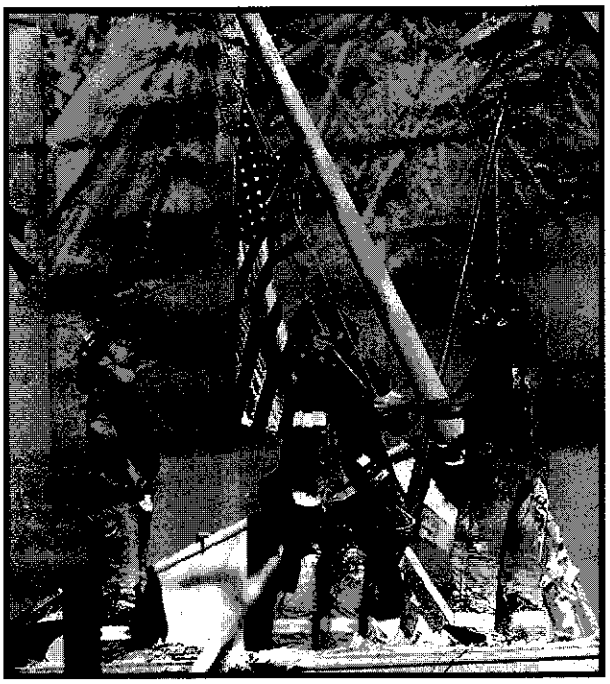
Gary Mahugh, Chair
Telephone: (406) 755-9535
Kalispell
Tony Cate
Telephone: (406) 728-1353
Missoula
William E. Perrin
Telephone: (406) 777-3937
Stevensville
Mike McCloskey
Telephone: (406) 771-9317
Great Falls
John Morrow
Telephone: (406) 844-3557
Lakeside
Pete Bishop
Telephone: (406) 883-5597
Polson
Scott Waldron
Telephone: (406) 626-4668
Frenchtown
Linda Williams
Telephone: (406) 622-3653
Fort Benton
Gar Wood
Telephone: (406) 739-4224
Loma

Please feel free to call members of the Advisory Council with your questions or concerns.

Emergencies strike Montana communities every day. The members of Montana's fire and rescue services are the first line of defense in an emergency and the first help to arrive at the scene. Their actions can make the difference in life or death, an insignificant brush fire or a ten-thousand acre 'Project fire.' We expect fire and rescue professionals to bring order from chaos and we depend on their effectiveness to keep Montana citizens safe during emergency situations. These heroic citizens give selflessly of their time and routinely put their own safety at risk to protect us. They number more than 12,000, and only a few of them are paid, 96% are citizen volunteers.

The responsibility for providing training to fire fighters is shared by the Fire Services Training School and the organization to which the responder belongs. The Fire Training Advisory Council is concerned that Montana fire fighters may not be getting the training they deserve and need. With current staffing, the Fire Services Training School is able to provide quality training to less than 50% of Montana's 432 fire companies.

The Fire Services Training School (FSTS) is an educational outreach program of Montana State University's Extension Service. The mission of FSTS is to build capacity in local governments for protecting the life safety of citizens, their property, the tax base and infrastructure from harm caused by unwanted fires, accidents, injuries, hazardous materials incidents and other emergencies.



Challenge

OSHA

OSHA mandates training for fire fighters. Large fines have been imposed on fire departments for failure to comply with OSHA rules.

Revenue Limits / Service Fees

In 1986, Initiative 105 froze the ability of local fire service organizations to generate additional revenue from tax funds. During the same year, FSTS was required to recover a share of its operating costs through fees for service.

Training Barriers

Fire fighters must be recruited, trained and retained to ensure their effectiveness during a local emergency. An average turnover of 10% annually in Montana's fire service organizations presents a challenge for training.

Opportunity

Effective Fire Fighters

Competent fire services can suppress wildfires in their incipient stage. The taxpayer spends an average of 3.5 million dollars annually on "project fires." If the competence levels of local fire services could be raised as a result of additional training, and the number of project fires reduced, the savings could be in the millions of dollars annually for federal and state agencies.

Training Materials & Seminars

Although local governments have the option of maintaining their own training libraries, the materials at the FSTS Resource Center ensure access to the latest in resources and no duplication of materials at taxpayer expense. A training curriculum specifically for Montana fire fighters was produced by FSTS and is provided to fire organizations at direct cost which is approximately $1,000 less than others on the market.

Although technical seminars are available out of state, the FSTS provides these opportunities to Montanans at a much lower cost. Total savings to participants in FSTS seminars in a recent year was estimated to be $203,000.

Training opportunities made available to local fire service organizations by FSTS instructors and uncompensated coaches also represent substantial savings.

Insurance premiums paid by property owners are directly affected by the training and equipment available to their local fire service organization. Property insurance premiums are lowered if high quality local fire organizations are available to respond to emergencies.

FSTS SAVES $$ and LIVES!

In Plentywood alone, the fire district was able to save its citizens approximately $200,000 in annual insurance premiums. The Plentywood Fire Chief attributes the savings to the training provided by the FSTS over a 10-year period.

Fire Training Saves Woman's Life

By Shannon Burkdoll, News - Argus November 30, 2002

Without the help of a Central Montana volunteer fire crew, a Billings woman would have died in October. On October 29, 23-year old Leslie Fey was involved in a head-on collision four miles west of Geyser while traveling south on Highway 87. "I've no doubt that our training and extrication equipment saved that woman's life," said Fire Chief Bruce Evans.

Dave Holder of the Montana State Fire Service Training School in Great Falls said the Geyser Volunteer Fire Department will encounter more automobile accidents than structure fire calls in a year's time. Therefore, the Geyser crew is participating in a four-part training series to learn new methods of extracting victims from a variety of automobile accidents. "Sunday's training session was the third part of the series and one of the most advanced classes," said Evans.

Meeting the Need

The goal of the Fire Training Advisory Council is to get every Montana fire fighter enough training to be safe and perform effectively at emergencies. A few communities are self sufficient and have little to no need for support from the Fire Training School. Most need training help. We need to reach 80% of Montana's fire service organizations with meaningful training on a quarterly basis. To reach that goal, six regional trainers need to be located strategically throughout Montana.

The Montana Legislature has gone a long way toward implementing our plan. Two of the last three legislative sessions resulted in funding for a new trainer. We are now at 4 trainers, or 2/3rds of the trainers called for by the plan. With the current funding, field trainers are traveling extensively to effectively train 216 fire organizations per year. More trainers will allow driving time to be converted into training time!

We thank the legislators who have supported our fire services in the past. We look forward to your continuing support and to working with newly elected legislators as we provide taxpayers with the best value for their tax dollars.

Where We Are → Where We Need To Be

$90.48 = COST PER FIRE FIGHTER TRAINED TODAY

50% of Local Fire Organizations Effectively Served
3,000 Trainees per Trainer!

63% of Local Fire Organizations Effectively Served
2,400 Trainees per Trainer!

Our Goal

80% Local Fire Organizations Effectively Served
2,000 Trainees per Trainer!

$82.14 COST PER FIRE FIGHTER TRAINED AFTER IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN.

"With the help of FSTS, our Department has achieved the best insurance ratings for any volunteer Fire Department in the nation!"

Tom Wood, Chief
Libby Fire District

Training for Safer Communities!

"The Fire School has a greater impact on life safety than anything else the state does."

Scott Waldron, Chief
Frenchtown Fire District

Services Delivered by Montana's FSTS

Curriculum Development ~ Designed to meet the needs of Montana's fire services, an innovative approach to training fire fighters was recently developed by the FSTS and has received national acclaim.

Technical Seminars ~ FSTS provides a series of technical seminars for the professional development of fire service specialists. Recent seminar topics include Advanced Fire Investigation, Code Enforcement, Conducting Live Fire Training Exercises, Tactical Operations, Building Construction, Instructor Training, Fire Service Administration, and Leadership Development.

Training Delivery ~ FSTS has a training presence in 216 of Montana's 432 fire fighting organizations in an average year. Trainers spend their time in communities all over Montana providing training.

Emergency Services Library ~ Over 1500 loans are made annually to Montana's fire services from the extensive FSTS library of fire and EMS related materials. An annual membership fee is charged to help fund this service. This central service saves thousands of dollars for communities.

Newsletters ~ Monthly, weekly and daily newsletters are distributed by the School to help keep fire fighters apprised of training opportunities and new developments.

Professional Certification ~ The FSTS testing program is accredited by the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress and the National Board for Fire Service Professional Qualifications. The certification recognizes professional competence measured against standards for various levels and specialties.

Mobile Training Labs ~ Three mobile training laboratories are utilized by trainers. The first is a large trailer used to train fire fighters in the use of personal protective equipment and rescue techniques in a smoke maze. The second affords 'live fire fighting' in communities statewide and the third provides live fire fighting involving flammable gases.

Coaches Network ~ FSTS identifies and trains experienced fire fighters to be coaches. They consist of a smoke maze, a live burn prop, and a flammable gas prop. These valuable training aids are transported all over Montana for use by communities.

National Fire Academy/FSTS Partnership ~ Together, FSTS and the National Fire Academy (NFA) bring NFA courses to Montana. Nine courses are delivered annually in Montana by NFA instructors.

EVIDENCE THAT TRAINING MATTERS

SCORE

Fire Department	A	B
FSTS TRAINING	no	yes
INJURIES RECEIVED	8	0

The Alberton Canyon Chlorine Incident . . . An illustration of the importance of training. Of the first two fire companies to respond, only one had received training from FSTS on hazardous materials - members of the other company ended up at a hospital.