



EXHIBIT 22
DATE 2-8-05
HB _____

AUGUSTA VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

P.O. BOX 151
AUGUSTA, MONTANA 59410

February 8, 2005

Dear Committee Members:

My name is Brad McBratney and I am the Chief of the Augusta Volunteer Fire Department (AVFD). We are an all volunteer fire department with approximately 20 members. We respond to 20 to 25 calls per year with the majority of those calls being wildland fires and Emergency Medical Service (EMS) assist.

When I first joined the department approximately seventeen years ago, the departments training consisted of occasionally taking the trucks out and practicing pumping or burning an old shed that some one wanted to dispose of. Since that time, we have begun utilizing the services of the Fire Services Training School (FSTS). The services that we regularly utilize are the training materials available through the library and the field training opportunities of our local trainer, Jason Caughey. Our training attendance has risen from four to five people attending a training session to 12 to 14 people participating when we utilize the field trainers from the FSTS.

Not only have we seen an increase in attendance, but the real value of this training has been in the quality of training we are receiving, the increased safety of our members and the public, and the increased efficiency of our members in performing their assigned duties. Jason is able to bring a level of professionalism, experience, and understanding of our departments needs that a video tape or other outside trainers usually don't bring. Jason tailors his presentations to our needs, abilities, and available equipment and does so with a very positive attitude. Adding the additional full time equivalents (fte's) that the FSTS is requesting would give us more access to the skills and professional training that Jason brings to our department.

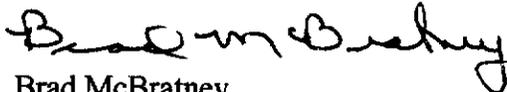
I know that many of the departments in the state are much like the AVFD. Adding these fte's will increase the training available to all the small departments around the state that provide fire and medical assistance to the vast majority of the state of Montana.

One example of the kind of training and the value of that training that the FSTS brings to Augusta is the burn trailer. The first time that I was called upon to enter a burning structure as a volunteer fireman, I almost had a very devastating outcome. I was going to

enter a burning building, at night, as a team of one. I had my self contained breathing apparatus and what personal protective equipment available to me at the time on, opened the back door of the structure, and was about to take the first step into the building. My face mask fogged up with the heat and steam coming from the building, so I was essentially walking blind into the structure. One of the other department members saw that the floor immediately inside the structure had burned through and stopped me before I stepped into that burned out hole and possibly into the basement. Fortunately for me this had a positive outcome. As a result of Jason training us with the FSTS burn trailer, I now know the proper and safest way to enter a burning structure. My first night on that burning structure was far from correct and could have had deadly results.

As mentioned earlier, EMS assist calls are a big portion of our call volume with car accidents being the major reason for those calls. Jason provided us with vehicle extrication training that will make us much more efficient in getting a patient out of a car and able to do so with less risk to the patient and to the department members. Jason tailored the class to the equipment we have and made suggestions on the most effective equipment for when we upgrade our existing extrication equipment. This training may very well help save a accident victims life or reduce the risk to our department members.

I thank you for your time and appreciate your considering the FSTS' request for additional field training personnel. These field trainers affect the well being of all Montanan's.



Brad McBratney
Augusta Volunteer Fire Department
Chief