

STATE COMBINATION FIRE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION MEETING

August 18, 2017

The meeting of the State Combination Fire Chiefs Association was held on Friday, August 18, 2017, in the training room at Station #1, 191 N. Pagosa Blvd., Pagosa Springs, Colorado.

Attendance

Randy Larson, Pagosa FPD, Tom Aurnhammer, Los Pinos FPD, Kristy Olme, North-West FPD, Rob Jones, Colorado River Fire Rescue, Steve Ellis, Colorado State Division of Fire Prevention and Control, Tanner Hutt, Colorado Division of Fire Prevention & Control, Dan Wonket, Representative of VFIS Insurance for Volunteer Firemen in the State of Colorado, Karn Macht, Deputy Chief, PFPD, Shirley Brinkmann, Executive Admin Asst., PFPD, Randy Johnson, Fire Fit.

1. Welcome

Chief Larson welcomed everyone to the Pagosa Fire Protection District. Each attendee introduced themselves.

2. **Chief Larson** gave the history of PFPD and stated the District covered 316 square miles of Archuleta County. He explained, in addition to the county, PFPD covered the area to the top of Wolf Creek pass and to the top of Yellow Jacket pass, which is at the east and west ends of Archuleta County. He announced that PFPD was a combination department with a paid Deputy Chief, 3 Captains, 1 Lieutenant, 1 part-time firefighter, working in operations, 1 part-time firefighter that works for the inspection department, 2 paid administrative staff and 47 volunteers. He further stated we had 7 stations scattered around the district the furthest being around 32 miles from Station 1.

3. **Steve Ellis**, Mike Morgan's representative from the Colorado Division of Fire Prevention & Control, announced:

- The Colorado Division of Fire Prevention & Control will be hiring a Chief of Staff to start at the first of the year. He stated they had over a hundred applications and have narrowed it down to 30 applicants for the interviewing process.
- Upcoming meetings on August 28, September 8 and October 27, 2017.
- Briefed the Fire Chiefs on the Wildland fire season and the Emergency Fire Fund system. After talking about, Western Colorado being hit hard by some Wildland fires, he encouraged the Fire Chiefs to work with the Wildfire Matters committees and give them ideas on how they should move forward. He announced Type 3 engines were in the process of being equipped and he is hopeful to have them ready for October 1st. The Type 3 engines will be placed in Rifle, Alamosa, Fairmont Fire District and Golden.
- Requested that the State Chiefs will continue to support them for an additional 2 additional drivers so they can start moving the Live Fire Training Trailers more efficiently.
- The Multi-Mission Aircrafts went out to Oregon and Montana. The Single Engine Air Tankers are in Minnesota and Rifle, Colorado. One of the engines in Fort Collins was

converted to a 5-person squad. The 2 helicopters, that were switched from Tech 3 to Tech 2, have been used for Search and Rescue, all hazard events and a bunch of wildland fires, one of which was in California and the other in Craig, Colorado.

4. Larson suggested that a “round table” discussion be held:

- Kristy Olme stated the Leadership conference is in the second week of October and it is also fire Prevention Week. A total of 47 people have registered to attend the full conference and half of the housing is reserved. She asked the Fire Chief's to get the word out.
- Rob Jones stated they had been busy with combined calls over the last year. The acuity of the calls continues to go up. Last month they had 10 fatalities on the interstate. CSP investigators involved had stated they had never seen anything like it in the prior years. They are expanding the interfacility transport, and have just hired 4 paramedics.
- Tanner Hutt announced the Certified Burner Course will be held in Cortez, October 16-18, for anyone who is interested. He is hoping to coordinate a natural burn on the 19th. They are working on an agreement between the Forest Service which will allow reimbursement for the operators. He potentially has a prescribed burn above Dolores.
- Steve Ellis stated they are working with the Workman's Compensation group in the State of Colorado, who never had firefighters before in terms of burn protocols. They have been asking the Forest Service to work on burn protocols for the last few years. He announced it might come down to the State chiefs to seek additional support on how burn protocols might work.
- Kristy Olme stated for North-West FPD it has been all about Wildland. They have 8 deployments for the season. Their Type 3 has been out all summer and is in Oregon now. They are ordering another Type 3 and it should be by the first of the new year they will have it. They will be asking for a mill levy vote in November, the first one in 14 years. They are the only district in the county that runs paid crews 24/7 and has the second lowest mill levy in the county.
- Karn Macht reported that PFPD is doing more work this year with 2 less firefighters. PFPD is waiting to see what happens with the Gallagher amendment kicking in. With less staff the Chief and himself have had to ride back seat in the truck. PFPD has had a couple of structure fires in the last 2 months. Wolf Creek calls have been approximately a truck a week that has crashed on the divide since March. He has been trying to talk to CDOT and CO State Patrol to try and figure out something to educate the drivers. Larson added that there are signs at both ends of the pass, motion activated lighted signs for the main corners, however, by the time they get to that point and they have missed that second truck ramp they are in trouble. Larson stated education is the biggest part, most of the ones that have an accident are first timers coming through. PFPD has been lucky not to have too much as far as HazMat problems up there.
- Tom Aurnhammer reported that it has been incredibly busy. Los Pinos when through and survived the ISO visit and came out of it with a good rating. They went to a 5 rating throughout the district. They have completed their succession plan, a plan for those in

the organization that want to step up. His deputy Chief has been on board for a year and is working on the Strategic Plan. They have wrapped up an assessment of the values of the organization, redoing the mission statement and incorporating that in the draft. PSI came in and wrapped up cross service analysis. He stated they contract with the Southern Ute Tribe to provide fire protection for the reservation. The contract is getting ready for renegotiation. They are redoing the Personnel Policy. Their new Type 3 came in. They have been deployed in Nevada and are in Oregon now.

- Randy Larson announced PFPD has had a lot of changes in the last couple of years. They have redone the budget process and are getting the program Captains involved. The goal is to ask for a mill levy increase with the idea of putting on 24/7 staffing. We have 4 grants out with FEMA. We are asking for a Type 3 Engine PPE, a training prop and the SAFER grant for staffing analysis. He announced he had spent a week in Charlotte at FRI with VCOS. He encouraged all the Fire Chiefs and Deputy Chiefs to get a hold of the “yellow ribbon” report that is on the VCOS website concerning mental wellness for firefighters.
5. **Randy Johnson** from Amarillo Fire Department and the creator of “Fire Fit”, a Firefighter Fitness Trainer gave a demonstration. The Fire Fit trainer was designed to help combat the biggest killer of firefighters which is overexertion, stress and medical issues. It has a stair simulator, hose drag, tool carry, ladder carry, door breach simulator, victim drag and pike pole.
 6. **Randy Larson** presented his Bullying and Harassment class. He stated when bullying is targeted to a specific person, and it’s over and over and it affects their mental status and work ethic, we have to put a stop to it. He had a slide presentation, which he presented at the Fire-Rescue International Conference (FRI 2017) in July. The presentation was with the Safety, Health, and Survival Section of the IAFC on Harassment and Bullying. The conference was held in Charlotte, North Carolina. He stated a tool box on how to deal with workplace violence is on the IAFC website, linked to the VCOS section. He wanted to give this presentation today in order to get a conversation going.
 7. **Discussion:** Larson led a discussion on the depth of bullying and harassment in the fire service. He stated “Bullying is everyone’s problem, silence is no longer acceptable”.

The meeting was adjourned.