



Contents

- Recruit Class
- Trivia
- Awards
- Air Ride
- New Equipment
- Training
- Fire Council
- SAR Vehicle
- Fire Safety
- EMS Safety
- Construction
- Fun Facts
- Humor
- Students
- Photos



May 2009

Fire Recruit Class 2009 Update

The 2009 fire recruit class is progressing well. They have training on a variety of topics so far. They have had classroom and hands-on instruction with SCBA, learned the science behind fire behavior and extinguishment, know how different types of buildings and construction affect fire spread, how to identify and react to a hazardous materials incident, how to communicate with dispatch and other fire units via radio, and know how to perform a variety of roles on the fire-ground.



They recently participated in a hands-on exercise on primary search and rapid response, which are the initial actions taken on a fire scene. Primary search involves searching for and rescuing victims, locating the fire and performing fire suppression to put it out. Rapid response is a safety procedure utilized anytime firefighters are performing hazardous duties or interior operations and involves having a second team of firefighters standing by at the ready in case the first team requires assistance of any sort. The second team can assist with removing a victim, rescuing a downed firefighter, and is also protecting the first team's exit from the structure.



The fire recruit class performs evolutions during primary search / rapid response training recently.

With half of their recruit training over, it doesn't take long to notice that they appear more comfortable in their gear and SCBA, know their role on the engine whether assigned tools or hose line, and some have even ran through some evolutions acting as crew-leader. Just as important, they are getting to know one another and developing a bond with their fellow recruits as well as other members of the department.

Awards

Recently, the fire and EMS divisions held their annual banquets. One of the highlights of the banquets is the bestowing of the EMS Provider of the Year and Firefighter of the Year awards. This year, the awards went to:

Steve Novakovich
EMS Provider of the Year

Trent Emineth
Firefighter of the Year

Both Steve and Trent are highly respected by their peers and much deserving of the awards. Congratulations Steve and Trent!

Trivia

In what year was the first fire sprinkler system used?

Answer on page 4



Recruit Kristen Merrifield listens to radio traffic during a training exercise in early April.

Question of the Month...

"How do you turn it on?"

Asked by a tourist to a Park Ranger about Old Faithful in Yellowstone NP.

Quote of the Month...

"When you face the sun, the shadows always fall behind you"

Helen Keller

Air Ride System

A71 is equipped with an air ride suspension system, which uses airbags to provide suspension in the rear of the vehicle, as well as to lower and raise the height of the rear for the loading/unloading of patients.

At this time, there is a small leak somewhere in the air circuit. When operating the vehicle, you may notice a red light on the dashboard that is labeled "low pressure". This light may or may not be on. If it is on, it is not a critical issue. If, however, the larger red light on the console between the driver and front passenger is on, stop the vehicle immediately. That would indicate that there is NO air currently in the system, and the lack of suspension can cause damage to the vehicle due to all the energy from road vibrations being transmitted straight into the vehicle and it's components. We will be sending the vehicle to Billings in the near future for repair.

In the meantime, should the big red light turn on, check the air ride switches on the dash around the "low pressure" light and ensure that the system dump is NOT on. See Aaron or Kyle if you have any questions.

NREMT Update

The NREMT has released statistics from those EMT's who have chosen the new option of taking a test in lieu of the continuing education requirements for recertification. Here are the pass rates for those who have used this new recertification option.

EMT/B	1716 people	78% passed
EMT/I85	86 people	90% passed
EMT/I99	14 people	79% passed
Paramedic	553 people	91% passed

Overall, 2349 people chose to "test out" for their recertification. Of those 2349, an average of 81% of them passed the test and were recertified.

Southern Fire Zone

The Southern Zone Fire Council has a new website online now. Their site, www.southernzonefire.com, features photos, documents, contact information and important wildland fire-related web links. Asst. Chief Tim Ryan has been very active with the council.

Thank You!

Thank you to everyone who made 2009 fire and EMS division banquets a success! A lot of people put in a lot of hours in preparation of the events, which were enjoyed by all. Thank you for all your hard work!

New Equipment

The EMS division is prepared to add some new equipment to their inventory. The department's ALS (advanced-life-support) providers recently underwent training on the Sure-Vent and the King LT airway.

The Sure-Vent is a single-use, disposable ventilator that is used to breathe for an intubated patient, primary during inter-facility transports. In the past, someone would have to ventilate the patient with a BVM (bag valve mask). The downside to this is that the person performing the ventilations has to be very cautious about maintaining a proper rate of ventilation. Hyperventilation will throw off the patient's pH balance and cause alkalosis. Hypoventilation will cause acidosis. Both can have a significant affect on the patient's outcome.

With the Sure-Vent. The ventilations can be fine-tuned and will remain consistent. Another major benefit is that end-tidal Co2 is monitored using a capnograph whenever a patient is placed on a ventilator. A capnograph measures the output of carbon dioxide during respiration. Using this measurement, the settings on the ventilator can be adjusted for maximum effectiveness and to maintain pH balance.

The second piece of equipment mentioned is the King LT airway. The King LT is a device used to secure a patient's airway in cases where endotracheal intubation is not available, is unsuccessful, and ventilation with the use of a BVM and oral airway is ineffective. The King LT can be inserted in a matter of seconds, and requires very minimal training to use. The King LT will replace the Combi-Tube airway, which is a backup airway like the King LT.

Draft protocols for both items have been sent to our medical director for review. They will be going into full service soon.

Training

Our personnel have been busy lately attending training in preparation of the coming wildland fire season. The basic wildland firefighter course was taught in Red Lodge April 25-26. There were about 30 students in attendance, including 4 from the EMS division. The course covers basic leadership, terminology and equipment familiarization, safety, tactics, weather and it's effects on wildland fire, and more.

In addition to this, other RLFR personnel were busy on the same weekend attending another wildland fire course, strike team leader, training in Billings. We put a high value on training, because it makes us that much better when the next incident occurs.

April Response Statistics - 23 EMS, 11 Fire Calls

4/1	Medical	BLS	Seizures	Pt transported from scene to BHHC ED.
4/2	Trauma	BLS	Leg Injury	Ski accident. Pt transported from Red Lodge Mountain to BHHC ED.
4/3	Medical	ALS	Diabetic Emergency	Pediatric patient transported from Red Lodge Mountain to BHHC ED.
4/4	Medical	BLS	Back Pain	Pt transported from scene to BHHC ED.
4/4	Medical	BLS	Vomiting / Illness	Pt transported from scene to BHHC ED.
4/5	Trauma	BLS	Laceration	Pt with a head laceration transported from scene to BHHC ED.
4/5	Medical	ALS	Nausea / Vomiting	Pt transported from scene to BHHC ED.
4/6	Interfacility	ALS	GI Bleed	Pt transported from BHHC ED to Billings Clinic.
4/7	Interfacility	ALS	Trauma	Trauma patient transported from BHHC to St. Vincent's.
4/7	Medical	BLS	Infection	Surgery patient with infection transported to BHHC ED.
4/7	Medical	BLS	Unresponsive	Pt refused transport.
4/8	Medical	BLS	Pneumonia	Pt transported from BHHC ED to the airport to meet a medical flight.
4/8	MVA	BLS	Motor Vehicle Accident	Called for a MVC. Cancelled enroute. No patient transported.
4/10	Medical	BLS	Intoxicated Person	Patient refused transport.
4/11	Trauma	ALS	Leg Injury	Ski accident. Pt transported from Red Lodge Mountain to BHHC ED.
4/11	Interfacility	ALS	Tib / Fib Fracture	Pt transported from BHHC ED to St. Vincent's.
4/13	Interfacility	ALS	Femur Fracture	Pt transported from BHHC ED to St. Vincent's.
4/13	Medical	BLS	Leg Pain	Pt transported from scene to BHHC ED.
4/14	Medical	BLS	Psychiatric Emergency	Patient refused transport.
4/20	Interfacility	ALS	Weakness	Pt with kidney failure transported from BHHC ED to Billings Clinic.
4/20	Medical	BLS	Unknown	Patient refused transport.
4/29	Medical	BLS	Stroke Symptoms	Pt transported to BHHC ED.
4/30	Interfacility	ALS	Stroke Symptoms	Pt transported from BHHC ED to St. Vincent's.

April Fire Responses

4/1	City	Structure Fire	Chimney fire in residence. No damage to property.
4/1	City	Vehicle Fire	Vehicle on fire.
4/5	City	Alarm	Investigate CO alarm. No problem found.
4/6	City	Smoke Odor	Investigate smoke odor. Appliance problem. No Fire.
4/7	Rural	MVA	Cancelled enroute.
4/14	Rural	MVA	Cancelled enroute.
4/17	City	Smoke Odor	Investigate outside smoke odor. No problem found.
4/21	Rural	Smoke Invest.	Investigate outdoor smoke sighting. No problem.
4/22	Rural	Gas Odor	Investigate natural gas odor. No gas found.
4/22	Rural	Smoke Invest.	Investigate outdoor smoke sighting. Controlled burn.
4/27	City	Investigate Odor	Investigate odor in residence. No problem found.

2009 Totals (As of April 1)

Total EMS responses:	162
Interfacility transports:	52
911 emergency calls & other:	110
Total fire responses:	29
Structure Fires:	5
Vehicle Fires:	1
Wildland Fires:	0
EMS Assist:	2
Rescue / MVA:	8
Hazardous Situation:	10
Service or Other:	0
Good Intent / False Call	3

Starr to Attend Training

Assistant Chief / EMS Operations Kyle Starr will be at the National Fire Academy May 4-14th attending an EMS management course. The course is designed to cover the day-to-day issues that leadership is likely to encounter as they oversee EMS operations. Some of the highlights of the course include resource management, personnel issues, and quality improvement techniques.

Construction Progress

Work on the upstairs of the station is progressing. Some of the ceiling sheetrock has been hung. The stairs have been installed on the west side of the station. The lighting fixtures are in, a kitchen design has been chosen, and most of the electrical work is done. Thank you again to everyone who has been chipping in to help get things done!

SAR Gets Free Use of Vehicle

Carbon County SAR, which falls under Red Lodge Fire Rescue, has recently a new all-terrain vehicle. The vehicle, a Kawasaki Teryx 750, is a highly capable 4WD ATV. The vehicle was obtained via a program that provides the vehicles free of charge for one year from Kawasaki. RLFR now has 2 specialty ATV's in the station, with the other being a Polaris Ranger. With the terrain that we encounter in our response area, having capable off-road utility vehicles such as these is imperative.



Fun Facts

About 73% of the firefighters in the US are volunteers.

The first paid firefighters in the US were hired in 1676

The first chimney-cleaning ordinance was put in effect in 1696.

Fire Safety - Wildland Fire PPE

With the wildland fire season rapidly approaching, we're going to talk about PPE specific to wildland fire use this month.

How many of us have even touched our wildland gear this winter? With a couple of minutes, we can all ensure that our wildland gear is complete and in good shape for service this season.

1. Do you have everything?

A page-out is not the time to discover that your wildland gloves have wandered off sometime over the winter, or that your belt was not with your Nomex pants as you thought it was. Go through your PPE and make sure everything is there and needs no adjustments. Check your deployment bag for any items you may want with you on extended duty, snacks, MRE's, etc.

2. Is it clean?

Wildland gear has to be clean to be at maximum effectiveness, just as your structural gear does. Dirt and other soiling can have a big effect on its flame and heat resistance properties. Oils left in fabrics can cause the fabric to degrade. Does your hydration bladder need cleaned? How long has that water been in there? Do you

need fresh batteries in your headlamp and/or flashlight.

3. Use it correctly!

We have top-notch equipment and PPE, but it isn't worth a thing if you don't use it properly. It is important to not get complacent, even in those instances where you may only be going a few yards from your engine. Always have your helmet, gloves, fire shelter, and full PPE on when you get out of the vehicle. Keep sleeves rolled down and buttons buttoned. Nomex doesn't do a bit of good to skin it isn't covering.



Be sure to avoid synthetic fibers in clothing worn underneath of PPE. A short-sleeve 100% cotton t-shirt is the recommended undershirt. Socks should be 100% cotton, wool, or specially-made fire resistant material.

Remember, inspect your gear, keep it clean, wear it properly and at all indicated times. Let's have a safe fire season!

EMS Safety - Effects of Sleep Deprivation

Sleep deprivation and its affects are not new to the public safety world. With countless studies performed on fire and EMS providers, who are sometimes working 24 hour shifts in busy systems where they get little rest in those 24 hours, there is little dispute that lack of sleep can be dangerous for fire/EMS crews and their patients.

While we are normally a high call volume department, there are aspects of our service that make us prone to sleep deprivation and its effects. One example would be inter-facility transports. Not all departments perform these, as private companies often perform these duties

in larger areas. One inter-facility transport to Billings and back can take up as much time as 3-4 911 calls. In the middle of the night, these transports can be hard on the crew. It may have been a busy day, so they may be tired even going into the night. These transports also involve highway driving, where it is far easier for the driver to get drowsy.

Studies have shown that someone who is sleep deprived can have hand-eye coordination and reaction time identical to someone who is legally intoxicated. Is this the condition you want to be in while driving an emergency vehicle or providing patient care?

Fortunately, we are careful here to ensure that crews are adequately rested. Typically, if a crew has already been on one interfacility transport in a night, they are offered a break and another crew lined up if necessary to take any additional transports. It is important that you speak up if you do not feel that you can safely perform your duties. Your safety and the safety of our patients is top priority.

Upcoming Dates

5/4	Fire association meeting	1900-2200
5/6-5/10	Wilderness Advanced Life Support	
5/6	Recruit Academy	1900-2200
5/9	Recruit Academy	0800-1400
5/11	Recruit Academy	1900-2200
5/13	Recruit Academy	1900-2200
5/16-17	S234 Ignition Operations	0800-1700
5/18	Fire Line Refresher	1800-2200
5/20	Recruit Academy	1900-2200
5/25	Fire Officer's Meeting	1900-2200

Trivia Answer

The year was 1860.



Tailboard

- The paid staff has been finding the lights on in the station and the door unlocked when they arrive in the mornings. The lights are turned off and doors locked when they leave in the evening. If you are in the station for anything in the off-hours, please lock up behind you and turn the lights off.
- Thank you to Tim Ryan, Hunter Bell, Tyler Rae and Ryan Ples for their help in teaching the basic wildland firefighter course recently.
- Please be sure to keep the laptops plugged into their chargers when being stored in the ambulances. Recently, one was found left on the cot with the battery dead.
- Thank you to Deputy Chief McDowell for all the hard work that went into teaching the EMT and first responder courses, and to everyone who assisted throughout the classes.

Call Before You Dig



This photo came from the East coast, where a man was using a post-hole digger when he struck a major natural gas line that runs North/South along the coast. Two homes were destroyed along with the obvious loss of life of the man digging the post hole. Sadly, this tragedy could've been prevented with a telephone call to the gas company.



Humor

You Might Work Fire/EMS in Montana If. . .

1. You've ever been trapped in your apparatus by wildlife.
2. You've bumped into a bear while taking the trash out at the station.
3. You've switched from A/C to heat in the course of one call.
4. You are an expert with a tow strap or rope.
5. Directions to the call include GPS coordinates.
6. You've had a pumper freeze up in June.
7. Your department has ever had to cancel it's July 4th cookout due to snow.
8. You break out your uniform shorts when it hits 50 outside.
9. You've reached for an IV bag to find that it was frozen.
10. You've had to drive through a creek to reach a scene.

A Glimpse of the Past

In order to maintain a "gentleman's atmosphere", many volunteer fire companies circa 1800 imposed fines to keep their members refined. The fines were quite steep for the time period. Some of the fines included:

No helmet worn on a fire	\$0.25
No badge worn on shirt	\$0.25
Failure to attend a meeting	\$0.50
Discussing politics at meetings	\$1.00
Swearing during a meeting	\$1.00
Coming to a meeting intoxicated	\$1.00
Smoking a cigar	\$0.25
Chewing tobacco	\$0.25

Students Complete Classes

The EMT and first responder courses that were being taught at RLFR have wrapped up, with the students completing the in-house portion of the class. The next step in the process is to take the written (computer-based) and hands-on practical

exam. The practical examination is scheduled to be held on May 14th here in Red Lodge. The students are responsible for setting up their own appointments to take the computer-based exam in Billings. Good luck on your tests!

Red Lodge Fire Rescue

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A publication of Red Lodge Fire Rescue

www.redlodgefire.com

The All-Call



Official Department Newsletter

Red Lodge
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