



## ARIZONA FIRE DISTRICT ASSOCIATION

Volume 22, Issue 1  
Spring 2015

# AFDANews

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## President's Message

By May Dalton, Sun City West Fire District



**G**reetings AFDA Membership!

"Hallmarks of excellence" can be described as characteristics or traits that define a level of outstanding performance or service. One of those hallmarks is the commitment to continuous learning: sharing experiences; lessons learned and best practices; engaging in dialogue and debate; and challenging each other to grow and improve. In the fire service, this is especially true because of the nature of our profession. To keep people safe and to enhance our ability to effectively serve our communities, we need to have a constant focus on learning, sharing, and communicating. Our future depends on having informed leaders.

AFDA's two premier conferences have continued to serve as a "hallmark of excellence" for the Association. This tradition was continued at the January 2015 conference. We had record attendance with over 500 enrolled in the statutorily mandated training classes and 600 members attending the Saturday luncheon. The conference feedback was very positive with individuals noting their appreciation of the time to network with peers, the opportunity to gain knowledge of contemporary fire issues, and in many instances, the chance to review statutorily required responsibilities. A conference of this scope and magnitude would not be possible without the support of the Association's vendors and numerous volunteers. I want to take a moment to thank all of you for your support and the

increased attendance at our January conference. I hope to see everyone again at our 2015 Summer Conference in Tucson. We believe the June conference will prove to be as successful and informative as the January conference.

This is a very challenging time in the fire service and not an easy time to manage a fire district in Arizona. We're seeing increasing public scrutiny, firefighter health and safety challenges, regulatory burdens and tax caps, as well as increasing operating costs with decreasing budgets. The Association is heavily engaged in statewide legislative issues in an attempt to address the many challenges that fire districts are facing. Executive Director John Flynn is at the Capitol on a daily basis advocating for the interests of Arizona fire districts. He is regularly joined by many of your Association leaders and fire district colleagues. Additionally, numerous Association members have reached out to their elected officials through phone calls, letters, and emails expressing their concern or support of various bills. Our united voice can shape local, state, and national policy, legislation, and regulation. As fire service professionals, we are keenly aware of the issues surrounding the delivery of critical emergency services to much of Arizona and can advocate for initiatives that will positively impact our communities. Individually, we must continue to work to maintain and build relationships with stakeholders of all kinds, including our legislators and policymakers, peers in the fire service, and the public.

Vice President Savage, Past President Davis, and I are currently making travel plans to attend the Congressional Fire Service Institute (CFSI) Symposium in Washington, DC in April. CFSI is an annual event that provides us the opportunity to meet with our Congressional representatives and explain the needs of the Arizona fire service. CFSI is designed to educate members of Congress about the needs and challenges of our nation's fire and emergency services so that the federal government provides the type of training and funding needed by our first responders.

It is a golden opportunity to ensure the message from our membership gets delivered directly to our Congressional offices. We will be joined in D.C. by members of the Arizona Fire Chiefs Association and Wiatt Wong, from VFIS, who provides sponsorship and support. Team Arizona will spend two days blanketing the offices of our elected leaders with a unified message from the Nation's and Arizona's fire service community. Lastly, AFDA represents approximately 95% of the state's fire districts. If you have a neighboring fire district that does not have a membership, I ask you to help us by providing the benefits of membership. Our goal as an organization is to represent the interests of all Arizona fire districts. We can only do that if we have a mechanism in place to hear those interests. The best mechanism to accomplish that is membership. You can find the contact information for each Board member on the public area of the website. Also found on the website (in the members-only section) is a searchable directory with contact information for every AFDA member. These are tools that I hope you will utilize to ensure your message is heard and represented. Together, we make a difference.

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### March: Mini-Muster Madness

You may know March Madness as it relates to college basketball, but at Drexel Heights Fire District March is Mini-Muster Madness! This year will be the 12<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Mini-Muster events for the District.

The program was originally developed in 1987 through a collaboration of Tucson area teachers and firefighters. The target audience is second graders who have completed a series of fire safety lessons in the classroom. Their reward for completion is an outdoor field event which is set-up by Drexel Heights Fire District at their school. The kids are then able to practice the skills they learned about in the classroom lessons.

At the "Escape Plan" event, they start by lying in a cot pretending to be asleep when the smoke alarm sounds. They then have to spring into action demonstrating how they would crawl low looking for a way out of their room and house. Once outside of the building they get to a family meeting place and learn about calling 911.

The second graders also learn a little bit about what it's like to be a Firefighter. The Mini-Muster incorporates some of the traditional Fire Service Muster competition activities like a "Bucket Brigade" and the "Squirt". The kids also are taught about what team work means as a Firefighter. In the "Team Turnout" event they must help their teammates dress out in firefighting turnout gear quickly like a firefighter would.

The event has truly been a star program as the kids really respond to the hands on activities the Mini-Muster incorporates. The teachers appreciate the fire safety lessons as well as the reward event that the District provides. Mini-Musters have been a win-win for Drexel Heights Fire District and the area schools and we are excited to celebrate a decade of success!





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## Message from the Executive Director

By John Flynn, AFDA Executive Director



The 52nd Arizona Legislature – 1st Regular Session is more than halfway to the end of the prescribed 100 day session limit as of this writing. By the time you receive this version of the AFDA News, the session should be in its last days. It is widely anticipated by Capitol insiders that the legislative session should close out in approximately 85 days, which would be a record.

For fire districts, the 2015 session has delivered mixed results. The tax rate cap override bill (HB2406) was met with fierce opposition from conservative legislators and tax watch dog groups. Even with the joint efforts of AFDA, the Professional Fire Fighters of Arizona (PFFA) and the AFCA, there was not enough political will to move the measure along. While we looked to move the issue through other means, it became clear we would not have the votes necessary from legislative leadership to move the bill forward.

We did, however, make significant headway in bringing the issue of fire district funding to light with many legislators. Since tax rate cap override elections would not be held until November 2016 at the earliest, we'll be in a position to re-introduce this same measure in the 52nd Arizona Legislature – 2nd Regular Session (January 2016). In the meantime, it appears as though the legislature will pass a Rural Fire District Study Committee bill (HB2162), with the

purpose of examining fire district taxation and finance issues. Along with the work Elliott D. Pollack Co is undertaking on behalf of AFDA, the study committee's work will help establish a foundation for passing tax rate cap relief in 2016.

With funding limited and most agencies funded by the State taking significant cuts, the fire service absorbed several as well. The AHCCCS ground ambulance reimbursement rate was again reduced to 68.5% of the ADHS approved rate. Dependent upon your agency's payer mix, this will further limit revenues available to operate. The fire service and ambulance industry worked hard to return the AHCCCS reimbursement rate to 74%, but at the end of the day, the State's budget was adopted without the relief sought.

AFDA was successful in mitigating a number of threats to revenues including reductions to FDAT, distribution of FDAT to certain cities, and distribution of FDAT to volunteer tribal organizations (not fire districts). AFDA was also successful in fighting a threat from strict limitations on fire district annexations (HB2441). Though not all of our legislative goals were accomplished, our work did limit legislation that would have been harmful to fire districts.

The state budget deficit also precluded any movement towards resolving the wildland fire suppression payment issue. While early efforts looked promising to resolve the "prompt pay" issue for fire service wildland cooperator payments, this effort became a casualty of the appropriations process as well. It should be noted the State Forestry Division was opposed to our efforts to secure "prompt pay" funding for wildland fire cooperators. Additional cooperation is necessary to evaluate their opposition and find a way to work together to achieve a solution to this important problem.

That cooperation may be facilitated by the State Senate's confirmation of Jeff Whitney as the new State Forester. Mr. Whitney has an extensive career in the wildland fire community and is highly regarded amongst his peers. Initial discussions with the State

Forester concerning the cooperator "prompt pay" issue have been encouraging. Mr. Whitney has assured us he's willing to work to make the changes necessary to fix this issue.

AFDA members held a number of successful legislative events before the session to engage legislators and address issues of importance to fire districts and the over 1 million citizens that are served by fire districts across the state. We'll need to continue those efforts during the off session to ensure our success going forward.

## Superstition Fire & Medical District

The Superstition Fire & Medical District, is busy with many projects, and waist deep in our annual budget planning for the 2015/2016 fiscal cycle. It is our hope that there will be some legislative relief coming to fire district's, as we, like everyone else, are struggling to meet the demands of modern fire service with a stagnant and limited NAV. But even with those concerns always in the background, we continue to have many exciting new and innovative things to report:

Since the summer meeting, it has been a whirlwind last 7 months and we are pleased to report the following good news to all:

SFMD placed into service in late January CCU263 which is a new resource supporting our **Community Care Response Initiative**; a partnership with Mesa Fire & Medical and a grant through the National Health & Human Services (HHS) Department and the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), under the HHS Health Care Innovation Awards program, funded through the Affordable Health Care Act. This new community para-medicine response model focuses on in-home health care and reducing the number of non-critical admissions to local emergency rooms. Staffed with an Advanced Health Care Professional and an SFMD Captain/Paramedic, they respond in a modified ambulance to less critical EMS calls and perform post discharge check-ups for people recently treated in local hospitals. The services provided by this unit include; in depth patient evaluations, suturing, minor trauma evaluations, cardiac diagnostic capabilities, pain management, prescription services, immunizations, health education, referral services, primary care consultations, sepsis evaluations, post discharge follow ups, and minor diagnostic testing. "Our goal is to improve the delivery of healthcare in our community with this new model, bringing not only immediate relief to those who need it, but be part of the bigger solution to our health-care crisis," stated SFMD Fire Chief Paul Bourgeois

To ensure that patients we treat have not only the highest level of pre-hospital

medical care available, but also a reliable and timely transport to an appropriate hospital for more advanced care, SFMD filed an application with the Arizona Department of Health Services in early December 2014 for our own Certificate of Need (CON). As the result favorable first review by DHS, we filed for a waiver of hearing and expect the waiver and our CON to be granted later this month. "This is a basic expectation that anyone should have – to be able to have timely and efficient emergency medical transport when you call 9-1-1 for a medical problem," said Fire Chief Paul Bourgeois. "We believe this is a natural progression for our agency," - "It is consistent with our existing automatic aid system and will allow us to transport patients in a timely and efficient manner,"

SFMD Fire Chief Paul Bourgeois, was awarded the designation of 'Chief Fire Officer' (CFO) by the Commission on Professional Credentialing of the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE) in December 2014. "This highly competitive designation assures our citizens that their fire service leaders have the educational and technical competencies necessary to meet the demands of today's dynamic fire and emergency medical services," said Assistant Fire Chief Dave Montgomery. "Our Fire Chief has a rich knowledge of the emergency services profession and his leadership skills far surpass those critical core competencies used to measure senior fire officer positions," continued Montgomery. Bourgeois is one of only a few dozen from Arizona that have achieved this designation. Chief Bourgeois noted that this is more than just about him. He gives much of the credit to the entire membership stating, "While I am honored by CFO designation, it truly takes a competent and engaged group of professionals supporting me as the Fire Chief; so this is also a direct reflection of the quality of the organization as well. Chief Bourgeois has been invited to attend the International Association of Fire Chiefs – Fire Rescue International Conference, where he will be recognized for his achievement at the CPSE annual accreditation banquet in August of 2015 in Atlanta, Georgia.

8 new firefighter-recruits graduated from their joint Mesa Regional Training Academy experience in mid-January and are now serving the community. These new firefighters bring a wealth of diverse experience with them and will be working hard over the next year to complete all of their probationary training requirements.

SFMD recently completed an aggressive campaign in which staff, using community and fire district statistics, identified high risk neighborhoods where adding a smoke alarm or replacing a battery would have the greatest effect. A high fire occurrence rate combined with lower income were two of the most significant factors used to help identify certain residential areas within the fire district. SFMD was able to secure a FEMA Grant for about \$11,000 to purchase 500 Smoke Detectors with 10-Year Lithium integrated power, along with a number of specialized smoke alarms for the hearing impaired, and a stock of 9-volt batteries to provide to those who may already have alarms. Joined by SFMD Crews, fire prevention personnel hit the streets for two days to provide free smoke alarms in the targeted neighborhoods, for their first 'Holiday Smoke Alarm Walk'. Tina Gerola, SFMD Public Outreach Coordinator, organized this opportunity for the fire district. "We have never received a grant like this before, and we are anxious to get these life saving devices into the homes that need them the most," stated Gerola. As Firefighters and staff visited each home, they checked existing smoke alarms, replaced batteries if needed, or if the home was not equipped with a working alarm they installed one for free. SFMD was also able to offer general education to the occupant about the care and operation of the smoke alarms, along with answering other fire safety questions. "With many older manufactured homes and lots of families with younger children that struggle to make ends meet, we felt this would be the most appropriate place to begin this campaign," said Assistant Chief Dave Montgomery. "Providing smoke alarms to these citizens will not only provide for a safer community, but will help individuals and families feel more confident and safer in their homes."

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## Vulnerability Assessment Program

By Dr. Bill Jenaway, Ph.D, Vice President VFIS Education, Training & Consulting

The National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF), in conjunction with Honeywell and the United States Fire Administration, developed, and is now making available, the Vulnerability Assessment Program (VAP), an online assessment tool that provides fire departments with a systematic process to evaluate risks and ultimately reduce the threat of firefighter injuries and deaths. At the end of the process, departments receive a customized report identifying areas of vulnerability linked to firefighter injuries and deaths. Each report contains suggestions for risk reduction alternatives specific to identified vulnerabilities and, when they exist, provides pertinent industry standards and guidelines to address the identified concerns.

Fire departments can then use this analysis to develop operational and strategic plans to implement the risk reduction recommendations necessary to minimize preventable line-of-duty injuries and deaths. The VAP has many advantages over traditional fire department evaluations—it is online, private, secure, customizable, easy to use and free. Unlike other fire department evaluations, which may run into tens of thousands of dollars to obtain, the VAP costs a department nothing to begin and complete.

The VAP exercise is composed of three elements.

- ◆ Completion of a short profile of the department, capturing basic organization-type and HR attributes.
- ◆ The actual assessment that is composed of nearly 400 questions. These questions were derived from an analysis of the root causes that the NFFF has determined are traceable to virtually every firefighter line-of-duty death.
- ◆ A fire department and community survey that will reveal more in-depth information about the department than the initial profile. All responses are confidential, although the survey material may be used in the aggregate to learn more about the American fire service. Department names will never be associated with this aggregated material.

The VAP is not just a casual online survey. The issue of firefighter line-of-duty death prevention does not lend itself to 10 questions or fewer. The VAP is a thorough self-examination of an organization. It takes time and care to complete. It also takes knowledge about the organization and may not be able to be completed in an hour or two. But, as chief of a department or safety officer, the best resources possible will be available to complete the assessment—colleagues. The VAP was built to be collaborative and sections of the assessment can be assigned to others who will be of assistance.

Don't let the demand of time be an excuse to avoid the VAP. The end result will provide resources to help address gaps in a department's safety program and help answer the question that haunts most fire department leadership—*"Am I doing enough to prevent a line-of-duty death?"*

Dr. Bill Jenaway of VFIS played a key role in the development of the VAP. For the entirety of its four year development, Jenaway attended meetings and contributed insights from the VFIS point of view. Many fire service organizations with a stake in preventing firefighter injuries and line-of-duty deaths participated in this process. The VAP is a very useful fire service.

The NFFF suggests that every fire department in the United States go through the VAP exercise to discover gaps in resources and service capabilities. Why should there be a firefighter death because they are unaware of safety practices that could save their lives. Visit the website at [www.firevap.org](http://www.firevap.org) to begin the process today. For more information, email [contactVAP@firehero.org](mailto:contactVAP@firehero.org).



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## Sun Lakes Fire Department “Flash Drive Initiative” Embraced by Community.

By Brian Curry

A team from the SLFD's volunteer Community Assistance Program (CAP) has taken the lead in integrating a computer USB “flash drive” program that started as a class project in the Sun Lakes “New Adventures In Learning” (NAIL).

Betty Earp a registered nurse and CAP member said the idea was borne out of hearing repeated stories about medical histories that were either unattainable, outdated or confusing.

Earp began teaching classes on the project at NAIL. In her classes students helped develop a pilot program that the Sun Lakes fire department heard about and saw as a way to be utilized on their emergency calls.

The small inexpensive flash drives store all your pertinent medical information such as previous history, medications, allergies and doctors. A secondary page will list all your emergency contact information.

“The beauty and simplicity of this program is that our paramedics can insert the flash drive into our electronic patient care report tablets and within seconds transfer the information onto it” said SLFD Chief Paul Wilson.

Introduced at the Sun Lakes community's open houses the flash drive has been embraced overwhelmingly by the residents with over 750 sold in the last few months. And recent news stories on KPHO (CBS) and KTVK (Channel 3) television have dramatically increased awareness and interest in the program locally, as well as all over Arizona and even out of state.

Earp emphasized, “ We have a community outreach group from CAP led by members Nancy Roberts and Kim Schmuck who have worked tirelessly introducing and explaining the flash drive and what it means to the demographics of Sun Lakes to everybody from the Lions Club to the veterans groups.”

Even the reports from the field have been glowing. SLFD EMT Brandon Johnson described his experience “ Our male patient told he had the flash drive and his wife brought it to our crew. I plugged into our patient care report

and within seconds was able to transfer all of his medical information. It worked great”.

The compact flash drives that can go anywhere with you on your key chain, necklace or wristlet can be purchased for \$5.00 dollars (just above cost) at the Sun Lakes fire department's Station Two at 25020 Alma School Road just north of Riggs Road. For more information or to purchase one during normal business hours call 480-895-9343.



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## AFDA – Change and Community Integrated Paramedicine

By Les P Caid — Fire Chief Rio Rico Fire & Medical

When thinking about writing this article on Community Integrated Paramedicine, it struck me that we in the fire service are called on to do so many things. We truly are the all-hazards response agency and always will be. That is, as long as we realize that the only constant in life is change. We can either fight change and go the way of the dinosaur or adapt to change and embrace the opportunity which is before us.

Change is hard on us and I think about one Captain on Tucson Fire when I was hired in 1979. "I am not going to wear these stupid turnout "bunker" pants" he would mutter. The fact that he had been wearing rubber  $\frac{3}{4}$  boots his entire career kept him from seeing the benefits of change. He was in constant trouble with his Battalion Chief over this issue (and a few others) and retired bitter, because the "nurses" (certified emergency paramedics) were taking over and he was a "fireman".

For those of us lucky enough to grow up through the golden years of the fire service, we have seen how an already diverse fire service must evolve once again. Driven by the changing cultures and communities we serve, we seem to reinvent what we do or at least add to the laundry list every 7-10 years. Change creates evolution and retired Chief Dennis Compton, has preached for years the waves of change that the fire service has seen and adapted to from our very beginning. His talk is so famous, that I do not feel the need to go any further into it, but I agree with his theory 1000%

It is because of another change that we in the fire service must evolve again. Health care costs are out of control, and the changing demographics of our county presents us, the 911 provider, de facto all-hazards response agency with multitudes of baby boomers reaching the age of need. Even changes we fought for, the three E's of Fire Prevention have lessened the actual working fire response to 4.6% nationally. (NFPA 2012) All of this change should make us look at what we are and what service we need to provide for our communities.

So what is the current wave we the fire service must adapt to and get comfortable riding? It is this thing called community integrated

paramedicine. The term comes from "Community Paramedic" which is trademarked, and so when I first became interested in this concept in 2010, I wanted to use a term that was close enough but did not infringe on trademark. When it came to name the program for a grant (we were unsuccessful in obtaining), I called it "Community Healthcare Paramedicine". Since then the concept has gained traction throughout Arizona and in 2014 Arizona Department of Health Services put together a steering group under the term "Community Integrated Paramedicine" (CIP). This is a term I support because this program truly must be integrated into the overall healthcare resources of each community, if it is to be successful.

The Rio Rico CIP provides in-home health care services to residents with chronic illnesses. The pilot project focuses on helping participants manage their medical conditions so they don't have to return to the hospital or call 911 as often.

We identified high utilization users from within our 911 system. Specifically, we see individuals who suffer from chronic disease. Once identified, we schedule appointments in a proactive attempt to help them manage their disease. This seems like common sense since it is cheaper for us to send two firefighters (CEP and EMT) at 2pm then six personnel to an emergency 911 call at 2am.

Our visits are to help guide and engage participants in the overall understanding of their health and disease process. We also want to try and identify the core reason that drives the need for frequent 911 visits, and we help the individual identify other healthcare resources that exist but may not have known about, or known how to access the resources.

While at the home the CIP team will get a baseline set of vitals and conduct a health survey. Working with University of Arizona Poison and Drug Information Center, the team will do a medication reconciliation, to ensure they are taking their meds properly, that they are not duplicating medication, or have medications that are counteracting each other.

Our CIP teams, which consist of a firefighter

emergency paramedic and firefighter EMT, also conduct a Home Environmental Survey & Safety Survey, to identify and mitigate trip fall hazards, mold, or other environmental issues that can adversely impact their health. If we suspect mold for example, we can work with community resources to make the home safe.

Our CIP program is also ideal for follow-up home visits of post discharge patients from the hospital, which I know will prove to be very beneficial in reducing readmissions. With the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA), there are penalties for hospitals that have patients readmitted within a 30 day period. One recent study found that a simple follow-up telephone call after discharge reduced readmissions by a low double digit percentage. That being the case, having a CIP team follow-up post discharge should have a much higher percentage rate of success. Golder Ranch Fire District, which services, Oro Valley and the surrounding area has started a CIP pilot program this past July looking only at readmissions. I am excited to see what they find out from their data. Working with a fire based CIP team can help the bottom line financials of hospitals. If we do this right we can help the patient and the hospital - that is a win/win which you have to love!

The concept of using "certified emergency paramedics" (CEP) for proactive healthcare is not new, and has been around for maybe 20 years, started internationally and slowly gained traction in the U.S. Last October, I spoke in Reno at the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual International Roundtable on Community Paramedics. At the conference, I was the only speaker representing the fire service, all others were private sector. Private sector knows a wave when they see one!

The CIP project we started at Rio Rico Fire Medical and Fire on January 3, 2014 is the first in Arizona and at the time was one of only a handful of fire-based CIP programs in the nation. According to an *Arizona Republic* article from April 22, 2013, Mesa Fire and Medical began extending community medical care provided by the fire service in 2006 with their Transitional Response Vehicles. They began by staffing the vehicles with two paramedics and

added a PA response truck staffed with a paramedic and nurse practitioner in August of 2012. Mesa Fire and Medical has been very progressive and successful with their efforts but they have a different model than ours and they are not calling their program CIP.

Rio Rico is a beautiful place to live and work. It is however considered a rural setting and we are under resourced as far as healthcare. Getting to those resources because of the lack of public transportation is also a barrier. We have no buses, or services to help our aging population get to doctors' appointments.

Our program is just over one year old and we are still looking at our surveys and data for the overall year of 2014, but have had 100% customer satisfaction on our returned surveys. We have saved the system money as well. We have one participant who in the first six months of 2014 reduced her 911 calls and visits to the ED by 50%.

We had another, who we found local physical therapy resources for after she was told in Tucson she could only drive back to Tucson for physical therapy. This saved her hours of driving time, reducing her stress and keeping her at home and off the streets with a lower risk of being involved in an motor vehicle accident.

The last example I will use is we had one participant who we found out during our medication reconciliation, that she had five different physicians who had prescribed to her anti-depressants. This is the kind of thing that would never have been caught without someone actually going into the home and being the eyes and ears of the primary care physician to ensure the reconciliation was done.

One of the more pleasant yields of this effort is that a prescheduled visit to a home is a very different environment than a 911 call. The calm setting of a CIP visit makes it so much easier for our team to interact and get to know the participant. The setting is so far outside the normal stressful venue of an emergency 911 call, that the firefighters involved with this project have time to get to know the individual and experienced firsthand the positive outcomes of this project.

One thing I have discovered in my time on the project is that most people do not know what the U.S. Fire Service is all about. They see the term "fire" and think that is all we do. I know that we must always be trained and know how to put our fires. But the data and science shows, fire is only a small percentage of what we do. If you look at the statistics, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) is really the bulk of

what our jobs entail. Also, Community Risk Reduction is a term we have used in the fire service for years. We have been involved in the activities of fire prevention, drowning prevention, wearing seatbelts and bike safety for decades. Working proactively in the overall health of our communities to improve outcomes, is just the evolution of the fire service.

The fire service is the gateway into the U.S. healthcare system. We should embrace that fact and work to make others aware of the potential fire-based EMS and Community Integrated Paramedicine have in improving patient outcomes. Embracing change and making a difference now there is another win/win situation for the Arizona Fire Service.

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On February 10, 2015, at a regularly scheduled Fire District Board Meeting, the Golder Ranch Fire District signed a statement of support for the Guard and Reserve. This effort was made possible through a collaborative effort with the Arizona Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), which is a Department of Defense office.

The Statement of Support confirms that Golder Ranch Fire District joins other employers in pledging:

- ◆ *We fully recognize, honor and enforce the Uniformed Services Employment and Re-Employment Rights Act (USERRA).*
- ◆ *Our managers and supervisors will have the tools they need to effectively manage those employees who serve in the Guard and Reserve.*
- ◆ *Reserve.*
- ◆ *We appreciate the values, leadership and unique skills service members bring to the workforce and will encourage opportunities*
- ◆ *to hire Guardsmen, Reservists and Veterans.*
- ◆ *We will continually recognize and support our country's service members and their families in peace, in crisis and in war.*

When asked about the criteria, Arizona ESGR State Chair Tim Williamson said, "By meeting the Statement of Support criteria, The Golder Ranch Fire District pledges to stand proudly with its Guard and Reserve employees, who continue to answer their nation's call to defend our way of life. Their personal sacrifices are essential to the strength of our nation".

"The Golder Ranch Fire District joins a cadre of Fortune 500 companies, state and federal agencies and thousands of America's employers in demonstrating support for our armed forces," added Tim Williamson. "By signing the Statement of Support, Chief Karrer

is sending a clear message to the employees of the Golder Ranch Fire District that while they are serving their country they do not have to worry about their civilian jobs."

After signing the Statement of Support, a representative from ESGR also honored Golder Ranch Fire District Chief Randy Karrer with a Patriot Award in recognition of his extraordinary support of its employees serving in the Arizona Guard and Reserve.

According to Tim Williamson, "The Patriot Award was created by ESGR to publicly recognize individuals who provide outstanding patriotic support and cooperation to their employees, who like the citizen warriors before them, have answered their nation's call to serve. Chief Karrer was nominated for being highly supportive of the fire district's guard and reserve members by Air National Guardsman and Golder Ranch Fire District Firefighter, Anthony Marquez. Supportive supervisors are critical to maintaining the strength and readiness of the nation's Guard and Reserve units."

Other Golder Ranch employees were also recognized for their support of the Guard and Reserve with the Patriot Award. They were; Assistant Fire Chief Tom Brandhuber, Battalion Chief Will Seeley, Captain Steve Lunde, Captain Bill Howe, and Captain Tom Helmandollar.

Air National Guardsman Marquez stated, "Golder Ranch Fire District has been nothing but supportive of my military duty. Recognizing the importance of my

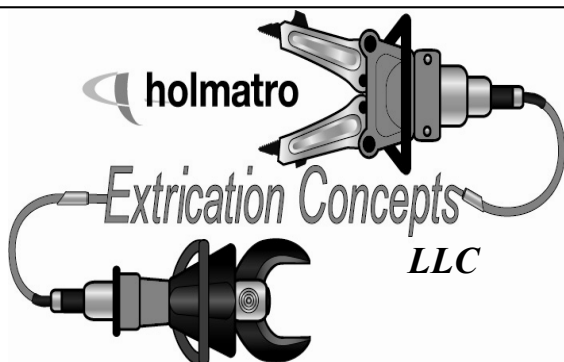
service the fire district adopted a military policy that was very beneficial to me and my family. Fire Chief Karrer was instrumental in approving this policy."

ESGR seeks to foster a culture in which all employers support and value the employment and military service of members of the National Guard and Reserve in the United States. ESGR facilitates and promotes a cooperative culture of employer support for National Guard and Reserve service by developing and advocating mutually beneficial initiatives, recognizing outstanding employer support, increasing awareness of applicable laws and policies, resolving potential conflicts between employers and their service members, and acting as the employers' principal advocate within the Department of Defense.

For more information about ESGR Outreach Programs, or ESGR volunteer opportunities, please call 520-750-5981 or visit [www.ESGR.mil.il](http://www.ESGR.mil.il).



Left to right: fire district board members-Mark Clark, Steve Brady, Richard Hudgins, USAF Staff Sergeant, GRFD Firefighter Anthony Marquez, GDFD Assistant Chief Tom Brandhuber, fire district board member David Dahl & Vicki Cox-Golder. Seated: Fire Chief Randy Karrer



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