



Lines & Leads

VOLUME I • ISSUE I • JANUARY, 2011

THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY FIRE/EMS DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

WE ARE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY

FIRE/EMS DEPARTMENT IMPLEMENTS REORGANIZATION – PHASE 1

December 13, 2010 marked the official implementation of the Fire/EMS Department structural and Management Team reorganization. In brief, Deputy Chiefs (Lieutenant Colonels) positions were reduced from four to three "Commands", while Assistant Chiefs (Majors) were increased from 13 to 14. Within the Office of the Fire Chief, Acting Major Paul Cruz has been assigned as the Executive Officer to the Fire Chief.

The majority of our staffing, budgetary, and operational elements reside in the Emergency Operations Command (EOC), commanded by Acting-Lieutenant Colonel Jerry Lamoria. Phase 1 reorganization in EOC refocuses Emergency Medical Services under the day-work assignment of Major Dennis Wood, while placing a single Major in charge of the Northern Division, Major Hess, and the Southern Division, Major Michaelides. Additionally, Majors resumed a single Duty Chief on duty 24 hours a day, with an enhanced Volunteer Division Chief selection program to bring a Northern and Southern Volunteer Division Chief to each shift.

The Special Operations Command, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Scott Hoglander, houses the Office of the Fire Marshal, Fire/EMSTraining, Risk Management, Safety, Research-Planning and Development, and the new Technical Services Division (TSD). The Majors working as Safety Officers have been reallocated to other positions, and Major Forby has been assigned to lead the Operational Safety Office. Battalion Chief Conner-White continues in a day assignment, with two volunteer Safety Officers assigned to each shift. Additional adjustment of this office is likely in future phases of reorganization. The TSD, under the command of Acting Major Adon Snyder, brings the new concept of a functional Battalion, the Technical Rescue Battalion, with geographically disparate stations. This Battalion will focus our specialty services (Hazardous Materials, Water Rescue/Marine Division, and Technical Rescue) under one command, while allowing stations to continue as local community fire/EMS service delivery points. The Special Events Unit (SEU) will also function under the TSD, providing not only services as needed, but

also the traditional services for FedEx Field and the National Harbor complex. Additional explanation of the entire TSD and Technical Rescue Battalion concept will be outlined in the Phase 2 reorganization announcements.

The Administrative Services Command (ASC), commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Angela Peden, brings together the majority of our administrative and managerial functions (Fiscal Affairs, Human Resources, Apparatus Maintenance, Logistics & Supply, and Information Management).

Phase 2 of the Department organization will focus on the Battalion level of management and organization, as well as the administrative staff functions. Additionally, some "tweaking" of assignments originally announced in Phase 1 will be part of the Phase 2 announcement. The reorganized structural chart was effective December 13, 2010, however, minor changes will be made along with distribution of the full organizational chart with the Phase 2 implementation announcements. Phase 2 reorganization will be announced January 5, 2011, with a January 30, 2011, implementation.

Keeping "Safety First": Trigger Your Mind to be Safe

The reason injuries and accidents occur in our business is not just because it is an inherently dangerous and stressful profession. After 35 years of exhaustive studies and analysis of workplace safety and risk management of the most dangerous professions, experts have determined that it is the attitudes and behaviors of the individual and/or the entire workforce that is the root cause of injuries and accidents 85% of the time. The remaining 15% is attributed to "unexpected and uncontrolled" circumstances that occur and are specific to that workplace.

These investigations revealed that there are four dangerous "states of mind" that prime a situation for extreme risk and potential for injury and/or accidents. They include: Rushing, Frustration, Fatigue and Complacency.

One of these states of mind in a dangerous profession is considered hazardous. If you combine additional states of mind from this list, the risks of that profession increase exponentially. Individuals and organizations as a whole can contribute to these four states of mind and threaten our safety. The good news is that through awareness and proper training, these threats can be recognized and corrected by individuals and organizations. Turning a blind eye to such obvious contributors to our safety is harmful and potentially fatal.

To become aware of a dangerous state of mind while in the station, responding on a call and while on the scene is only the first step to increasing our safety. The crucial next step is to trigger your mind to make a change that will decrease risk while still performing at optimum levels. We must understand that it is our state of mind that causes injuries and accidents 85% of the time.

PRODUCED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

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PRINCE GEORGE'S HIGHLIGHTS: Our Facilities and Equipment

Laurel Volunteer Rescue Squad • Station 849

A group of Laurel citizens who were members of the Laurel Police Association first developed the idea of providing emergency ambulance service to the citizens of Laurel in 1949. Then the closest ambulance was the Branchville Rescue Squad, which covered the entire area from College Park to just north of Laurel. On March 16, 1952, the Laurel Volunteer Rescue Squad, Inc. (LVRS) officially placed in service a 1939 Miller-LaSalle ambulance. A number of the founding members were also members of the Laurel Volunteer Fire Department.

The current LVRS station at 14910 Bowie Road, is the third station location, built in 1959. The largest most recent additions include placement of a live-in member building and in 2004 the construction of 4 deep bays. This increased vehicle capacity to 7 bays in total. While LVRS was initially formed to provide EMS and heavy rescue services, additional areas of emphasis were added over the years, including at certain times an air wing consisting of both fixed and rotary wing aircraft, overland search and rescue and a marine division. The progression of additional services culminated in 2004 with the organization purchasing and placing in service a Class A pumper, and being assigned a first-due assignment area for the engine.

LVRS also provides specialty Water Rescue services as part of the Technical Services Battalion. The Water Rescue Team provides swiftwater/flood, surface ice rescue, fire/rescue boat services, and dive rescue/recovery throughout the County as needed. This team is led by Assistant Chief Rich Takacs, who has over 19 years of experience and is considered a regional experienced resource and content expert at water rescue. Today LVRS operates a Rescue Engine (2004 Pierce Rescue Engine), a Heavy Duty Squad (a 1994 HME 8-man cab with walk-in body), 2 BLS ambulances, and a Water Rescue component consisting of a 2000 Freightliner response unit and 1999 Boston Whaler 19' Guardian fire/rescue boat and 1991 Achilles inflatable, along with a component of Chief and support vehicles. Plans for 2011 include the delivery of a new Pierce Heavy Rescue Squad and the purchase of a new ambulance. The station complement of vehicles also includes a county-owned and staffed Paramedic Unit.

LVRS Command Staff is led by Chief Mark Arsenault, who brings 27 years of experience, and Deputy Chief Rafael Gibson, who has over 10 years experience. Both Arsenault and Gibson are trained ALS providers in their career organizations and are certified in not only Fire / Rescue / EMS, but in components of the water rescue team. Chief Arsenault also serves as the President of the organization. Richard Sien is the current Chairman of the Board. LVRS has over 50 operationally certified members who provide staffing in addition to the weekday career staffing. The organization has 39 life members (a number that are still active) and an additional 20 support and associate members that provide much needed administrative support. The organization is proud of the high level of experience, diversity and training that makes up the officer corps and membership.

LVRS career staffing consists of assigned medics to staff Medic 849, and a contingent of four career personnel, currently led by Captain Kendall Patterson.

Persons interested in additional information about our organization can go on line to laurelrescue.org.



OUR PEOPLE: Above and Beyond the Call of Duty

Fire Fighter/Paramedic II Nicole Solomon



Currently the war in Afghanistan and Iraq have made deployments a common phrase. Many families are separated and sometimes a little piece of home to remind the men and women of the military that we are thinking about them helps them to get thru their time away. This year, Nicole Solomon decided to do something to help so she contacted the United Service Organizations (USO) Coordinator at Fort Meade to ask what she could do.

Nicole was informed that "Care packages" for the troops abroad were in need and, within a week, she implemented a plan to place a box at each station requesting donation of items that could be sent to the troops. Requested items ranged from baby wipes to hand soap to just about anything that could be shipped and packed so that the troops could have items from home.

Response from this program has allowed Nicole to produce a total of 12 shipments of personal supplies to 100 United States Marines. With this program she has also started another that is called "Helping Hearts for Troops". She created a way that you can adopt a soldier and show support to them while they are deployed. Care packages will be created and you will be able to send a special note to a soldier who is deployed. To send a package the donation is \$12.00.

Knowing that the holiday months can be difficult with deployments and family away from each other Nicole met again with the USO and, through many generous donations and support from various members of the Department, she was able to host a Holiday Dinner held at Fort Meade's main chapel on Thursday, December 23, 2010. Dinner and fellowship was received by 60 service personnel and their families. Many generous donations were given in support to make sure that the families of the deployed and the service personnel assigned to Fort Meade had a place to go and be with family.

As you see the Operations USO box, please take a moment and support this most worthy cause. If you would like more information about "Helping Hearts for Troops" you can email Nicole at hh4troops@comcast.net. Thank you Nicole for putting service ahead of self.

A MESSAGE FROM THE FIRE CHIEF

In the four short weeks since my appointment as Acting Fire Chief, I have spoken with many of you during a whirlwind of station visits, one-on-one conversations, and meetings. The thing that I am continually reminded during our dialogue is that the best assets of the Prince George's County Fire/Emergency Medical Services Department are not found in counting the bricks and mortar of our facilities. Nor is our treasure calculated in how "state of the art" our equipment can be. The one essential intrinsic value of this Department has always been and continues to be the resiliency and ingenuity of our people.

As a Department, we have weathered some challenging times. I will not gloss over our situation - we are certain to face a number of critical difficulties in the coming months and years. However, it is my firm belief that, given the wealth of talent and resolute commitment found in the ranks of this Department, the potential of our organization to address these critical issues effectively is practically limitless.

During my meetings with personnel, I have been extremely pleased with your overall spirit and enthusiasm. For those of us that are determined to invest in our future, we are certain to achieve many victories at all levels. At the same time, however, I am concerned that I have also observed lingering pockets of cultural complacency within critical areas of our operation. In any organization, complacency will forever be witnessed in those who are resolute to accept failure. Within our Department, these individuals will either be forced to accept the need to change their attitude, or they will be permitted to personally fail, however individual failure will not deter the rest of us from completing our mission.

For those of you who continue to permit pessimism to guide your performance, my message is this: We can never change the past, but each of you is now being presented with a fresh opportunity -- as well as a duty and obligation -- to help chart our future. It is inevitable that some among us will never accept change. However, we cannot and will not expend our precious and limited resources coddling these individuals. It is my mission to inform those who intend to stand in the way of progress that I intend to personally weed you out of our system, one by one.

Chain Of Command

As Fire Chief, I have a great regard for respect of Chain of Command, both volunteer and career, both on the emergency scene and off. As such, I am going to demand a similar level of respect for the authority of all officers within that chain of command from each of you.

When it comes to direct supervision, I will tell you up front that I do not expect you to look to me to provide the answers on how to achieve our objectives. My job is to formulate the goals. Your leadership and guidance along the path to achievement of those goals is vested in those who have earned

appointment to our supervisory ranks; our Station Officers, Volunteer Leadership and Civilian Managers. These personnel have been selected to take supervisory positions within this Department, and all have done much to achieve their levels of responsibility. It is incumbent upon me, as well as our Commanders, to afford these managers as much flexibility as possible in the supervision of the personnel within their span of control as we work to achieve our mission objectives.



MARC S. BASHOOR, ACTING FIRE CHIEF

Finding Your Source of Motivation

While on an emergency scene, you will rarely -- if ever -- hear the phrase, "There is nothing we can do here". By nature, a basic quality instilled in all first responders is that we simply refuse to stand aside and not pitch in to resolve an emergency situation. We nearly always "get the job done" through a combination of on-the-fly innovation, enabled by knowledge, technical training, and general common sense. The effective application of these exact same critical thinking and analytical skills is an absolute necessity in all areas of our modern workplace. I ask you now...Are you willing and prepared to apply the basic skills that we use in incident management to the way we do business in general? The skill sets we apply to scene management are basic in nature, yet thorough in application to problem solving. They include;

- **Honesty and Integrity**
- **Strong Work Ethic**
- **Constant Vigilance for the Safety of Yourself and Others**
- **Teamwork**
- **Effective Communication**
- **Flexibility/Adaptability**
- **Attention to Details**
- **A Continual Commitment to Self Improvement**
- **Investment of Your Experience for the Betterment of Our Collective Future**

Honesty and Integrity

According to Webster's Dictionary, honesty implies, "truthfulness, fairness, and refusal to engage in fraud or deceitful activities". We cannot maintain the trust and respect of those we serve if the core qualities of honesty and integrity do not exist. As a member of our Department, your words and actions should always present you in a manner that will build up - not tear down our Department as a whole. As such, it is your solemn duty to maintain a basic level of integrity in your actions, both on the job and off.

CONTINUED - SEE "FIRE CHIEF" • PAGE 4

Strong Work Ethic

In an age where the numbers of structural fires are on the decline and every other type of call imaginable is increasing, the definition of a good work ethic is constantly being redefined as we adapt to this ever changing environment. The bottom line; be prepared to do your part and then some, regardless of whether you will receive immediate reward for your actions or not. Do this and you will always stand out among your peers.

Constant Vigilance for the Safety of Yourself and Others

Simply put, our golden rule in risk analysis of any situation must be: "We will risk a lot to save a lot, We will risk little to save little, We will risk nothing to save nothing." Remember – If we put "Safety First", then we have done our utmost to assure that "Everyone Goes Home".

Teamwork

Emergency and non-emergency situations alike require personnel with the attitude and ability to effectively function as a contributing member of a group. Your ability to function as a team member is critical to the success of every Departmental initiative. Do not be the outsider - become a part of the team. You and the Department will be better for it.

Effective Communication

Effective communication is absolutely essential on the emergency scene. The same is true in the station or office. Many of you have heard me speak of breaking down the "stovepipes" – those territorial institutional barriers that prohibit the free exchange of information and knowledge that currently exist throughout all areas of operation. Free and cooperative exchange of information is essential to our success, as well as our survival. While my personal strategy will be to generously reward those who accept this principle, be forewarned that I also plan to candidly reprimand those who do not.

Flexibility/Adaptability

Older firefighters often wax poetically about the "good old days" when structure fires were plentiful and "nuisance" runs were few and far between. Accept reality: Those days are over. Flexibility is a must for those who are engaged in the emergency response. Our workplace demands flexibility to overcome unforeseen obstacles and deadlines that surface in the daily performance of our duty. You must always be adaptable to the needs of the Department and willing to put the needs of the Department above your own personal wishes and desires.

Attention to Details

This one is simple: Organizational pride begins and ends with individual pride. If you do not care to present a professional appearance, how can you expect others to treat you as a professional? If you fail to take pride in the little things, where does

that put the big things on YOUR list of priorities? As emergency responders, our success will always be achieved through a proper and concerted attention to the details. Responders that embrace this critical attention to detail will always stand out against those that do not.

A Continuous Commitment to Self Improvement

There are some among our ranks who see 30 years of "street smarts", absorbed while running calls, as an acceptable substitute for career development and continuing education. I am here to tell you that in today's world, this is a fallacy. This "School of Hard Knocks" outlook is but one piece of the pie...absent of continuing education, it is dangerously ancient for responding to the issues and challenges we face in our modern world.

The future demands that we upgrade our profession to ensure our members will be able to maintain their edge over new technological leaps and specialized training requirements. It's the responsibility of this Department to provide the best and brightest workforce, both volunteer and career, to serve the needs of our citizens. I see the foundation of our educational experience in this Department in two basic commitments we must all recognize and practice. They are:

- ***Personal professional success relies on an individual commitment to lifelong learning.***
- ***Organizational success and survival are dependent upon this organization's ability to learn and then translate its learning into meaningful services and programs.***

Investment of Your Experience for the Betterment of Our Collective Future

The history of Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department is a tapestry woven of the duties, deeds and accomplishments of many who came before us. Ours is a story that will never be complete, yet it is a "work in progress" that will constantly be judged by our current level of achievement. With this in mind, I believe that it is fundamentally important to recognize that we are all part of a living history. Many of those who serve within our fire service family are born of this community. Most who serve this Department continue to have strong roots in Prince George's County. These are the people who know what is best for the future of our community.

As time passes, more and more of these veteran personnel, both volunteer and career, are retiring. Whenever veterans leave the Department, they exit with a wealth of valuable knowledge, experience and "lessons learned" that could benefit others in their career pursuits, and benefit the Department as a whole in our quest for continuous improvement.

If you are a veteran employee approaching retirement, please recognize that it is incumbent upon you to put the months and years prior to your departure to best use by passing on the

"intellectual capital" you possess to others. This assures that the Department continues to build on past knowledge and creates an avenue to assist with career and professional growth for those who will continue your mission after your departure.

Taking that All-Important First Step

Every journey must have a goal, and while our point of excellence may be continuously "just over the horizon", our efforts should always focus on a creation of a culture of safety, quality, progress, and delivery of a service that is second to none.

To refocus our journey, I am pleased to share that the establishment of a total of eight Workgroups (WG) and Task Forces (TF) will be announced on January 5, 2011.

The WG and TF concept is intended to strategically analyze and provide recommendations for many of the critical, sometimes chronic, issues affecting our Department. The Workgroups will be standing, permanent teams designed to provide long-term support to these critical elements. The Task Forces will generally be temporary in nature, lasting about 90-days, and may be extended by the Fire Chief as necessary. Task Forces will examine areas where enhancements may have been identified and/or available, however, not implemented.

In closing, I can sum up my future plan for this Department in a single ideal, and that is to leave our Department better than it was before it was placed in my charge. To achieve this, I commit that I will uphold four simple goals:

- **Maintaining a standard for integrity and professionalism for myself and those I manage.**
- **Assuring the safety and well-being of our workforce, both volunteer and career.**
- **Measuring each decision on how well it will improve the service to our citizens.**
- **Operating within a sound fiscal structure that is responsible and accountable to taxpayers.**

Achievement of these goals will require all of us to express a loyalty to our common vision: To improve our ability to serve the citizens of our community to the best of our ability, while constantly safeguarding the well-being of our personnel. The paradox for me is that loyalty to that common vision cannot be mandated. Loyalty must be demonstrated and earned. It is my intent to earn your loyalty by demonstrating to you - through action more than words - that I am worthy of your trust.

I hope each of you will join me in bringing our collective vision to reality.

Sincerely,



Marc S. Bashoor
Acting Fire Chief

Announcements

■ All personnel are reminded that effective January 3, 2011, all correspondence from the Office of the Fire Chief – including the "Lines & Leads" Newsletter, reorganizational plans, and Sworn, Civilian, and Volunteer Personnel Memorandums – will be disseminated electronically, except in circumstances where signatures are required or legal processes require paper documents. Electronic dissemination will save thousands of dollars monthly in printing and duplication needs. Work sites are encouraged to only print announcements as necessary, while sharing them widely in electronic format. We are working to ensure an adequate email stream is identified for volunteer dissemination. Until such time, the extensive email list compiled by Volunteer Major McClelland will be used to ensure as wide a volunteer email distribution as possible.

■ A new feature for the newsletter will focus attention on our people, our facilities, and our equipment. An individual or groups of individuals will be selected each newsletter for "Highlighting".

The selections will be derived from contributions submitted by our readers, with a focus on the extraordinary facilities and equipment and, most importantly on the service of our membership – both on and off the job, and in and out of the station or office.

Please forward your suggestions for these features via email to sltaylor@co.pg.md.us.

Accidents & Injuries

■ INJURIES 2010	339
■ INJURIES 2009	331
■ CHANGE + 8	^2.4%
■ ACCIDENTS 2010	225
(99 WERE DEEMED PREVENTABLE)	
■ ACCIDENTS 2009	214
(101 WERE DEEMED PREVENTABLE)	
■ CHANGE + 11	^5.2%