



FREMONT COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

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THE DISTRICT

January-February 2015

Volume 8, Issue 1

Chief's Message

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Oops!!!

The National Assoc. of
State Foresters, who supply
the Smokey Bear Pocket
Planners, wish to
apologize!

In printing this year's cal-
endars they inadvertently
gave us 29 days in
February of 2015.

As we all know 2015 can-
not possibly be a leap year.

To make up for the error
they do promise to give us
29 days in February next
year!!!

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to those of you I didn't get to see before the Holiday Season. I hope that each and every one of you had a wonderful Holiday Season. This time of year can tend to be stressful on people and add to our already hectic lives. When in reality this time of year should be a more relaxed time, a time to enjoy our family and friends and look back at the past and forward to a New Year. But once again we have let the world dictate to us what we "should" be doing and not what we need to be doing. We are driven into the frenzy by the hustle and bustle of those around us and forget that being part of this frenzy is really our choice. So when we begin to feel a little out of control or that we are being controlled we need to step back and look at the bigger picture and what is truly important to us. And for that THANK YOU.

This is kind of a hectic time of year for me also with the meetings, trainings, and conven-
tions that I attend in hopes of picking up things to not only help myself personally but to
help you with and also the District. I would like to share with you some of the "isms" that I
picked up recently. These are things that we can apply to our daily lives. Things that will
help us personally, with our families, and in our fire family as well. Well here goes:

You're the Fire Chief, act like it. Remember that as a Fire Chief I represent the Fire
District no matter where I am or what I am doing. This can be applied to all of us no mat-
ter our rank or position on the department. From the Chief Officers to the Probationary
Firefighters we all represent our department and our fellow firefighters. We also represent
all firefighters around the world, with today's social media all it has to say is "firefighter"
and your actions represent all firefighters.

Act like you've been there before. This one can be taken many different ways, but
for us it goes back to know what you are doing or at least don't act like you don't know
what you are doing. Our public perception is what keeps us alive and we do not need bad
publicity in any form.

Don't ask me what you can't do, show me what you can do. Not sure what more I
can really add to this one. Follow the rules, especially the golden rule.

Run the bases like you want to win. Nothing is more frustrating than watching peo-
ple do things that they are not committed to do. Like my Father used to tell me "If you're
going to do something, do it like it means something to you."

From the book **Lessons from the Geese**, - "Are you honking just to honk or are you
saying something positive." We can learn a lot about life and being part of some-
thing from geese. A whole other topic for another day. Just remember that you are part of
something bigger as a firefighter, a family and that we need to help each other along the
way.

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District Trainer Dan Oakley

Hey folks,

Back in November Chief Haslam and I attended the International Association of Fire Chiefs VCOS Symposium in the Sun and like we have in the past years we took a couple of Commissioners and Battalion Chiefs with us. This conference has always been thought provoking and usually leads to some pretty interesting conversations among those who attend. This year was no exception, each person who attends seems to come away from the conference with different thoughts, views and ideas. In the past 4 years that I have went, it seems that I always came away with different ideas of fire ground leadership whether it be strategies and tactics, accountability or some other fire ground safety concern.

This year was different, this year there were two different breakout sessions that really got me thinking. The first was Reputation Management, the presenter was a young lady from a large volunteer organization back east. She started the presentation with news headlines from all 50 states that included sexual assault, robbery, vehicular homicide due to drunk driving and murder. The kicker was that every headline was started with "Firefighter accused of" or "Firefighter convicted of". She then informed us that she was going to pass a bucket around to collect donations for "a good cause". Then she addressed social media and the pitfalls that a poorly or inappropriately worded comment or post can have on your department. She also pointed out that "**EVERYONE**" is a reporter and that in today's world we are being filmed, recorded and or photographed all the time. She finished up her presentation by pointing out to us that we had donated almost \$300.00 on blind faith that the money was going to be donated to a "good cause" even though we didn't know what that "cause" was. When she asked us why we donated the money without asking her any questions about who or what the money was being raised for, the answer was unanimous "Because you are a Firefighter". Simply proving that the level of trust the general public has in us and how easily it would be to betray that trust and destroy our reputation.

The second breakout session that got me thinking was presented by this old guy from Virginia. Now, I am not going to lie, I had a very hard time listening to his presentation because he was very dry and spoke in a monotone. However, he posed one question that caught my attention and then followed it up with a statement that really got me to thinking. The question was simple: Do you have a Fire House or a Fire Station? He then explained the differences between them.

A Fire House is just that, it is a house. A place where family and friends gather, memories are made, stories are told and traditions are developed and continued. As we struggle with recruitment and retention, I look back on the 20 years that I have spent in the emergency services and try to figure out what changed. Here is the single biggest change that I came up with. Now I can only reflect on my experiences but I believe many of you will identify with it. When I joined the fire department I instantly acquired 64 brothers who made it their mission to teach me everything I needed to know and make sure that I went home to my family. My wife inherited 64 brothers in law and my kids now had 64 uncles. Even though I spent a lot of personal time away from my



Chief's message

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Use the Brain Trust. This one is one that we often steer clear of. I believe it is due to the fact that we don't want others to think that either we don't know what we are doing or the fear that they might know more than we do. Well get over it, working together will get you a lot further than trying to do everything yourself. Let people be part of the solution and build a strong organization. Which brings us to another one, **'Pay attention to everyone.'**

Don't be a Billboard for bad behavior. Goes with **"What do they see when they see you coming"**. Remember who you are and what you represent—ALWAYS. **People will never forget what you do.** They may forget what you have done, but do something wrong and they will remember it. If you haven't experienced it Trust Me on this one.

Humility Matters – Stay Hardware Humble. We have all seen it, the one person that does something and gets recognized for it or accomplishes a milestone and there becomes no living with that person. I think you all know what I am talking about, I am not saying that bettering yourself is a bad thing by any means, as a matter of fact that is why we are all here. Improving ourselves and the organizations that we are associated with is what this life is all about. The same goes for some folk when they become officers and they receive that brass or hardware. Some switch turns on and they suddenly become the all-knowing, all seeing, and all doing magical, whimsical, oracle. What I am saying is that no matter what you do, you need to remember is that you probably didn't get there by yourself. Sure you put forth the effort, stayed with it till the end, succeeded and you deserve the recognition. But there were probably people that helped you along the way and you should return the favor and not act like you are the god of what you do. Remember **"Get like you was before you got what you is."** Again there is nothing wrong with improving yourself and reaching for higher levels of achievement. As long as you remain humble, share what you have done and how you did it with others. We all get out of bed in the morning and put our pants on one leg at a time and we never know when we may need the help of another.

Like I've been told, I tell my children, and we all have been told **"Don't Burn Your Bridges"**. You never know when that one person whom you really don't have much of a use for right now may be the one that saves your rear end in the future.

The last one that I will share with you right now is **"Say Thank YOU"**. As we go through this life it is the little things that can make the difference sometimes. The good mornings, how ya doin, have a nice day, etc. But for me it is letting the good people around me know that they are appreciated. And when you say thank you be sincere and really mean it. If you're not then don't. And for all of you out there, THANK YOU.

Chief Craig Haslam

Remember the Fire District's Annual Banquet: The Banquet will be January 24th at Saint Margaret's Gymnasium. RSVP to Headquarters 857-3030.

If your Battalion wants to nominate a Fire Fighter of the Year those nominations are due to Headquarters by 5:00 p.m. on January 9th.

Hope to see you all at the Banquet !!!

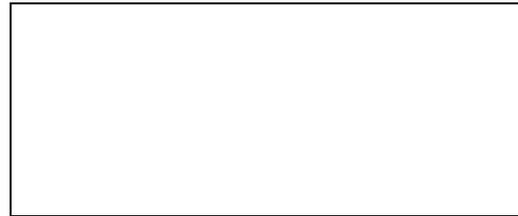


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Mission Statement

The Fremont County Fire District is dedicated to providing the highest quality of fire, emergency and other community related services to the residents and visitors of the district.



We're on the Web at

FremontCountyFireDistrict.com

Dan's Message Continued

family the department made sure that they were included in as much as possible. Every major holiday was a family celebration at the fire house. The annual awards banquet was a time for the wives to be appreciated and treated like queens. The annual summer picnic was for the kids with games and water fights. Much of the extracurricular activities were designed to be family friendly and to keep them involved as much as possible. Many of the wives would get together on their own when the guys were tied up with fire business and our kids played together regularly. It was a family, dysfunctional at times and definitely not without its own family drama, but family none the less.

We all complain about the lack of people knocking on the door. Recruitment is down and retention is becoming harder and harder to maintain. With all that is required of our firefighters these days many of our people are forced to make a choice between the department and the family. That is a pretty easy decision to make. If we want to recruit and retain members then we need to bring the family aspect back into our departments.

Oh yeah, a Fire Station, that is just a place where trucks are stored!

Dan