

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Douglas P. Forsman
Fire Chief
Union Colony Fire Rescue Authority

Issues . . .

The word "issues" is a bit of an overworked buzz word these days. The term seems to apply to problems, disagreements and even troubled relationships. While we hope that there are not many fire service related matters in the latter two categories, we as members of the Colorado State Fire Chiefs' Association do have "issues". Here are some that merit your thought, concern and action.

1. We recently laid to rest a young fire officer and family man, Captain Shane Stewart, as a result of a line of duty death. The issues that are the root cause these tragic events are well known to all of us. Safety is a management responsibility and we as individuals are ultimately responsible for our own safety. We as a fire service in the whole must continue to address these issues.
2. The health of our Colorado Forests is an issue now and it will be for many years in the future. This significant "powder keg" that we sit upon in terms of the dry wildland fuel load holds a potentially devastating blow for us as well as the ecology and economy of the State. The problem is not just for our forested lands and interface areas, but also threatens the water supply for the entire Front Range and Plains. We must continue to draw attention to this situation in government forums and among our citizens, now and in the future.
3. The built environment is an issue. We live in a world where conveniences are paramount regardless of the hazard that they may represent. Balancing proper built-in fire and safety systems with the desire for and cost of our conveniences will always be a challenging issue for us.
4. Age is an issue. You won't get much argument from me on that. However, we are all seeing the impacts of an aging population upon our workloads. Older citizens have always had special service needs and the number of these types of calls will increase dramatically with the aging of the "baby boomer" generations. We need to find creative and cost effective ways to serve our older citizens with the type of compassionate and helpful service that is the trademark of the fire service.

5. The proper flow of information and the sharing of ideas among our peers is an issue. With many of Colorado's smaller fire departments absent from our membership roles, the flow of valuable information and its subsequent feedback remains a challenge for the Colorado State Fire Chiefs' Association and its members. Encouraging our peers to participate and share both at our Association level and at the local association level is a responsibility of all of us.

Your Association is very much focused on these and other important issues. Your help, input, opinions and compassionate concern are needed. So, next time you hear someone say that they have "issues", you can that we have issues as well. In the case of our issues, let's all work together to address them.

Be safe.

Sincerely,

Douglas P. Forsman, President
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