

MINUTES OF THE  
*WYOMING FIRE CHIEFS' ASSOCIATION*  
RIVERTON, WYOMING  
March 31, 2000

- The meeting was called to order by President Wenke at 10:05 am, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.
- A sign up sheet was circulated and everyone was asked to indicate if they would like to serve on committees and which ones. If you are already on a committee you will be reappointed unless you have a valid reason to be taken off. Officers present were Russ Wenke, Gene Diedrich, Brad Sarff, Don Huber, and Bob Taylor.
- A motion was made by Bob Taylor to approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on January 7, 2000 as mailed. Ray Weidenhaft seconded. Motion carried.  
(Motion #1)
- The Treasurers' report was given by Secretary/Treasurer Diedrich. Starting Balance as of 1/1/2000 was \$10,122.00. Took in \$3,440.00 in dues, ½ NVFC dues paid by Firemen's Association of \$150.00, Interest earned was approximately 40.00 for total receipts of \$3,630.00. Paid out \$300.00 on NVFC dues, \$1847.00 in grants, \$150.00 on postage, \$605.00 on copying, \$1500.00 for Legislative Committee. Total Expenditures were \$4,402.00. Total left is \$9,350.00 as of March 28th. The Grant balances are Recruit and Retention - \$2,761.00, \$400.00 to Missouri Valley Fire Chiefs Grant and \$2,292.00 to the Website Grant. There are currently unrestricted funds of \$3,898.00. A motion was made by Lanny Applegate and seconded by Speed Hartbank to accept the Treasurers' report. Motion carried.  
(Motion #2)

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

- State Fire Council: Russ gave a report on the last meeting on February 25 in Cheyenne. There were no appeals. There was an update on the roping arena in Riverton and that they have come to an agreement with Dick Dubay on how they would handle it. There was information from the University of Wyoming that the City of Laramie has given enforcement of the electrical code back to the State Fire Marshal's Office. There was an agreement made that the State Electrical Board would act as an intermediary if there is a disagreement between UW and the Fire Marshal's Office. The hearing appeal process was discussed. The Council has a new member - Dr. Brian Pead with Lincoln County School District #2. The next three meetings of the Council are June 16 - Rawlins, September 29 - Gillette and December 1 - Powell.
- Missouri Valley (Bob Taylor): Chief Young and the committee have had three meetings. Things are moving along well. The hospitality room committee is formed and in place. They are hoping to have a good contingency to go to Joplin in July. At the next meeting

they hope to confirm some speakers. Donna has set up the budget although there won't be any expenditures for a while. Should be money coming in from registrations before they need to pay anything out. Mark Young asked for ideas on speakers. Gene asked how many speakers they would like. Bob Taylor responded that they would like two to four. Some have been eliminated because they were very costly. The person from Colorado has not confirmed but they hope he will. Don Huber asked if they had a particular context for the speaker. Bob responded that there has been no theme or title yet. Whatever the current buzz word is.

- Certification (Ron Smith): The major thing going on is the new testing system. The system is not changed just the test. The tests will be graded by scanner so that will be a timesaver. We are being held up right now in trying to develop the test with modular testing. It is a computer based program and we just haven't got it figured out but it will be implemented sometime in the year.
- Legislative (Lanny Applegate): Lanny gave an overview of the bills that were brought up this year. Attached is a copy of the results of the various bills. Discussion was held on who supported the bills. HB0222 was amended to say that the funds would go to the General Fund.

Lanny thanked everyone who came down there and also those who stayed at home and contacted legislators. He believes that the support really works. He also commented on the loss of Cap Lee who was a powerful force and will be missed. He commented that Cap was a great benefit to himself (Lanny) and the Fire Service.

The next meeting will be in Lusk in June.

- WIFRS (Ray Weidenhaft) - State Forestry and the State Fire Marshal's Office have gotten together on the new NFIRS 5.0. They have ordered 50 copies of Firehouse and 2 copies of the site licenses. In April they will come up with an implementation plan. Some departments may receive the software at no charge and if others need them the Forestry and Fire Marshal's Office will jointly fund that. They are trying to come up with some computers for departments that can't afford them. Eventually there will be training on the software. Russ asked the Chiefs to come up with a list of computers. Ray said that they would send out a survey to see who needs equipment and they are looking at the possibility of getting some workable computers through surplus.
- Fallen Fire Fighter Memorial (Gerry Dewey): The Memorial Service is on for 1:00 p.m. They still need pictures of some of the firefighters. If anyone has any information of who to contact or whatever she would appreciate receiving it. There will be coffee and cookies after the Memorial in the Memorial Hall. There are several families who are planning on attending this year. She also pointed out that the wall on the south is all Blackwater Fire pictures and the north wall has all the others.
- Nomination Committee: Don Huber reported that the same officers have been nominated. Those officers are: Russ Wenke - President, Brad Sarff - 1st Vice President and Don Huber - 2nd Vice President. Bob Taylor is on the Missouri Valley Committee but his term is not up

till next year. There were no nominations from the floor. Bob Taylor moved to accept the nominations and cast a unanimous ballot. Jim Wingert seconded. The motion carried.  
(Motion #3)

- Constitution and Bylaws : No report.
- Officer Development: No Report
- Wyoming Fire Academy (Gene Diedtrich) - The Academy is doing very well and Chief David is doing a good job. They are getting ready for the S&I classes. The Natural Gas Facility is just about finished and should be a great training setup for the fire service and the community. Lanny stated that the Academy was one of the places where people could donate to the Larry Lee Memorial. Gene stated that the projected total amount could be \$2,000 - \$3,000 or more. He is suggesting a scholarship for a student in Fire Science. If anyone has any suggestions the Board or the family would be receptive. The Foundation Board with the help of the family will decide where to best use the donations.
- National Volunteer Fire Council (Carl Jungck): He is still trying to keep everyone informed on the legislative updates. The National meeting will be held in Washington DC in May. This last year he assisted and directed two seminars in the nation on how to train volunteer firefighters. He is very protective of our system in Wyoming and feels it is a good system. He and Russ Wenke went to Georgia and Texas and had about 40 states that attended. He is on the Wildland Committee and would like to see more people join that group as individuals as well as departments. Russ added that Carl gave him a copy of a fax about the House passing a bill for \$100,000,000. for money for local fire and emergency services. Now it goes to the Senate so we will see how it goes. It passed 386 to 28 in the House.
- International Association of Fire Chiefs - Volunteer Officers(Gary Scott): No report
- Haz Mat (Don Huber) - They are looking at reproducing the Awareness Course in Correspondence format. We'll continue with the regular classes but this may help some students who can't take regular classes for whatever reason. There is money available for Haz Mat classes now so get with Ron Smith if you need a class. We have noticed an increase in the amount of EMS who have taken the classes. To date 3,357 students have been through the classes. Incident Command for HazMat has had their Train the Trainer class. The Haz Mat conference will not be held this year. The planning committee has decided to cut back on legislative items this next year since that seemed to be their downfall this year. There is a possible grant available through the Department of Justice to buy some equipment. Possibly as much as \$3,000,000.
- Recruit and Retention: No report.
- Association of Arson Investigators - The Fire Academy will be housing the reference materials for the Association. They had their spring conference in Thermopolis a few weeks ago. Their next conference will be in September tentatively in Jackson.

- Fire Marshal's Office (Ron Smith): There is money available for Haz Mat Training at Awareness and Operations levels. The IC level is just about ready. The ERG books are available and if you want books for your trucks talk to your county coordinator. There will be three NFA classes at Cody Fire School. We are showing a decline in NFA classes and would like to keep the numbers up to about 20 per class. One of the classes is Incident Command for Structural Collapse and it is being taught by the Fire Chief in Colorado Springs. He is a very interesting speaker even if you are not interested in structural collapse. The Gard Brother issue has been resolved - they changed their covering last week to a fire retardant covering.

Rich Hallcroft addressed the Chiefs about an Arson issue. In 1994 and 1995, in Sheridan, there were six vehicle fires on the first night and they had about 13 incidents in a year. There was a similar problem in Billings and at one time they had nine incidents. Last month in Casper there were three vehicle fires and a house in one night. The only information in Sheridan was an elderly lady saw two younger adult males and didn't think too much of it even though one of them was crawling under the vehicle. She didn't report it for about two days. Since the ones started in Casper it is now up to eight fires. It appears that someone is traveling around doing this so if anyone has any information on similar fires please let Rich know. Russ encouraged anyone with information to contact Rich.

- Forestry Division (Ray Weidenhaft): He thanked the legislative committee and fire service for supporting the Forestry division this year. They were able to stay within the State Lands and Investments and now will look at the agency as a whole. The director has assured he would give his support. The budget took a hit in the operating budget. It may not affect the programs but will probably impact travel, etc. He recognized the Wyoming State Forestry Outstanding Performer of the Year - Carl Jungck. Russ commended Carl for his representation of the firefighters of Wyoming. When he leaves another state, everyone knows just how proud he is of the State of Wyoming and their programs. Ray stated that Forestry was very glad to have Carl and he would soon be very visible in his "yellow" vehicle.
- WEMA (Bob Bezak) - He introduced three of the ladies who work in his office. They were Bobbie Tenborg who is the Administrative Assistant for the State Emergency Response Commission, Kelly Reese who is the Public Affairs Officer for WEMA and Candace Van Dyke who is the media representative for the Emergency Response Commission. They will be doing some traveling around the state doing training. In April they will be at the WLEA to train on Incident Command. The new ERG's are in. They are free now and when they run out there will be a cost. Every county has a hand held computer that has the ERG built in it as well as other things. If you get a chance and they are not being used check it out. WEMA has two fully equipped communications trailers - dispatch centers, fax, satellite, phones, etc. They will get low band in them this summer which seemed to be a problem at an incident near Lusk recently. Congress is funding Terrorism and Weapons of Mass Destruction, that will change to CBRN - Chemical - Biological - Radiological - Nuclear. A lot of money will be put out for this for training and equipment. Hopefully we can use that for our old Haz Mat scheme. Wildland fire potential is high this year. Snowpack is now 85 to 90 percent of normal. Less than one half the snowpack of past years. He thanked Lanny and the others for their support in legislation and they will reciprocate as much as they can. WEMA took

4% cut in their operating budget. They lost 1 position in WEMA.

- Gene added a statement regarding the Academy. He wanted everyone to know that the Academy is trying to generate more funds. They would appreciate any input on what we can do as our burn building is becoming high maintenance.

### Old Business

- Russ brought up that Gene's books need auditing. It was decided that Russ and 1 officer could do the audit.

### New Business

- Russ reminded everyone that the Memorial would be at 1:00. The banquet will be at 7:00 with cocktails at 6:00. Riverton Fire Department has agreed to handle the banquet at Station One. The cost is \$12.50 each. A head count was taken.
- Russ asked whether the Fire Chiefs would like to contribute to Larry Lee's memorial at the Wyoming Fire Academy. Ray Weidenhaft moved and Jim Wingert seconded to donate \$250.00. Bob Taylor asked if that amount was sufficient. Discussion was held. Ray amended his motion to donate \$1000.00 and the second was amended. The motion carried.
- Gene received a letter from the International Association of Fire Chiefs about their Award of Excellence program. You can nominate a fire department for this award. If anyone is interested contact Russ Wenke.
- Jim Wingert brought up about the problem of snake pits. In Laramie County they have a place that sells venomous snakes, poisonous spiders, etc. The County Attorney in that county has researched it and there are no statutes that cover it except under Game and Fish. Maybe legislatively we need to do something. First responders are at risk. Don Huber agreed that it is a concern. He asked about the problems with registering these types of places.

There was no more new business.

The next meeting will be on June 14th in Lusk at 5:00 pm at the Fire Hall.

Gene announced that only three people signed up for committees so the President and Secretary will set up the committees.

Bob Taylor reminded everyone that the meeting in Joplin will start on July 13th. If anyone is interested in going meet with Bob and Gene after this meeting.

Jim Wingert moved and Bob Bezak seconded that the meeting adjourn at 11:15 a.m.

Attachments: Copy of the Legislative report and copy of Mark Young's speech which was given at the Memorial Service.

APRIL 1, 2000

TO: PRESIDENT RUSS WENKE  
WYOMING FIRE CHIEF'S ASSOCIATION

SUBJECT: UPDATE OF 2000 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

**HB0062 - SPECIAL LICENSE PLATES FOR FIREFIGHTERS**  
AN ACT AUTHORIZING SPECIAL VEHICLE LICENSE PLATES TO  
FIREFIGHTERS. THIS IS A REVENUE GENERATING BILL. THIS COULD RAISE  
A MINIMUM OF \$90,000.00 AND AS MUCH AS DOUBLE THAT IF EACH FIRE  
FIGHTER BOUGHT TWO SETS. THESE PLATES ARE TO RECOGNIZE FIRE  
FIGHTERS, BOTH CAREER AND VOLUNTEERS. WE FELT THAT THIS WOULD  
BE AN EXCELLENT RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION TOOL FOR  
VOLUNTEERS. THEY WOULD ALSO WORK FOR IDENTIFYING FIRE  
FIGHTERS ON OR OFF DUTY THAT MAY ASSIST OTHER AGENCIES.  
PLACED ON GENERAL FILE, DID NOT MAKE IT TO FLOOR FOR  
DISCUSSION

**HB0064 - SCHOOL REQUIRED FIRE AND SAFETY DRILLS**  
RELATING TO FIRE DRILLS REQUIRED IN SCHOOLS, AUTHORIZING SAFETY  
DRILLS AS DETERMINED BY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION  
SEVERAL AMENDMENTS ON BILL - HAVE NOT SEEN FINAL BILL, BUT  
WAS SIGNED BY GOVERNOR

**HB0075 - PLAN "B" FIREMEN'S PENSION**  
AN ACT INCREASING SERVICE PENSION BENEFITS  
SIGNED BY GOVERNOR

**HB0076 - PLAN "A" FIREMEN'S PENSION**  
AN ACT INCREASING THE BASE BENEFIT AMOUNT  
SIGNED BY GOVERNOR

**HB0085 - SEARCH AND RESCUE OPERATIONS**  
ESTABLISHING S&R COUNCIL, DELEGATING RULE MAKING AUTHORITY,  
CLARIFY AND MODIFYING S&R ACCOUNT EXPENDITURES AND  
ADMINISTRATION.  
PLACED ON GENERAL FILE - DID NOT MAKE TO FLOOR FOR  
DISCUSSION

**HB0192 - FIRE PROTECTION - EXCEPTION**  
PROVIDING AN EXCEPTION TO THE UBC FOR CERTAIN BUILDINGS AND  
STRUCTURES.  
ASSIGNED TO COMMITTEE - WAS NOT DISCUSSED

**HB0195 - DE-EARMARKING OF STATE REVENUES**

AN ACT RELATING TO DE-EARMARKING OF REVENUES. DE-EARMARKING FEDERAL MINERAL ROYALTIES AND SEVERANCE TAXES FOR TRANSPORTATION AND INTEREST ON WATER DEVELOPMENT FUNDS., CREATING AN EDUCATION EQUITY ACCOUNT; MAKING CONFORMING AMENDMENTS AS NECESSARY. THE ONE THAT EFFECTS THE FIRE SERVICE IS THE CAPITAL CONSTRUCTION GRANT PROGRAM. IT'S BEEN PROPOSED TO DE-EARMARK SOME OF THESE FUNDS TO FUND CERTAIN STATE AGENCIES (STATE FORESTRY). THIS COULD DIRECTLY EFFECT YOUR ABILITY TO FUND FIRE APPARATUS AND STATIONS, ETC. VERY VOLUMINOUS BILL - FIRE SERVICE ~~DID NOT~~ SUPPORT THIS BILL. SEVERAL AMENDMENTS. UNSURE IF GOVERNOR EVER SIGNED

**HB0222- FIRE PROTECTION**

RELATING TO FIRE PROTECTION, CREATING A FIRE PREVENTION AND SAFETY PLAN REVIEW AND INSPECTION ACCOUNT, AUTHORIZING THE DEPT OF FIRE PREVENTION AND ELECTRICAL SAFETY TO COLLECT FEES FOR THE PLAN REVIEWS AND OTHER INSPECTIONS AS PROVIDED BY RULE. SIGNED BY GOVERNOR

THE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ALSO LOBBIED IN SUPPORT OF THE WY STATE FORESTRY AND FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE BUDGETS.

THE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE WOULD LIKE TO THANK ALL THE FIRE FIGHTERS WHO TOOK THE TIME TO CALL THEIR LEGISLATORS.

LANNY APPEGATE / CHAIRMAN  
LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

## FIREFIGHTER SAFETY

Mark Young, City of Casper Fire Chief

Fellow Chief Officers, fire service members, Wyoming Fire Academy Staff, family members and guests. I am honored to be able to speak to you today.

Today we pay tribute to Wyoming's fallen firefighters. The firefighters who are enshrined on this memorial made the supreme sacrifice in the service of this State, their counties, their communities, their departments and their fellow firefighters. We are also here to pay our respects and to continue our support of these firefighter's families. You see, these family members have also paid the ultimate price.

The fallen firefighters who are honored today should serve as a constant reminder to us of the service, commitment and dedication they provided to this State. We are also reminded that we as fire service leaders need to be ever vigilant in our efforts to increase firefighter safety. Today I would like to speak about firefighter safety.

As I look around the crowd today, I see many fire service members and fellow chief officers. I am going to focus on what we as chief officers and fire service leaders can do to enhance firefighter safety in our districts, counties and communities.

First, I would like to relay a story to you about a Fire Captain named Jim Dame. He was a member of the Natrona County Fire Department and served in this capacity until his death in 1991. I'm telling you this story because I knew Jim personally and professionally. In 1991 I was a Captain with the Casper Fire Department and worked at Station #6. My crew and I served the City of Casper and assisted the County Fire Department on mutual aid and automatic aid responses. Because of this fact, Jim's crew and my crew often trained together. We also made a point to invite each other's crews to our stations for an occasional breakfast and dinner. One day while I was on duty I heard the County Department with Captain Dame get dispatched to a structure fire in the County. My station was near the highway and I remember seeing Jim and his crew pass by heading out into the county to fight this fire. That moment was the last time I ever saw Jim. Captain Dame suffered a heart attack and passed away during the later stages of that fire. I was shocked and deeply saddened when I heard the news. I kept coming back to the thought of how easily a life can be taken away. Jim did not return to his station. Jim did not return home to his wife and loving family. That incident re-focused my attention on safety both personally and professionally. Today as a chief officer I am still reminded of Captain Jim Dame and I am motivated to do more to provide for firefighter safety.

We as fire service leaders and as chief officers all share a common mission. That mission is to see that all personnel under our command will return safely to their families after the emergency or after the end of each work shift.

Every time I visit this memorial site I wonder if there will be more names added in the future. I regretfully have to answer yes. Yes, more brave firefighters and rescue services personnel will



be enshrined with the others who have gone before. But why does this answer have to be yes? An answer to this comes in the fact that we work and serve in an emergency service field that is wrought with risk and danger.

At this memorial we honor and pay tribute to the 41 Wyoming firefighters who have died while in the line of duty since 1920. On a national basis, we lose an average of 100 firefighters a year while performing their duties in the line of duty. And during a single year approximately 100,000 firefighters are injured in one way or another.

As many of you are aware, the role of the fire service has changed dramatically over the past 20 years. We used to provide emergency services in the areas of fire control, prevention, basic emergency medical services and basic rescue functions. Today, we still perform these basic services. However, many of our departments are called to respond to hazardous materials incidents, advanced Emergency Medical situations, high angle rescues, confined space rescues, swift water and underwater rescues, trench and collapse rescue situations, extended and more complicated wildland fires, to name a few. All of these changes have increased the level of risk to our firefighters in this State. There are approximately 1.1 million firefighters in America. Out of that number, there are nearly 4,500 firefighters in the State of Wyoming. All of these firefighters are exposed to these increased risks and dangers.

Does this mean that we as fire service leaders simply accept the fact that we work in a dangerous environment, and injuries and fatalities are a part of the job? The answer to this is no. As our risks increase we need to ask ourselves what level of risk is acceptable to you and your department. We all need to understand that we are #1 and that we must take care of ourselves first before we can protect and serve.

So what can we do to provide for enhanced safety in our departments? I would suggest the following:

- We need to change attitudes. The key to safety is attitude and it starts at the top with the Chief. I truly believe that you will set the tone for your department through your behavior, actions, and attitude. We as officers must ensure that our behaviors are safe, our actions are sound, and our attitude toward safety is strong and proactive. Remember, lead by example.
- I also feel that it is important that we all work together, not separately, to provide for greater safety. Here in the State of Wyoming our resources of apparatus, equipment and manpower are very limited. Comparatively, fire departments on the east coast and west coast can easily respond to a major fire with literally dozens of apparatus and hundreds and hundreds of firefighters. I know that here in Wyoming we might be able to muster a handful of engines and maybe 50 firefighters. Well guess what, fires and other emergencies don't consider how many people and trucks we respond with. Fires still burn with the same intensity in Cody as they do in New York City. Hazardous materials are as deadly in Douglas as they are in Los Angeles. And we all need to realize that our rural environment does not make us any less vulnerable to the terrorist threat. Our fellow Oklahoma City Firefighters know that all too well.

- I know that together we can provide more resources to help each other in the time of need. This will aid in making our workplace safer.
- I feel that together we need to adopt more mutual aid and automatic aid agreements with neighboring departments so that we can respond beyond traditional jurisdictional boundaries to get our jobs accomplished more efficiently and safely.
- We can continue to train together so that we can actually work together when called upon.
- Our departments must continue to stress the importance of Incident Command. And we must constantly train and apply its usage to provide for better accountability.
- We need to continue to support this training facility, the State Fire Marshal's office, State Forestry and other major fire schools around this State.
- We need to ensure that all departments in this State have adequate personal protective equipment. I would like to see an increased level of commitment from departments to donate their surplus protective equipment to those departments who are struggling to purchase their own.
- I believe it is important to be more aggressive in our investigations of firefighter injuries. I would like to see a system developed where we could document "near misses." A near miss is when a firefighter feels that he or she was lucky not to have been injured or killed. If we can track these kinds of near misses it will give us a clearer picture of our existing safety problems.

These are just a few ideas of what we can do together to increase firefighter safety. I am sure that there are many more.

It has been said that when the experts need help they call the fire department. Because of this, we must ensure that all firefighters who respond have great safety attitudes, the proper equipment, the necessary skills and knowledge to get the job done safely.

We should all be proud of the great accomplishments that we have made over the past decade in the area of firefighter safety. We must continue to assist each other in enhancing the safety of firefighters in this State.

In conclusion, I challenge all fire service leaders to re-focus on safety and to work in a spirit of unity so that we can effectively manage the risks to our firefighters.

Each year we will come to this spot to honor these fallen firefighters with deep respect and heavy hearts. And each year we can walk away with a spirit of commitment and dedication to provide the best in firefighter safety.