



# *Lake Region Firefighters Association*

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## **July 16, 2012 Lake Region Meeting Minutes**

President Scott Schaefer called the meeting of the Lake Region Firefighters Association to order at 7:32 PM. The pledge of allegiance to the U.S. flag was said. A moment of silence was observed for all fallen firefighters. We were welcomed to Albany by host chief Dean Mitchell. Chief Mitchell thanked everyone for coming and originally the meeting was to be at the fire station and luckily it was moved to an air conditioned place. Talked a little about a retired member of the Albany department, Jim Stueve, who passed away that afternoon. Chief Mitchell introduced the Albany City Administrator Tom Schneider who also thanked everybody on behalf of the City of Albany for showing up on a hot summer night. Roll call was taken showing 88 firefighters representing 26 fire departments. There were 10 guests and vendors present for a total attendance of 98.

Fire Chief Ken Heim of the Sartell-LeSauk Fire Department was on hand to give an approximately 30 minute overview of the Verso Paper Mill fire that occurred on Memorial Day, May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Ken led the audience through the timeline of fire while showing pictures and playing dispatch recordings. Upon dispatch Sartell already knew they had two people unaccounted for in the building. Ken described calling for initial mutual aid to realizing as he crossed the bridge heading to Verso that he had a disaster. He called for the 14 departments in the Central Minnesota Fire Aid mutual aid group were called for apparatus and personnel. He showed various pictures of the plant and as the fire progressed. Ken stated that Sartell Fire trained annually on the Verso plant and in all their training they had always anticipated that the mills internally fire suppression system would be available. The explosion took out the water main which rendered the fire suppression system useless. Due to the loss of the fire suppression system the initial response turned defensive plus the operation became a rescue / recovery operation. It took about 45 minutes into the operation to learn that one of the two people missing was accounted for and one was deceased. Ken described some of the challenges facing them while fighting the fire. He described the BNSF track right next to the track where trains came through at about 60 mph every 20 minutes and it was fortunate that there was no train derailment as there was debris on the tracks. Ken stated that luckily somebody at Verso, presumably one of the guards, contacted BNSF and got the trains stopped at least temporarily. Getting to the fire was a challenge due to the railroad tracks and the instability of the blast area. Also complicating the operations was the fact was that the plant went down "hot" this meant the machines were running at operating speeds and the power plant was running. The main stack on the plant needed to be cooled down, requiring almost 36 hours of constant water application to avoid having the power plant from starting on fire. Showed pictures of the warehouse area and how the explosion took out a set of offices above the explosion site. Ken stated that if this had been a normal work day that area would have been occupied and many more people would have been injured or killed. Showed how the concrete walls were blown out and moved. Chief Heim also stated that when the warehouse was designed it was constructed as three separate areas which allowed entry from the north and south areas which were intact and fight the fire in the middle section which was damaged. Once BNSF arrived on the scene they wanted the trains to start moving again. BNSF brought in equipment to help clear the tracks and also removed some of the steel siding on the warehouse to allow better access to the fire. Talked about some

of the different attempts to access the fire that didn't work and the need to reevaluate and change as issues arose. As the trains moved through the supply hoses needed to be broken and aerials need to be stopped and moved back. After a while BNSF allowed the aerial to keep spraying water while they were raised for the trains to pass. Train speed was reduced to about 20 mph. Called for the helicopter, not sure how effective it was on the fire but it did allow Chief Heim to get a handle on size of the fire. About 2 ½ hours into the operations dispatch notified the scene of severe weather heading towards Sartell which included golf ball sized hail. Fortunately the weather moved through without much disruption. Initially 14 area fire departments responded to the call with approximately 150 people. 92 departments over the 8 day incident were on the scene in some capacity. As times progressed it was determined that parts of the collapse area were being supported with the large burning paper rolls. These rolls of paper weigh between 1 and 3 tons and would burn off each layer of paper and were difficult to put out. Safety was also the propriety at the incident. Sartell held twice daily safety meeting to discuss potential problems, hazards and plans moving forward. Engineers were brought in to evaluate the stability of the building and contractors were brought in to remove the rolls with heavy equipment. At times progress was slowed by the need to test the air for asbestos, none found, and concern by the contractors over the stability of the building. What worked well was the 800 MHz radio system, the incident command system. Some challenges besides what was already talked about were sending in departments and crews that had never seen the inside of the building. Also portions of the mill needed to be turned back to Verso so they could prevent further damage to the machinery due to plant shutting down while making paper. Since the plant went down while in operation the materials need to make paper needed to be removed before it turned solid and harden almost like concrete. Ken thanked the departments that showed up, thanked Bill Thoennes from the region for his help in lining up departments for the statewide mutual aid then asked for questions.

Minutes from the April quarterly meeting were emailed. Reading of April quarterly meeting minutes were waived with a motion made by Waite Park and second by Albany to approve the minutes. Motion carried.

The treasurer's report was presented.

Type	Date	Num	Name	Memo	Amount	Balance
<b>Plaza Park Bank</b>						<b>\$5,181.64</b>
Check	04/24/2012	5013	Iceberg Web Design	Website Updates	(\$100.00)	\$5,081.64
<b>Total</b>						<b>\$5,081.64</b>

Motion was made by Waite Park and second by Forada to accept the treasurer's report. Motion carried.

## REPORTS

### MSFDA – Mike “Spanky” Schroeder

<http://www.msfd.org>

- 2012 Conference will be June 14 – 16 in Alexandria. 385 delegates registered 251 guests. Keynote speaker Eddie Buchanan of Hanover Fire & EMS, Richmond, VA. talked about building leaders, not tactics. One thing Mike took away from his talks was the statement: “When your values are clear your decisions are made easy.”
  - Next year's conference in Bemidji will be a little later in the year, June 20<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup>.

- Will attempt to do a lot more hands on training at next year's conference.
- Joint meeting between and MSFDA and MSFCA brought out that every relief association needs to make sure they have their IRS 990 form completed. If not finished by the end of the year the IRS will be coming after the relief associations. Check the MSFDA and MSFCA web sites for information on how to proceed with the 990. This issue really only affects Minnesota and Pennsylvania so to the IRS this doesn't affect a lot of people which means they aren't moving too fast to remedy the situation.
- Legislation which passed this year.
  - Fire Safety Account will have substantial changes which will help with training.
  - The memorial dedication is scheduled for Sunday September 30, 2 – 4 pm. You can sign up for free tickets at <http://www.eventbrite.com/event/3311696373/>
  - Red lights on antique vehicles passed, allows antique fire trucks to drive on the road with red lights. Before it was technically illegal and some departments got in trouble.
- Fire Service day at the Capitol will most likely be in February, 40 plus seats are up for grabs and it's important to meet with these new people to let them know about issues with the fire service.
- Minnesota Fallen Firefighters Association is making a plea to get donations to cover the remaining \$45,000 needed for the memorial. 40% of the departments in the state have not donated, they are trying to get these departments to donate a least some money. Lists of departments that have donated and have not donated are available.

### **MSFCA Report – Bill Thoennes**

<http://msfca.org>

- Talked a little on the Sartell Verso fire, departments that returned from the incident mentioned the emphasis on safety. Thanked the departments that responded for request for personnel and equipment.
- Chief's Conference in Duluth, October 18 – 20<sup>th</sup>. Rooms are filling up fast, make sure the mention the MSFCA to get the group rate on the rooms.
- Fire Officers School, next February 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> at the Arrowwood Resort in Alexandria. Rooms are available to book at the Radisson and Hampton Inn. Going to try and make it a little more family oriented.

### **Certification Board – Dean Wrobbel**

<http://www.mfscb.org/>

- Theresa Zikmund [tzikmund@mfscb.org](mailto:tzikmund@mfscb.org) will be putting on two planning symposiums for fire instructors and training officers to help people prepare for the FFI and Operations certification testing. Something like a 30% fail rate. August 22<sup>nd</sup> 11:30 – 1:30 & 6:30 – 8:30 pm.
- Developing Inspector Certification.
- Certification schedule is available on the mfscb.org web site.

### **State Fire Marshal - Jerry Rosendahl**

<https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/sfm/>

- Commended the Lake Region as being one of the better attended and informative regions in the state.
- 28 fire deaths this year, 29 fire death so far last year.
- Hired Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Specialist Kathi Osmonson, some discussion on maybe changing the Juvenile to Youth.

- Also hire Fire Service Specialist Bruce Roed.
- Talked about ImageTrend for reporting. Free of charge from the state, trying to make sure it has features that people use in the commercial products.
- Bill passed to expand legalized fireworks but was vetoed based partly on opposition by the fire service.
- Vetoed a bill to prevent cities and the state from enacting a law requiring residential sprinklers in 1 and 2 family homes. Primarily supported by the builders association. Veto stated the main reason was that with the new construction methods and light weight material that public and firefighter safety was of importance.
- Opened up the rest of the money in the Fire Safety Account. In about 2 years the legislature will stop taking the surplus out of the account. The surcharge on the insurance was lowered to .50% from .65%. But with costs increasing the Fire Safety Account will increase. Jerry attributed the change from the legislature on the sea of red shirts that descend on the capitol during Fire Service Day at the Capitol.
- National Fire Academy contact is through the Fire Marshall's office now.
- Highway Responder Safety training will be coming out the Fire Marshall's office funded by the Fire Safety Account that will be distributed to departments in the future.

### **Bruce Roed**

- \$200,000 is available for Shared Services grants. Allows fire departments to study the feasibility of sharing services and equipment with other departments in a region. Doesn't require departments to merge or dissolve, make suggestions based upon current services. Committee has been formed and this will roll out later this year.
- Looking to play a stronger role in getting help from the state. One example is the State Wide Mutual Aid with Verso.
- From the Verso fire was the need for a state wide accountability system. The state is looking into a way to implement a system which doesn't require everybody to change but as a way to track when large events occur.
- National Fallen Firefighters Association is looking to certify fire departments if benefits are ever needed. Fire Departments are asked to send in a notarized statement stating the fire department is either a non-profit or a unit government. Will be on the MSFDA and MSFCA websites.
- Mentioned a citizen complaint about some fire departments fueling vehicles without shutting the engine off. Reminding people that fire departments are in the public eye and what you do in public can affect how you are perceived.

### **MN Board of Firefighter Training & Education – Bruce West**

[www.mbfte.state.mn.us](http://www.mbfte.state.mn.us)

- Round 4 has ended which was from July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012. So far only \$850,000 of the \$2 million has been requested. If you don't use the money the legislature will take the money away.
- Submit any payment over the allocated amount because if departments don't make a request any remaining dollars will be reallocated up to \$200 per firefighter.
- Deadline for submission is August 1, 2012, anything after that won't be accepted.
- Contact Bruce if you have questions.(651) 201-7258
- Round 5 starting July 1, 2012 will cover the cost of FFI/FFII/Hazmat Ops and Certification. Fire Departments don't need to request the money; the training facility will request payment directly. No out of pocket payment is required for fire departments.
- Live burn training, up to \$1,500 for a live burn. Must meet NFPA 1403 requirements. Part of the requirements in there must be a transporting ambulance onsite during the burn.
- Mass & Gross decon is continuing.

- Next statewide training is Incident Safety Officer, will go over what an incident safety officer and how to implement it. 3 hour drill will be available when approved by the state.

**VFBA – Steve Spaeth & Barry Nelson**

<http://www.vfbaofmn.com>

- No report

**DNR**

[www.dnr.state.mn.us](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us)

- No Report

**IAFC - Great Lakes Division - George Esbensen**

<http://www.gld-iafc.org/>

- No Report

**Technical College**

**Ridgewater College – Mike Roe**

<http://www.ridgewater.edu>

- FFI starting this fall in the Glenwood / Elbow Lake area. Also in Paynesville / New London / Spicer
- Holding pumper classes.

**St. Cloud Technical and Community College – Chad Steffens**

<http://www.sctcc.edu>

- Fire School will be September 22 & 23 at the St. Cloud Campus. Can register online at <http://www.sctcc.edu> under the customized training tab.  
<http://www.sctcc.edu/customized-training/programs-and-courses/fire-fighter-training>
- Looking for Fire Instructors, need FFI / FFII and Fire Instructor I certification. Will need to get registered as a MBFTE instructor.
- Building a LP trailer, firefighter survival maze to compliant the firefighter survival trailer and a forcible entry door called a Multi-force forcible door entry system by Firehouse Innovations.
- Various FFI/FFII trainings coming up.
- Fire Instructor I this fall followed by Fire Officer I.
- Technical Recue / Ropes I this fall with certification.
- Vehicle Extrication / Machinery class in the spring.

**Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) – Kevin Reed**

<https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/hsem>

- No Report

**Old Business**

- Everybody needs to send in updated information to the secretary for the directory. Send information to [secretary@lakeregionfire.com](mailto:secretary@lakeregionfire.com).
- Hero Rush, no information on how that went.

**New Business**

- Looking for ideas and suggestion for the Lake Region
- League of Minnesota Cities is watching carefully Flashover Trailer and questioning the need for them. If your city is insured by the League of Minnesota Cities this may affect you.

**Good of the Region**

- Starbuck is holding their golf tournament August 18<sup>th</sup>.

Next meeting will be October 15, 2012 – Sauk Rapids, Sauk Rapids Fire Station.

Motion to adjourn was made by Waite Park second by Sartell. Motion carried. Meeting was adjourned at 9:38 PM.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Drais". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jeff Drais, Secretary/Treasurer