

TALKING POINTS FOR FUNDING, TRAINING AND PERSONNEL

NORTH DAKOTA FIREFIGHTERS

SERVING:

NORTH DAKOTA

- The **risks** and **dangers** that North Dakota rural firefighter faces on a daily basis are **greater** than ever before.
- The North Dakota Firefighter's Association consists of approximately **7,000** firefighters, **376** fire departments, including **4** full-time career fire departments and **11** combination career and volunteer fire departments.
- **96%** of the firefighters in **North Dakota are volunteer fire departments.**
- Additional financial sources are needed for: **funding, training and personnel** to increase and maintain trained, front-line firefighters to protect our state.
- There is **increasing pressure** and **demands** for rural fire departments to perform **more** and **technical services** such as: **EMS, extrication, structural collapse, trench rescue and hazardous materials response.**
- Firefighters in many cases are: **“everything to everybody”.**
- The **firefighters** are the **first line of defense** in emergency scenes.
- Many volunteer firefighters **lack feeling of safety and security.** The feeling of safety and security comes with confidence and proficiency when the firefighter has the **proper training; other qualified trained firefighters** that go out to the emergency scene with them, and the **proper equipment** needed to do the job.
- Probably the **biggest area of concern** for the firefighters is: **time.** In today's busy business environment, how much time does the average firefighter have after holding down full-time jobs, parenting, supporting other family members, community involvement and other activities that expend their day? Yet our **rural firefighters are expected to deliver the desired and expected results rapidly and safely on the fire ground.** To become acceptable in fighting fires they need to have the applicable instruction and guidance which requires: **FUNDING**, they also need to have: **TRAINING** so that they can learn proper preparation to protocols needed in

fire fighting situations, and **PERSONNEL** so that when we the Baby Boomers and others retire, there is a succession of new rural volunteers that will be in place to serve North Dakota rural communities.

- **NDFA is very cognizant of the time issues related to North Dakota's Volunteer Fire Service. To acquire the proper training, the basic level of training required for certification requires 160 hours of training. That is a huge commitment for our volunteers.**
- **The hours required for training and the lack of young people staying in our North Dakota communities are issues that we are researching in order to assist the rural fire departments so that they can remain viable in the future.**
- **NDFA is aggressively going after grant opportunities that are offered throughout the state and federal networks. Unfortunately, the likelihood of being approved for each grant application submitted is highly unlikely. Therefore, it is vital that assistance and financial support comes from North Dakota state funding sources.**
- **Recently NDFA was awarded grant money through the Department of Emergency Services (for Hazardous Material Training), Workforce Safety and Insurance (for the *Courage to Be Safe Program*) and the North Dakota Insurance Reserve Fund (for an Emergency Vehicle Operations Course).**
- **In 2011, the NFPA Needs Assessment survey reported that North Dakota Departments without enough equipment to equip all personnel was:**
 - **88% for self-contained breathing apparatus compared to 91% in 2001 and 78% in 2005**
 - **82% for personal alert safety system devices compared to 93% in 2001 and 63% in 2005**
 - **19% for personal protective clothing compared to 40% in 2001 and 22% in 2005**
 - **91% for portable radios, compared to 88% in 2001 and 78% in 2005**
 - **97% for structural firefighting training as compared to 91% in 2005**
 - **70% for emergency medical service compared to 82% in 2005**

- **30% of the fire departments do not have backup power**
- **44% of the fire stations are over 40 years old**
- **17% of fire department engines are over 30 years old**

SURVEYS:

- **376 surveys were sent out to North Dakota communities; so far 102 cities have responded back**
- **The expectations are that the fire departments will be able to contain a local fire suppression response**
- **Large scale incident with victim rescue**
- **Have incident management capabilities**
- **Provide technical rescue response**
- **That takes dedicated training**

Recommendations:

- **Support North Dakota Fire Departments and Firefighters**
- **Need more training in all areas of emergency response, i.e. big rig response, hazardous materials, structural collapse and technical rescue**
- **Continue to identify needs for training and educate the communities**