Hot, Hot and Hotter

That is certainly what June 2012 has been. Sure the temperatures reached record highs last month along with non-existent moisture, but the results were devastating and tragic. As many as 12 wildland fires burned at one time and the State’s resources along with many more from local communities including Golden were stretched thin. The Waldo Canyon Fire in Colorado Springs is the fire in which the West Strike Team from the Denver area was sent for basically four days. Golden sent Engine 2 and a crew of four on Tuesday, June 26 around 6:00 PM. That crew consisting of Captain Maiers, Engineer Balgemann, Firefighter Steinhoff and Firefighter Creaven spent two days assigned to Colorado Springs Station 6 as Engine 61. During the first 48 hours the crew of Engine 61 ran 16 emergency responses. They were relieved on Thursday June 28 by Engineer Bunting, Engineer Smith, Engineer Johnson and Firefighter Hiedeman. Their initial assignment was to patrol the burned structure area and the next day be assigned back to Station 6 where they ran numerous responses. This crew returned to the City of Golden on Saturday, June 30th. I think if you ask any of the crew members they will tell you what a humbling experience this was to view the destruction as well as the dedication and strength of the Colorado Springs Fire Department. As Fire Chief, I can tell how proud I am of our personnel who responded to this disaster as well as how proud I am of those who stayed behind to protect the City of Golden during this time. A job well done by all.

Other hot items include the arrival of the new Truck 4. Truck 4 is slated to be here the week of July 9th. At that time we will be scheduling radio installation, equipment mounting and getting it ready for Fire Rescue International. Truck 4 will be on display at the IAFC’s annual conference at the Denver Convention Center, August 1 through August 4. Pierce is also scheduling three days of training with a factory representative August 12, 13 and 14. They will also go over some refresher training for Tower 1. It will be the same training repeated three times. All D/O Aerial personnel

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will need to attend one of these trainings. If all goes well, the truck should be in service prior to September 1\textsuperscript{st}. It also should be available for the Buffalo Bill Days Parade on July 29\textsuperscript{th}.

Another item of note is the replacement of the SCBA System. We have received the purchase order from UASI for a total replacement of our air packs. We will be receiving, in the next 60 days, 60 new SCBA’s, 100 regulators with heads up display and 141-30 minute bottles. Also we will receive several vales to convert some of our 60 minute bottles to the new style. Training will occur and you will need to be signed off prior to putting these on the apparatus. The Training Division has opted to purchase a new RIT pack and if we have some funding left, the department budget is going purchase a second new RIT pack.

Coming in the next few months, there will be some apparatus moves and switches as well when Truck 4 goes into service at Station 4. They are as follows:

Rescue 4 will become Rescue 1
Rescue 1 will become Rescue 2 and be a reserve unit
The Public Education Trailer will become the Incident Operations Trailer at Station 2
Squad 1 will be replaced with a new 2012 Ford F-250 crew cab.

All other apparatus will remain in their current assignment and location. While we are getting Truck 4 ready to be placed in service, Engine 2 will temporarily move back to Station 2 until the switch can occur. The department will also be making some exhaust system changes to Rescue 4 and the bays at both Station 4 and Station 1 to accommodate these changes.

Obviously June, July and August will be busy months. The Training Division will be moving forward with a Brush Class, D/O Rescue Class and a D/O Aerial Class.

In addition to all of the above activities, we have the annual Pancake Breakfast on July 28\textsuperscript{th}. So as you can see, things just keep getting hotter and hotter. Enjoy the summer heat and all of the activities going on within the department. Happy Summer.

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<th>NUMBERS FOR JUNE 2012</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Calls - 130</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Hazardous Condition - 5</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Mutual Aid Given - 6</strong></td>
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<td><strong>District # 1 - 65</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Clear Creek Canyon - 1</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Average Response Time - 5:06</strong></td>
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<td><strong>District # 2 - 54</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Miller Coors Property - 2</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Average Firefighters/Call -</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Fire Response - 3</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Out of City/Other - 6</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Average Total Time/Call - 45:40</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Rescue/EMS - 62</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Mutual Aid Received - 3</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Est. Fire/Damage Save - $500.00</strong></td>
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I have many friends who talk about how much they hate their jobs. They count down the days until it’s Friday. Maybe they have an app that counts down the days until they retire. When the 5:00 whistle blows they rush out the door only to drag themselves in tomorrow morning. Current economic woes will not allow them to quit and find another job so they stick it out but without conviction or commitment. I was fortunate to have enjoyed my job working with kids and teachers but I know some of the people I worked with would have been happier somewhere else.

Would the disgruntled worker use their free time to volunteer to do the same thing? No. I don’t even know many happy employees who volunteer their time to do something similar to what they get paid for. Yet we have over 37 members of the Golden Fire Department who give us their time for free and get paid for doing the same thing in order to earn a living.

More than that, when a crisis arises like the collapse of the Twin Towers in New York, or a mutual aid call for a neighboring community, or a “good” structure fire in town, or the recent spat of wildfires in Colorado - we want to be in on it. Only 8 of us were able to help our brothers in Colorado Springs as the Waldo Canyon fire blew up but many more were ready to go. As the wildfires burn around us many who have let their Red Cards lapse want to find ways to get them current. When the page goes out for additional resources, we negotiate with families and employees trying to free up our schedules.

I don’t think I am unique in loving our job. We wouldn’t have 37 volunteers who work for other emergency response agencies who volunteer with us if others did not share my feelings. Part of this desire to serve is the peer pressure of the friends who ask us what we have done about this or that fire. Part of it might be the media that praises the job our brothers have done. Some of it might be the hero worship that grateful homeowners shower on firefighters. But, we shy away from reporters and the TV cameras. When asked why we did what we did the response is usually “I was just doing my job”.

In a very weird sense it’s knowing the job is risky that makes us happy in our jobs - hopefully a calculated if not controlled risk - but still we are in a risky business. We are disappointed if we are not able to share the risk of an immediate assault on a fire that other firefighters are in the middle of.

We may not share in the direct attack right now but we share in the professional knowledge that we will, someday, put our excellent training to use and have other firefighters disappointed that they are not in our boots.

We have found how to serve and love what we do – it doesn’t get better than that.
Recently, a citizen wrote in on the City of Golden website to weigh in on our fire ban shown below. As I was responding also shown below, I realized that our citizens only see the actual ban and some exceptions to the ban without knowing some of the thought process behind it other than the very obvious. Additionally, we are in an urban-wild land interface transition area along the boundaries of most of our city and some things may not make sense to some just by the words of the ban.

Message Body:

I can certainly understand the concern and the need to take action against the potential for wildfires, but preventing people from grilling a steak or some hot dogs for the 4th on their Weber grills seems to me a bit over the top. Through 26 years living in Golden, I've seen plenty of dry conditions. I've seen both North and South Table, and not too long ago the Mt. Galbraith area burn, but not from a private homeowner's grill. Close them in the parks, sure. Tiki lamps and portable fireplaces, sure. Charcoal grills in private backyards, really?

My Response:

Hello Mr.xxxx:

I was forwarded your email about the fire ban on backyard charcoal grills. While at first blush it seems rather over the top to ban backyard charcoal grills, there are circumstances around the entire state of Colorado rela-

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tive to wildfires that are unprecedented. With the fire ban in its current form we took several things into con-
sideration from the big picture.

One of the consistent themes we see is that citizens are confused by the various exceptions to bans such as be-
tween the City of Golden and Jefferson County, particularly as the county typically differentiates certain ex-
ceptions to their restrictions or bans based on locations east or west of Hwy 93, which also happens to divide
the City of Golden. Because we have areas that are in the wild land urban interface along these areas, we try to
be as consistent as possible with the Jeffco Sheriff’s bans or restrictions to the extent reasonable. With the ex-
treme fire danger conditions, we are concerned about all areas of the city. In relation to the charcoal or wood
grills along the periphery of the city along the Table Mountains and the foothills wild land urban interface ar-
eas, our concern is heightened. So to keep with a consistent message to citizens, we instituted the ban city wide
so as not to create confusion resulting in an avoidable fire incident.

Additionally, emergency response resources have been a consideration in this extreme fire danger period.
Nearly every fire service organization in the state and certainly along the metro Denver Front Range is taxed.
Golden is no exception as our mostly volunteer fire department continues to balance the numerous requests for
mutual aid resources as far away as the Waldo Canyon fire in Colorado Springs while maintaining resources
for the everyday incidents in the City of Golden.

Know that we continue to monitor the fire dangers in light of the considerations above, and will modify the
fire ban as soon as reasonably possible.

Regards,

Jerry Stricker Deputy Chief/Fire Marshal

Why do I put this in the newsletter you may ask? Because as members of GFD, we are out in the community
and have the opportunity and responsibility to save lives and protect property through various methods, by
emergency response and by prevention. A big part of prevention is public education, so I provide the email
dialogue to make all of us aware that citizens may have questions or at least have their opinions heard. Feel
free to pass on at every opportunity the information on the less than obvious issues we thought about when
amended our fire restrictions to a more strict fire ban.
Changing Perceptions On Safety!

Recently while speaking to a firefighter about differences in departments and philosophies on firefighting I realized that there are many different perceptions of the word safety and what it means to different people and different organizations. What does safety mean to you? To some folk’s safety means staying safe and wearing the right PPE, in other cases safety might be viewed with less enthusiasm, for example the firefighter who associates the word safety with the all too common safety Nazi (health and safety officer), this firefighter might view safety as something that prevents firefighters from entering buildings or in some cases even saving citizens.

How about you? Has the word safety been used so much in your organization that you have come to resent the word as if it means that we as firefighters no longer help or save people? A common question that is currently circulating in many circles within the fire service arena is who’s safety is more important a firefighter or a citizens? Although controversial this question stir’s some valid debates with some obvious questions about what side of the safety line you stand on? More importantly speaking as a department appointed safety officer I think this debate sheds crucial light on the perspectives of the individual fire fighters and their perceptions of the word safety. For clarification the word safety is a noun that is defined in the American Heritage dictionary as “the condition of being safe”, conversely safeties reciprocal is risk (2009). I personally would argue that risk is a key component of the safety debate because after all we as fire fighters are most likely never in a perfect state of safety, but rather we are people working in a profession of risk reduction. Our very jobs are based on the occupation of reducing risks to save citizens from danger. Putting out fire is the act of reducing risk both to other firefighters and citizens. The next question that might arise then, is that if these terms are so easily defined why is there still such a debate?

Popular discourse would suggest that the debate surrounds the issue of where you draw the line between safe and unsafe actions. In other words is it safe to enter a burning building to save a citizen? The simple answer is NO. No unfortunately it is not safe to enter a burning building to save a citizen, however the critical component of this argument is not if it is ever safe to enter a burning building, but rather the risk low enough to make entering the building a viable option. In other words from a safety perspective I as the safety officer want you as the firefighter to be able to evaluate a burning building for what it is and make entry without the building falling on your head. For those who have not tried it, the simple answer is that you do not save anyone once the building has fallen on your head. The goal of a safety officer and safety messages is not to keep you from entering burning buildings, but rather to teach you what buildings are the least safe, what conditions will hurt you the fastest, and what to do if you can’t make safe entry.

The final message that I would like to leave you with on this topic is that the safety officer is not trying to keep you from encountering unsafe situations, but rather to educate you on how to recognize less safe situations and make sound educated judgments on how to rescue citizens without getting hurt and ultimately avoid having buildings falling on your head.
Left, The Golden Fire Departments new Truck 4 on the “Blue Floor” at Pierce Manufacturing. right, Truck 4 ready for final inspection. This apparatus will be displayed at the Fire Rescue International 2012 convention.

Golden Fire Department responded to the Waldo Canyon Fire in Colorado Springs to provide mutually coverage for the Colorado Springs Fire Department. Eight members of GFD covered the CSFD Station 6 response area with Two 48 hour shifts of four personnel. Above is an e-mail Chief Bales received from a Colorado Springs resident.
Captain Charles Plumb was a naval aviator during the Vietnam War. A graduate of the Naval Academy, Plumb was assigned to the 114th Fighter Squadron and flew F-4 Phantom jets from the carrier Kitty Hawk. On his 75th mission he was shot down over enemy territory. He parachuted from his damaged plane, was taken prisoner by the North Vietnamese, and spent almost six years as a prisoner of war.

Some years after the war, Plumb had the following experience (told in his own words below):

Recently, I was sitting in a restaurant in Kansas City. A man about two tables away kept looking at me. I didn't recognize him. A few minutes into our meal he stood up and walked over to my table, looked down at me, pointed his finger in my face and said, "You're Captain Plumb."

I looked up and I said, "Yes sir, I'm Captain Plumb."

He said, "You flew jet fighters in Vietnam. You were on the aircraft carrier Kitty Hawk. You were shot down. You parachuted into enemy hands and spent six years as a prisoner of war."

I said, "How in the world did you know all that?"

He replied, "Because, I packed your parachute."

When I heard this story recently, I thought about our equipment here at Golden Fire. I'm sure from time to time all of us have found things put back in the wrong place, put back incorrectly, or possibly not put back at all. People sometimes accidentally leave drains open or leave something in the off position that should have been left on (or vice versa). There is a great deal of equipment here and learning where all of it goes and how to use it all takes a lot of time and practice. EVERYONE makes mistakes. I hope those of us who find equipment mistakes correct them. I hope after finding mistakes we don't start a witch hunt. I hope if anyone has a question about the equipment that he or she feels comfortable asking someone about it. I hope after asking the question that it is answered without making the person asking it feel stupid. I hope we all feel we are part of a team and are willing to do whatever we need to in order for the team to succeed.

The point I would like to stress is that attention to detail can make or break us on an emergency scene. We are all counting on the last person who put the equipment away to have done it correctly. If we can’t find something or if we have to put it together because it was left apart there can be a delay in our efforts to do our job. This can have dire consequences for the people we have been sent to help and also possibly for our brothers and sisters on this department.

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Rick Pretz, one of our former members, often made the comment: “We never have time to do it right but we always have time to do it over.” Doing a halfway job of putting a piece of equipment or a rig back in service means someone is going to have to do the job over again at some point. So please, PLEASE, take the time to put equipment away correctly and in the right location, do the task completely, ask someone if you have a question, and help people learn correct procedures in a constructive manner. This applies to ALL of us, whether we’ve been on the department for a few months or for more than three decades. Not doing these things can have disastrous results.

Captain Plumb probably never thought much about his parachute on his first 74 combat missions or on the countless other flights he made. But on that 75th mission, his parachute became his most important piece of equipment. After the parachute packer identified himself to Captain Plumb:

I was speechless. I staggered to my feet and held out a very grateful hand of thanks. This guy came up with just the proper words. He grabbed my hand, he pumped my arm and said, "I guess it worked."
Are You Prepared?

One of the things that constantly impresses me about the fire service is the state of readiness that each individual takes responsibility to maintain. One of the things that stand out to me is when you first come on shift. Each one of you gets out your gear, puts it by the truck and then you get your mask out and test it to make sure it is in good working order.

Now let’s be honest, the odds are, in most 24 hour shifts, you will not use that mask. But with that in mind, not one of you takes that chance. You test your gear and you want to be sure you are prepared to handle whatever comes your way. If it should come to pass that you need it you want to be prepared and rightfully so.

It’s the same way in the rest of life. Most of us want to be prepared for everything that comes at us in life. In my life, I am a husband, father, son, brother, pastor, friend, and chaplain. I want to be prepared for everything that comes my way. But I have come to a conclusion over the years. I can never be completely prepared for everything. There are some things that just take us by surprise and we are unprepared for. There are some things that are so difficult to deal with that we often feel unprepared or not prepared enough. Things like:

- That phone call in the middle of the night that a loved one has died
- That doctor’s appointment where he uses the word “cancer”
- Arriving on a scene where a small child has been fatally wounded
- When your husband or wife announces, “it’s over, I want a divorce”
- When you return from a scene that didn’t seem to bother anyone else, but you still have nightmares about it.

What do you do at those times? What can we do when life doesn’t go the way we planned it or prepared for it? After all, I am a fix it person. When something is wrong, I want to take charge and make sure it gets taken care of or I get it under control. But there are some things I don’t know how to fix or can’t get under control. When that happens I have found that two things work for me.

First, I seek the advice, council and comfort of my creator. I know that He cares for us and wants to be there for us always and especially in those times when I call on him because I don’t know what to do.

Second, I have found great help from people around me. We are not made to be an island all to ourselves. I have people in my life that I know I can turn to in times of crisis in my life. I am grateful to them because I know they will be available.

Are you prepared, do you have someone to turn to when things don’t go the way you planned. I pray for all of you that your lives will be blessed for all the great work you do, but I also know the reality that life doesn’t always go the way we planned it. As your chaplain, I would like to extend an invitation that I am always available to you and you will not be putting me out if you would like some time “to talk” when things aren’t going as planned.

Thanks for all the great things you do as you serve the citizens of Golden and take care of your fellow firefighters.

Chaplain Mark
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<th>Wed</th>
<th>Thu</th>
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<td>Vehicle Extrication Lecture &amp; Video 18:00 Station 1</td>
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July 2012
Golden Fire Department
911 Tenth Street
Golden, Colorado 80401