Are You on the Top of Your Game?

The purpose of this article is this; “Are you on top of your game?” Here are just a few thoughts on being on top of your game.

Find your center of excellence.

What is it you are good at? I am a believer that everyone has talent. What I also believe is that everyone cannot be good or excel in everything. If that were true I would have ended my major league career as a baseball player and begin vying for a Hall of Fame spot. That didn’t happen. We have 79 volunteer firefighters including 17 recruits with a variety of skills and abilities. During your career as a firefighter you have either found the things you are passionate about and things you would rather not be bothered with. In this business we find those who will and have excelled at being officers, others have chosen to pursue being an Engineer or a Tech Rescue Specialist. But the bottom line is that every one of us is a firefighter and has to possess basic skills and abilities. While our Training Division continues to pour out various types of training with a variety of instructors, there is one common denominator and that is basic skills. Continue to excel at it.

Live the exceptional life.

You are a firefighter. Be proud of it and live it every day. It was never more apparent than this year when 131 applicants applied to be part of the 2011 Recruit Academy. Only 10% made the grade. On Sunday, May 1st, the Homeowners Association of Mountain Ridge held a celebration to thank the firefighters that responded to the Indian Gulch Fire. It was a great event and I only wish more of you had attended to see how much the citizens of this community appreciate their fire department. Yes, their fire department. Not mine, not yours but theirs. Golden Fire is a fully fledged city service department providing fire and EMS protection for life and property. Only a small minority of people get to experience the satisfaction of belonging to the American Fire Service. Be proud that you are a part of it and live it.

Improve your skills and abilities.

This only comes through training and experience. Attending training other than when you are on shift is important. Part of improving those skills and abilities is about being a team member. Remember that firefighting plus the other services we provide is a team sport. Weak players are a potential for disaster and in this business that means somebody could get seriously hurt. Avoid overloading or you will short circuit. As I stated earlier in this article, you have to pick and choose the things you excel at but your basic skills and abilities have to be a top priority. Then pick out the area you want to excel whether it be Engineering, Tech Rescue or Officer Development.

(Continued on page 2)
Mentors: Be one – find one!

75% of this department has less than 5 years of experience in the fire service. Find that person either inside or outside the department that you trust to help you improve skills. For those of us who have a few years more in the business, we still look towards that one person who continues to set the example and teach us to get better. Also, it is important that you make yourself available to the newer firefighter and not find that to be a burden. You can’t just get a revelation that you want to be a mentor, you have to be sought out and then make the decision to go forward with it. Mentors are sought out based upon their experience but most of all by their actions. You can’t force yourself on someone and decide you will mentor them. Be open and a little less grumpy about it.

Following these few and simple guidelines will put you on top of your game.

The Colorado Fire Protection Association Fire Hose Relay

It might look a little funny at first glance, but at its core, the Colorado Fire Protection Association Fire Hose Relay fills a serious need.

On Friday, March 4 at Arapahoe Basin Ski Area, teams of five made their way through a 15-gate giant slalom course. Two runs, the lowest combined time wins.

Oh, and they had to race wearing fire helmets and bunker coats and with each racer holding onto a 50-foot length of fire hose.

The fifth annual event was a fundraiser benefiting The Children's Hospital Burn Camps Program, an organization created “to meet the psychological and rehabilitation needs of the child and family following a burn injury,” according to the hospital's website.
ON THE SCENE WITH GOLDEN FIRE DEPARTMENT
Eleven firefighters died in 2010 as the result of vehicle crashes, down substantially from 16 deaths in 2009, and for the first time since 1999, none of the deaths involved aircraft. Four firefighters in 2010 died in accidents involving firefighters responding in personal vehicles. Seven firefighter deaths involved fire department apparatus, one of which was a double firefighter fatality incident. That’s over 269 firefighters and other emergency responders have died since 1979 from accidents involving emergency vehicles. Between 20 and 25 percent of firefighter deaths are from these types of accidents. These figures do not include the many emergency services personnel who are injured annually from emergency vehicle related accidents.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

AS AN EMERGENCY VEHICLE OPERATOR

- Ensure you are qualified and fully capable of operating the emergency vehicle you are driving.
- Drive with due care. Operate an emergency vehicle as you would if all those in your vehicle and on the road around you were your family.
- Slower means safer. A good safety guideline is not to exceed the posted speed limit. Drive even slower when road conditions or visibility is poor.
- Always use parking brake and appropriately chock the wheels of parked emergency vehicles.

(Continued on page 5)
Don't move your emergency vehicle until you and all passengers are safely seated and wearing seatbelts. If your emergency vehicle does not have seatbelts for every occupant it would enhance the safety of the vehicle to have them installed.

Make sure your emergency vehicle is completely stopped before anyone exits.

Always use a competent spotter when backing your emergency vehicle.

Never drive an emergency (or any other) vehicle under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Always stop at intersections with a negative right of way. Proceed through these railroad crossings and intersections only after coming to a complete stop and are sure that other vehicles have stopped and given you the right of way.

At an unguarded railroad crossing, or when your view is obscured at a railroad crossing the National Transportation Safety Board recommends lowering the emergency vehicle's window, idling the engine, and turning off all radios, fans, and wipers to listen for oncoming trains.

Never assume that another vehicle is aware of the presence of yours. Today's vehicles with noise insulation, powerful radios, and air conditioning lessen the effectiveness of horns and sirens. The same could be said for dark tinted windows with emergency lights. Additionally, some emergency lights may be difficult to see in daylight.

Park safely. Park your emergency vehicle away from hazardous areas (such as: near downed electrical lines, falling debris, and structures, flames, toxic gases, and smoke. If you park on a roadway, ensure that it can be seen by oncoming traffic. This can be done by the vehicle's emergency warning lights and by safely placing warning signals such as flares and portable warning lights or safely locate another emergency vehicle where oncoming traffic can be alerted.

AS AN EMERGENCY VEHICLE PASSENGER

Always put on protective clothing before getting in an emergency vehicle.

Always ride seated in the interior of the emergency vehicle with your seatbelt on.

If not completely enclosed by the vehicle wear helmet and use eye protection.

Never ride on the exterior tailboard or side running boards of an emergency vehicle.

Never stand in a moving emergency vehicle.

Never try to jump onto a moving emergency vehicle.

Ensure all tools and equipment in passenger and patient treatment compartments are safely secured before the emergency vehicle moves.

Ensure the emergency vehicle has come to a complete stop, and you are given direction to do so, before you unbuckle your seatbelt and exit the vehicle.

Upon exiting an emergency vehicle, ensure that it is safe to do so. Watch for oncoming traffic, downed wires, and other hazards. Look before you exit.
• If you are performing as a spotter for a backing emergency vehicle always be aware of its direction and location. Never turn your back on a vehicle headed in your direction.

• Never board an emergency vehicle as a responder under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

AS THE OFFICER IN CHARGE

• You are responsible for safe and prudent operations of the emergency vehicle and for the safety of all passengers in the vehicle.

PLEASE TAKE THE TIME TO READ AND THINK ABOUT THE INFORMATION IN THIS ARTICLE. With the growth of the Golden Fire Department in numbers of calls and personnel, we have a higher chance of something happening. This year we have already ran two Driver Operator certification classes, Driver Operator with eight (8) new engineers, and Driver Operator Aerial with nine (9) new engineers. In November we will also have a class for Driver Operator Pumper with again 6-10 students. STAY SAFE!!

Firefighter Fitness Facts

Lingering Effects of Caffeine

Turns out that tall coffee first thing in the morning does more than just perk you up - it also stresses you out.

And even if you consume your caffeine before 1 p.m., you could still be feeling the effects - higher blood pressure and stress levels - by the time you go to bed.

Researchers at Duke University in Durham, N.C., studied the effects of caffeine on 47 regular coffee drinkers.

Participants consumed the caffeine equivalent of 4 small cups of coffee in two pills, one pill in the morning and one before 1 p.m. On another day, participants were given placebos.

When consuming the caffeine pills, participants felt more stressed, had higher blood pressure and produced 32% more of the stress hormone epinephrine than when taking the placebo.

Caffeine has a half-life of an average of four hours, so it will take your body four hours to rid itself of half the amount of caffeine that you've consumed. After eight hours, your body will contain one-quarter of the original amount and, after 12 hours, your body will still contain one-eighth of what you first drank.

Source: Psychosomatic Medicine, 2002: 64, 593-603
Birthdays & Anniversaries

Anniversaries

37 Years Going for a Record!
Bob Burrell  05/09/1974

11 Years
Anna Trzeciak  05/08/2000

3 Years
Ashleigh Andrews  05/06/08
Tina Balgemann  05/06/08
Jason Fritch  05/06/08
Kevin Kirby  05/06/08
Cody McHugh  05/06/08
Jason Mulari  05/06/08
Mason Prince  05/06/08
Daniel Roozen  05/06/08
Dustin Schissler  05/06/08
Jared Stricker  05/06/08
Sean Stull  05/06/08
Sean Van Houten  05/06/08
Joseph Vogel  05/06/08
Chad Wachs  05/06/08

11 Years
Anna Trzeciak  05/08/2000

Birthdays

Bob Burrell  05/09
Case Collard  05/05/10
Brandon Daruna  05/05/10
Derek Ferchau  05/05/10
Michael Gonzales  05/05/10
Richard Gonzales  05/05/10
Jeff Hulse  05/05/10
Benjamin Moline  05/05/10
Truc Nguyen  05/05/10
Brandon Phelan  05/05/10
Jeff Steinhoff  05/05/10
Justin Tomsick  05/05/10
Colin Winter  05/05/10

2 Years
Angela Baca  05/05/10
Jeff Cole  05/05/10
Bureau Updates

To say the Fire and Life Safety division has been busy would be an understatement. The process for the hiring of a new Fire Inspector has been completed and I am happy to say that Deputy Chief Stricker has made his decision, so our new Fire Inspector starts May 5th so if you get a chance come by and say hello to Fire Inspector Steven Parker.

Fire inspections for the city are ongoing, this month I will be focusing on Heritage Square and the West Colfax area. As for re-inspections I am currently working on corrections for inspections that were completed for the CSM campus in February and March and any city businesses that had violations for the month of March.

As for new construction there has been no shortage of plans coming into the FLS Division. A new one that might be noticeable would be the bookstore that used to be at 1200 Washington will now become the Goozell Yogurt Shop. Red Rocks Medical Center continues to fill with new tenants; we have received plans for two new specialty offices that should start the build out process soon. The groundwork for the new CSM Marquez Hall has been started and is in the beginning stages. Along with new projects there are some that are coming to an end, such as CSM Residence Hall; finals for the building are being scheduled for next month. The Brown Hall addition should follow shortly. Also the Weaver Tower renovations will be fast and furious as summer break project; however, we now have a fully sprinklered building once it is done.

You probably have already noticed the new snow plow storage and maintenance garage in the CDOT yard at Hwy 6&40 (17101 West Colfax Avenue). Note that this building does have a dry pipe fire sprinkler system protecting it as well as a fire alarm system to monitor the sprinkler system. The building Knox Box is adjacent to the entry into the building on the west or Lena Gulch side of the building. Additionally, Phase II of the site construction will include a sliding gate into the site complete with a Knox key switch to open it and access the yard. A new hydrant was added in the yard on the west side near Lena Gulch.

As the weather gets warmer and we move towards summer there are more requests for public education. Here are a few I would like to mention that we have scheduled that we could use help from the membership on. The first would be the University of Colorado Hospital Safety Day we have planned on September 24th from 10:00am- 2:00pm. And the second is a safety fair at The Home Depot June 4th 9:00am-12:00pm. If you can help out with any of these events contact the Fire and Life Safety Division. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those that have helped in the past with public education and those that continue to help today.
After a seemingly quick application, interview and hiring process I am honored to be joining the Golden Fire Department as your new Fire Inspector. I am excited to become part of this department for many reasons, to name a few would be; the very dedicated men and women that provide emergency and fire prevention services to the City of Golden, great facilities and equipment, and a very supportive and knowledgeable administration. I admire and respect the work that is done at a volunteer fire department because I not only grew up in one, but also currently serve as a volunteer firefighter.

I would like to give you a little insight to how I view fire prevention; first is that fire prevention not only is a key function for those who live in the community, tourists, and businesses, but for the members of this department. Information that we attain during routine inspections or plan reviews of new occupancies can provide vital pre-planning and operational information for those responding. So if there are any questions that you may have regarding fire protection systems, locations or components please feel free to come and ask me. Second, I view fire prevention as an educational experience. I like to use inspections to help inform the community that what we are doing is essential to their safety and ours. Many people just do not understand why we require what we do; but a little education and explanation can go a long way in helping them become aware of potential hazards and possibly prevent unnecessarily placing someone in danger.

Again, I would like to thank you for welcoming me to the Golden Fire Department. I look forward to meeting all the members and for a great 2011.
Well, another year has gone by since I last wrote and I find myself thinking of all of the things I could have wrote about in the last 12 months. This month I struggled to figure out what would benefit everyone out there by reading. Then after having a third discussion about the company officer and driver/operator/engineer relationship and response and parking of apparatus, I knew I had my topic. Here is a brief synopsis of those conversations as well as background information, in my humble opinion, as to how to handle them.

The first conversation involved a witnessed event of an engineer going through a red light with no obvious attempt to stop. This was not witnessed by just anyone; it was witnessed by one of our own firefighters at the station. Do you see a problem with this? Do you know what the Department Policy States? How about the State of Colorado Law? I’m not going to answer these questions for you…. You know where the driving response guidelines are located (if you don’t, please ask your supervisor). As for state law, do an internet search on Colorado Revised Statue (CRS) 42-4-108. It is pretty clear as to what the guidelines for response are and when we can “request” the right of way. My response as a company officer, if it’s red, you better be able to stop if someone else who has the green light comes into that intersection. If I tell you and you don’t listen, shame on you. If it happens again, shame on me and there will not be a third. Sorry, but if you continue a pattern of bad behavior, you are now a liability rather than an asset to the Citizens of the community you are serving. Know the rules!

The second conversation involves parking in fire lanes. Guess what, in case you didn’t get the information passed on to you from an email that went out this year, we don’t park in fire lanes unless we have responded to an emergency. Why? If you’ve been reading this newsletter, it has already been explained in previous article(s). Or you can do a search on the topic and see what other articles and forums are out there on why we should not park in fire lanes. Now, this does not mean you should turn on your emergency lights when you get to the store, walk in to go shopping, and not expect someone to see you doing this that is not a member of Golden Fire or another local fire agency. You will be seen and questions will get asked and you were not an emergency run. If you read the CRS I mentioned above, it sums it up, or you can take a look on the CDOT website and look through the Model Traffic Code. This only reinforces what was said in the Colorado State Law, “when responding to an emergency….but not upon returning”. Enough said, don’t do it!

The third conversation involved a driver/operator who was told by the company officer to shut down at the intersection, but decided to proceed and pass vehicles on the right of a busy, relatively high speed, intersection. To talk on this, who is in charge of getting us to the CITIZENS EMERGENCY safely and home again? Is it the driver or officer? If you chose one, or both, you’re wrong, it is each and every one of our responsibilities to do this! “EVERYONE GOES HOME!” Driver, Officer, Firefighter, we all have the responsibility of getting there and home safely. If you see something, speak up! The engineer may not be able to see the car coming up beside them for what ever reason, but you can.

(Continued on page 11)
Now to dive into this a little more, an Engineer’s job is to get the apparatus to and from the call safely and without incident and to provide water at the appropriate pressures to extinguish the fire if pumping. Does the individual sitting in that seat know how to do that? Do you know that they know how to do that? With that in mind, who is supervising that individual driving the 30,000 to 75,000 lb apparatus? Whoever is in that right front seat, firefighter, Lieutenant, Captain, or Chief, it doesn’t matter, they are in charge of that crew and apparatus until they get to a scene and someone else takes charge if needed. They should tell the driver to shut down if there is a safety issue, they should be talking on the radio. Not the driver (who may be an officer) in the seat behind the wheel.

Once one of these events has happened, as an officer or acting officer, you have to make the decision, is this something that should be documented? Yes! You gave an order and it was gone against, not followed, pushed aside because that individual knew better. If you don’t document it, it may have happened, but your credibility will be less that had something been wrote down in your own file or log. Paper makes the world go round (not just money, it is paper too). Talk to that driver, engineer, or officer, figure out what they were thinking, what they heard, and why they did what they did and sum it up in your log or file with a date, time, and incident number. If a pattern of behavior exists and that individual gets hurt or hurts someone else, and it is documented that they were talked to, and the behavior was not corrected, it sure makes it a whole lot easier to fix the problem.

To tie all of this together, each and every one of us has to be able to work together with each other to get the job done, especially in getting there and getting back. Guidelines, policies, and laws have been written to help us have some wavy lines to follow in the sea of grey, even though the consequences are fairly black and white. Know who you are riding with, if not get to know them. Do you know what their capabilities or limitations are? How about their faults? Know your equipment, and how to ensure it is working properly and know that the other individuals on your apparatus know this too. Know that whoever is driving you around lights flashing and horns’ blaring knows how to check each and every apparatus they drive.

Above all, keep it simple, remember IT IS NOT YOUR EMERGENCY. DON’T MAKE IT ONE FOR YOU OR ANOTHER CITIZEN by driving like an A** or letting the person behind the wheel do so. BE SAFE and remember EVERYONE GOES HOME. EVERYTIME!
When people ask me what I miss the most since I retired from the Air Force, my answer is always the same. I miss the men and women I served with. It didn’t matter where we came from or what our background was, when we served together we were a unit or a team and there is a bond there that can never be broken. Our drill instructors started instilling the need for teamwork in basic training and over the years I learned the absolute value of that.

I see the same thing in the fire service. As firefighters, you most certainly see your share of adversity and that is where a brotherhood is crucial. When entering a dangerous situation you don’t worry about the man or woman with you because you are all a part of the team and they will have your back.

But teamwork doesn’t start on the fire scene. It begins in the fire house. In a full time department, the majority of the time you jump on a rig you will be going with people who are on your crew and you spend a lot of time with. In a volunteer department, there is a good possibility that if four of you jump on a rig together, there will always be one of you that has never worked with the others before. So where does teamwork begin? It begins in the firehouse. During training look for members that you haven’t worked with and train with them not just your usual buddies. During meetings look for people you don’t know real well and get to know them. Your life may depend on them one day.

One of the eight points of the Maltese cross is loyalty. Although some may take that to mean loyalty to the profession of firefighting, the most important part is loyalty to one another and to make sure you all get the job done and go home safely. Take care of your brothers and sisters for they are born for adversity.

Chaplain Mark
On April 21st the Golden Fire Department was dispatched to an injury auto crash with a vehicle inside of a structure at the Wells Fargo Bank, 1301 Jackson Street. Upon arrival, crews found a Toyota 4-Runer that had crashed through the building by the drive-up window. There was significant damage to the structure. There were no injuries to the 94-year-old driver or the bank personnel in the building. The city building official deemed the structure safe. Fire crews secured the scene and all fire units cleared the incident.
2011 GFD Recruits

Alex Baumeister Recruit
Daniel Casey Recruit
Casey Dragos Recruit
Damon Gentrup Recruit
Devin Hallock Recruit
Scott Hartmann Recruit
Anthony Hittle Recruit
Holly Hiedeman Recruit
Michael Jojola Recruit
Sonja Klopf Recruit
Anthony Martinez Recruit
Aaron McNally Recruit
Jon-Daniel Rotzoll Recruit
James Rudnicki-Vasquez Recruit
Ulises Sarinana Recruit
Kyle Shelton Recruit
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<td>6 DO Aerial Written Exam</td>
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Beginning with the June issue of Smoke Signals we will be adding a new column featuring two Golden Fire Department members each month. Firefighter Baca will be interviewing each of you for the column and then writing a short profile of who you are and why you’re involved with the Golden Fire Department. We would like to feature some information about what you do for a job and activities outside of the GFD. This was done in the 1970s by the Golden Daily Transcript, below are some of the profiles from the 1970s. There will be more profiles from the 70s in future editions.