

FEBRUARY 2018 • COLORADO MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

# COLORADO MUNICIPALITIES



## PUBLIC SAFETY

ADDRESSING A CRISIS AS A COMMUNITY,  
THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO KEEP US SAFE,  
HIRING AND RETAINING QUALITY POLICE OFFICERS,  
THE WIRELESS ALERT SYSTEM,  
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#### **Mission**

*Colorado Municipalities* is published to inform, educate, and advise appointed and elected municipal officials about new programs, services, trends, and information to help them perform their jobs and better serve their citizens and communities.

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# COLORADO MUNICIPALITIES

## ABOUT SOME OF OUR CONTRIBUTORS



**Rick Brandt** has been chief of police in Evans since 2007. Prior to that, he was with the Aurora Police Department for 26 years, retiring at the rank of lieutenant. Brandt currently serves as immediate past president of the Colorado Association of Chiefs of Police (CACP), chairs CML's Police Chiefs Section, is the law enforcement vice-chair on the Substance Abuse Trends and Response Task Force, and chairs the Weld County Drug Task Force Control Board. He also serves on the Colorado Special Olympics Law Enforcement Torch Run Advisory Committee as a CACP representative.

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COLORADO MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

## ADDRESSING A CRISIS AS A COMMUNITY

“WE CANNOT ARREST OUR WAY out of this epidemic!”

Have you heard this from your police chief? He or she is talking about the opioid epidemic that has created a national crisis and is afflicting virtually every community in Colorado.

Nationally, more people died from drug fatalities in 2016 than were killed in motor vehicle crashes in 2015. In 2016, the United States experienced 64,070 drug overdose deaths, or about seven individuals per hour. Those numbers are alarming and disheartening. Police and first responders are dealing with an unprecedented threat to our

communities, and we are ill-equipped to make long-term impacts on our own.

Colorado is experiencing drug-related death rates on par with national data trends. The graphs on page 7 illustrate opiate-related deaths as compared to motor vehicle fatalities, whereas the national data reflects all drug overdose deaths.

What we are learning through scientific research is why traditional approaches of arresting and incarcerating drug dependent users have not been effective. One issue is that jails and prisons do not offer long-term treatment to these individuals, which

results in the ultimate release of still-drug-dependent offenders. In short, the “forced” withdrawal of these individuals and the subsequent detoxification while incarcerated does not equate to treatment and rehabilitation. Statistics show that people released from jail and prison after extended abstinence are four times more likely to die from an overdose than the population at large. Furthermore, about 75 percent of drug dependent offenders released from jail will reoffend and return to prison within about a year. These numbers are very frustrating for law enforcement.

In response to the lack of success of traditional response methods, law enforcement agencies are focusing increasingly on preventing overdose deaths. Many Colorado law enforcement agencies responded to the rapidly increasing numbers of fatal overdoses by deploying Naloxone to officers. Police officers have used this life-saving drug to reverse more than 280 lethal overdoses in Colorado since January 2017. Certainly, the life-saving value of this program cannot be overstated, but more must be done if we hope to curb the tide of this rampant emergency.

Police cannot rely solely on traditional enforcement methods to address the problem if we are serious about making a difference. If arrest, jail, and stigmatization were an effective



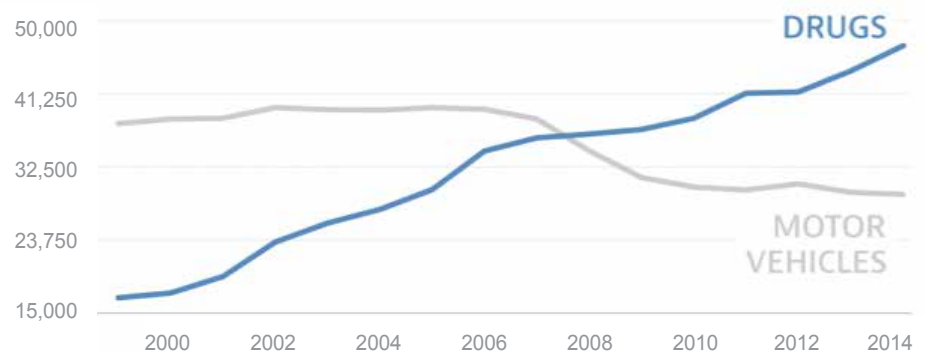


**If arrest, jail, and stigmatization were an effective strategy, we would not be facing an epidemic of this magnitude today. Police chiefs must take a hard look at partnering with public health and harm reduction organizations, and implement multifaceted responses to drug dependent users.**

strategy, we would not be facing an epidemic of this magnitude today. Police chiefs must take a hard look at partnering with public health and harm reduction organizations, and implement multifaceted responses to drug dependent users.

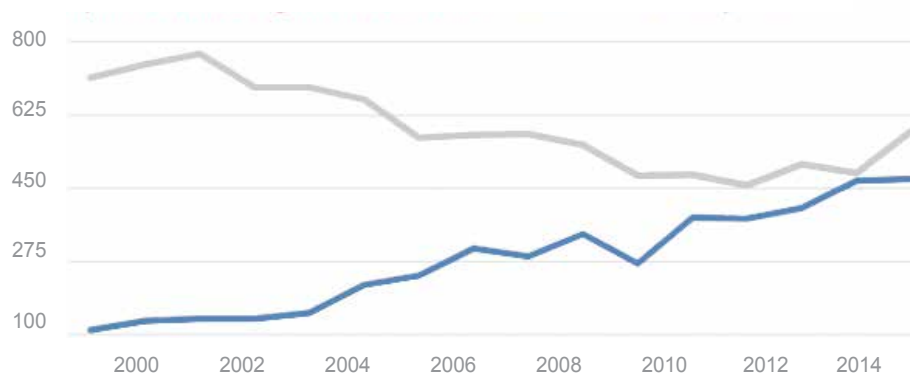
Two grant-funded pilot programs have been introduced in Colorado that will partner law enforcement and community stakeholders to provide more tools to street officers. Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) has shown promise in Seattle, Albany, and Santa Fe in getting dependent drug users into support programs. From a law enforcement perspective, LEAD is controversial to say the least. The program allows street officers the discretion (within specific parameters) to divert low-level drug dependent offenders out of the criminal justice system and into treatment facilities. Rather than taking an eligible individual to jail, officers may offer suspects the opportunity to be transported immediately to a treatment facility. The diversion only occurs with the agreement of the victim of the crime (e.g., a store manager where the suspect shoplifted goods). The grant will provide about \$500,000 per year for three years to each of the four pilot-site agencies. The program will be evaluated at the end of the three-year term and findings reported to the state.

**National: Drug Overdose and Motor Vehicle Deaths**



Source: Center for Disease Control

**Colorado: Drug Overdose and Motor Vehicle Deaths**



Source: Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

The second program — the Co-Responder Program — also pairs public safety with public health. Colorado will have eight pilot sites funded for a five-year period wherein local behavioral health agencies will assign mental health clinicians or peer counselors to police agencies as co-responders. These clinicians will respond to calls where mental or behavioral health issues are suspected or apparent. Police officers will have specialists available when dealing with individuals suffering from a mental health crisis and will have the option of turning the individual over for treatment as opposed to transporting them to the ER or jail. Unlike LEAD, individuals who commit a crime requiring incarceration are not diverted to support services and will be arrested if appropriate.

These two programs will not solve the drug problems in Colorado. They will, however, offer law enforcement options to direct individuals with behavioral issues into support and treatment environments rather than the criminal justice system.

Harm reduction strategies also are being introduced around the state. We are familiar with harm reduction in the forms of designated drivers to prevent DUI crashes, or wearing seatbelts to mitigate injury. In the world of drug use and dependency, it focuses on reducing the harms associated with the use of needles by offering alternatives to needle sharing and improper disposal.

Although there is not a direct partnership between harm reduction and law enforcement being proposed, certain drug laws will have to be amended to legally permit some of the strategies. One harm reduction strategy is syringe exchange programs (SEPs), where intravenous drug users can exchange their used hypodermic needles for new ones at a safe facility. SEPs are community-based public health programs that

provide a wide range of harm reduction services, including sterile syringes, needles, and other injection equipment; HIV and hepatitis testing and linkage to treatment; safe disposal containers for needles and syringes; education about overdose prevention and safer injection practices; referral to substance use treatment and referrals to medical, mental health, and social services; and tools to prevent HIV, STDs, and viral hepatitis, including counseling, condoms, and vaccinations.

Many Colorado communities are dealing with discarded syringes in parking lots, parks, and school yards, potentially exposing children and others to grave danger. SEPs can reduce the numbers of improperly discarded needles by facilitating the safe disposal of used syringes. Established SEPs report syringe return rates ranging from 48 to 88 percent, suggesting fewer syringes discarded in our communities.

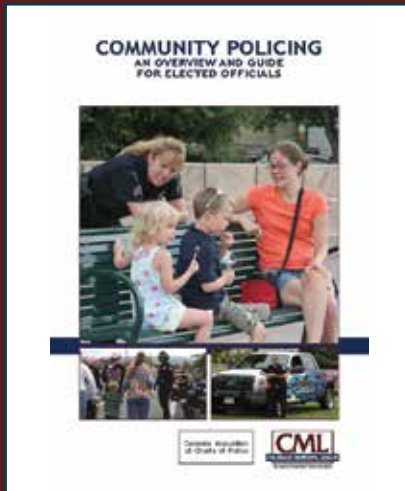
A more controversial harm reduction strategy is being proposed in the form of a bill for the upcoming legislative season: a supervised injection facility (SIF) in Denver. At such a facility, drug users would bring their own drugs and be provided sterile needles for injection. SIF staff would be present to intervene in the event of an accidental overdose. The used needles would then be collected by staff and disposed safely. Drug users also will be offered treatment and rehabilitation options while they utilize the facility. The bill will face significant hurdles in compatibility with existing drug possession laws. Currently, there are no SIFs in the United States and if the measure passes, it would make Denver one of three cities proposing to open the first site in the country.

Clearly, none of these programs is a silver bullet, and they will not produce meaningful results without effective nontraditional partnerships in our communities. The complexities of drug

dependency require multidisciplinary approaches if we are going to see long-term results. With the added correlation of mental health disorders combined with drug dependency, the complexity of the problems increases exponentially. Police officers regularly deal with individuals suffering from both mental illness and drug dependency, but resources for those people often are insufficient. Officers on the street have limited options in these situations and frequently can only have the person admitted to a medical facility (ER), where they receive virtually no mental health or substance abuse treatment on-site. These people frequently are released from ERs before officers finish their reports. Each year, more than a quarter-million Colorado residents require mental health assistance, but tens of thousands do not receive the care they need. Bringing numerous stakeholders and resources to work on these multipart problems offers a promising approach.

Meantime, in nearly every community, stakeholders such as harm reductionists, physicians, mental health and substance abuse specialists, pharmacists, law enforcement, EMS, and colleges are meeting regularly to build effective relationships to address local problems from a multidisciplinary approach. Often, communication and education are the priorities — get information out about available resources such as Naloxone, standing orders, and the availability of local services. As Colorado communities continue their grassroots efforts to address drug addiction through partnerships among public safety, public health, and harm reduction organizations combined with critically needed funding from the state, we may be able to have measurable, sustainable reductions in crime and addiction rates, and keep our communities safe.

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Check out the CML publication  
*Community Policing: An  
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Elected Officials* (available  
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# THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO KEEP US SAFE

## STATE OF OUR CITIES & TOWNS: PUBLIC SAFETY

### POLICE OFFICER: MORE THAN A PROFESSION

"POLICE OFFICERS ARE JUST folks like everybody else, doing a very difficult job that, honestly, 98 percent of the population cannot do. Police work is not a profession, it is a calling ... and it is a passion."

We can all be thankful that we have neighbors and friends who have answered the call as outlined by Evans Police Chief Rick Brandt. It is often a tough job but, as Chief Brandt points out, the job delivers "a lot of satisfaction at the end of the day that you are making a difference and absolutely making a difference day to day in people's lives."

During an afternoon of traffic enforcement on Evans' streets, Officer Rob Wardlaw uses his radar gun to track speeds. His courteous approach keeps the situation calm when making contact with the drivers. Why write speeding tickets? Wardlaw explained,

"We try to slow people down to reduce the amount of traffic accidents with vehicles, bicycles, pedestrians so that people are not getting hurt as often."

On one street in an industrial zone, all the vehicles coming around a blind corner are driving close to the speed limit — no tickets there. Wardlaw explained that he frequently had been sitting in that spot due to concerns over speeding traffic expressed by the businesses that line the street. That hour's lack of citations showed his enforcement activity was changing behavior. And safety is what law enforcement is all about.

"Some days you make people's day, you help them out, you are able to make their day better when they are having a bad day. You are able to help people who cannot help themselves sometimes, which is important to me," explains Wardlaw.

Finding people with a calling to help people through a law enforcement career, however, has become a concern for many municipalities. The 2018 CML State of Our Cities & Towns survey reveals that seven out of 10 Colorado municipalities find it difficult to recruit officers. In the larger cities, that figure rises to 90 percent. The survey found that the reasons vary: Small and mid-sized towns are challenged by their rural locations and inadequate pay, while larger cities face problems due to current public perceptions of police and the demands of shift work.

It is the public perceptions of police work in today's political atmosphere that has bolstered a movement to better connect police officers with their communities. Dedicated community policing programs have been adopted

*Article continued on page 12*



## FIRE FIGHTER: YOU FEEL YOU HAVE DONE SOMETHING GREAT

IN THEIR CLASSIC FAIRY TALE, the Grimm brothers warned Little Red Riding Hood about going into the woods. They were on to something. There is danger out there — from fire. Just as the woodcutter rescued Red from the wolf, today's firefighters are saving Colorado residents and protecting their homes. Residential development continues to encroach on wildlands, creating a new challenge for firefighters — especially in Colorado's foothills and mountains. In recent years, wildfires have taken their toll not only on housing developments in heavily forested areas but in traditional urban neighborhoods as the flames have burned into large cities such as Colorado Springs.

The 2018 CML State of Our Cities & Towns survey found that half of municipalities participate in a Community Wildfire Protection Plan,

with another 10 percent working toward implementation of a plan. About one-third of Colorado municipalities have taken the planning process a step further, developing specific programs to promote wildfire mitigation.

One of the leading programs has been put in place by the Town of Vail. Vail Fire Chief Mark Novak notes: "The important thing is that development is done purposefully and mindfully of the fact that people are moving into an environment that is adapted to wildfire."

Chief Novak believes municipalities must have the elements in place to successfully protect the community when they move into the urban-wildland interface: "That would be good access, good water systems, fuel breaks around the community, as well as defensible space around houses." He said the latter may be the most important, and homeowners are

urged to create a defensive space up to 100 feet around their homes. Vail Fire/Rescue deploys a dedicated wildland fire crew during the fire season that not only fights fires, but goes door to door providing fire-safety assessments for homeowners. As an added encouragement to create defensible spaces, the fire crew provides wood chipping and disposal of vegetation removed by homeowners.

Not only a threat for the mountain areas of the state, wildfires have swept through thousands of acres of the Eastern Plains in recent years. On the front lines are many volunteers, as with the Springfield Fire Department. Chief Bob Schaller said his department works with property owners throughout Baca County to develop a fire defense plan to help protect their farms and residential

*Article continued on page 13*



RECRUITING REPORTED AS A CHALLENGE ACROSS PUBLIC SAFETY

69%



Some challenges in recruiting police officers: inadequate pay/benefits, rural location, current public perceptions

“Police Officer” continued from page 10

by six out of 10 police departments, with another 16 percent planning to implement a program in the near future. Community policing programs have fostered cooperation among police, residents, and businesses.

Sergeant Jim Creasy serves on Grand Junction’s Community Resource Unit, which works closely with businesses and residents in the downtown area. The local Downtown Development Authority helps fund this unit that combines school resource officers, neighborhood watch, crime prevention through environmental design, homeless outreach, and dedicated patrol officers into a unified effort. One of the major accomplishments of the unit, according to Creasy, is the personal contacts that result in “the

public feeling comfortable coming to us.” The results in Grand Junction are impressive: The program has reduced police calls in the downtown area by 59 percent.

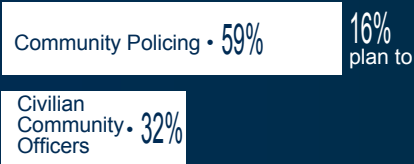
It is important that people understand what is actually happening during police interactions with the public, and a new tool provides some insight. The CML survey revealed that half of Colorado’s police departments have adopted the use of body cameras. Colorado Springs Police Chief Pete Carey said police officers have come to appreciate their use: “It shows what they are doing, following policies and laws, so now the officers are doing very well with the cameras.” Carey added that the video record is used as evidence in prosecutions, for internal affairs investigations, and with training. He mentioned that the

camera footage does not generally tell the whole story, but it does show much of what happened and is effective in prosecuting cases and demonstrating officer behavior.

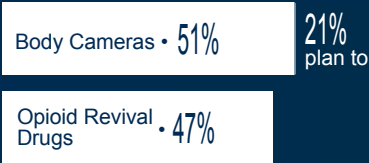
Public perception is more important than ever for our police officers. As Wardlaw puts it: “The hardest part of being an officer for me right now is just watching the media, seeing the way we are portrayed in the media, the way that a lot of officers are being attacked, physically and through media. We are out trying to help people, trying to do our jobs. So it is hard to see that.”

Chief Brandt wants us all to keep in mind that police officers are mothers, fathers, and parents like everyone else: “We go to work and we are trying to serve.”

Efforts such as community policing and civilian community services officers are yielding positive results.



New technology also is helping to build public trust. Officer-worn body cameras record contacts with civilians. Antidotes are provided to revive opioid drug overdose victims.





52%



Challenges in recruiting volunteers for fire departments: work out-of-service area, training requirements, compensation, time constraints

*“Fire Fighter” continued from page 11*  
investments. Nimble “brush trucks” and water tankers stand by to take on prairie fires that can spread rapidly on hot summer days.

Springfield faces another challenge — one shared with half of the state’s volunteer fire departments — recruiting volunteers. Schaller said that it is a growing problem as lifestyles change in today’s society: “People are so busy now, and there are so many other things to do, and I think that people lose that volunteer focus on community and it’s pretty sad.”

The CML survey found fire departments listing training requirements, residents working outside the service area, inadequate compensation, and not enough

personal time as reasons cited by potential volunteers for declining to serve.

When Schaller encourages volunteering, he stresses a firefighter’s role in helping people: “If you can help one person, you feel like you have really done something great.”

Municipal fire departments are helping each other as well, partnering with neighboring departments (and in some cases merging to form fire authorities) to make better use of equipment and stretch dollars. Alternative response vehicles are being developed to provide a lower cost response to medical calls. New techniques such as fog nails and smoke curtains are being utilized.

The Loveland Fire Authority was the first in Colorado to implement the use of fog nails to make the initial attack on fires in attics and other closed spaces. Battalion Chief Jason Starck explained that a perforated rod connected to a fire hose is inserted through the exterior wall or roof to inject a fine mist into the room on fire. “It creates a much larger total water surface area that can absorb heat at a quicker rate and essentially take the energy away from the fire and snuff the fire out, by converting to steam quickly.” He estimates the method can cut in half the damage that firefighting operations would inflict on the house.

Better planning, cooperative efforts, and equipment innovations are making the fire/rescue service safer for both firefighters and residents.

Two-thirds of fire department calls are medical emergencies, and fire departments are finding more efficient methods of response through full ambulance service, community paramedicine programs, and alternative response vehicles.

Ambulance Service • 36%  
16% transport

Innovations such as community wildland fire protection planning and new equipment such as fog nails and smoke curtains are making fire departments more effective.

Wildland Protection Plan • 48%  
10% plan to

Wildfire Mitigation • 33%  
12% plan to



## HIRING AND RETAINING QUALIFIED POLICE OFFICERS

A WELL-TRAINED AND QUALIFIED police force is crucial to maintaining public safety for municipal citizens, a core function of cities and towns. For this reason, municipalities take great care in hiring for law enforcement positions; however, law enforcement is now one of the most controversial professions in the United States, which has deeply affected municipalities and their hiring pools. Municipalities in both urban and rural areas are struggling to find interested candidates for positions, let alone those who are also capable. There are numerous challenges to police recruitment, but there are also effective solutions to improve enrollment and potential resources for municipalities.

### Challenges

The largest challenge seems to be a stark shortage in qualified recruits. This is potentially due to many issues. Some economists predict that during an uptick in the economy, law enforcement agencies have a tougher time recruiting. That appears to have been the case in 2016–2017.

Another issue is the risk associated with being an officer. According to research by the PEW Center, 42 percent of officers often have serious concerns about their safety. This undoubtedly wears on potential recruits, particularly as the narrative around policing is increasingly negative. In 2015, confidence in

police was at a 22-year low and has just begun to increase.

In addition, diminishing pay is a significant factor. This can be especially concerning for law enforcement agencies in lower population areas. Small departments also generally pay considerably less than big city forces. According to the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), the median starting salary for a new officer is \$39,000; in smaller departments, it is just \$30,000 to \$32,000.

Another significant challenge is the generational shift at the workplace. Millennials, and now the first members of Generation Z, make up the majority of today's hiring pool. The expectations of these generations are much different than those in the past, and agencies must adapt. Based on feedback from police departments across the country, many of today's applicants do not envision spending

their entire lives in a single career. There is also the issue of timing as newer generations are much more accustomed to faster timelines which may not suit current hiring procedures.

## **Solutions for Police Recruitment and Retention**

**Determine the needs of your agency and community.** A law enforcement agency must begin by assessing and prioritizing the traits it and the community desire in their police officers, then hire officers based on those desired characteristics. This requires a clear understanding of the organization's goals and strategy. Focus on officers who identify and bond with the agency, as well as understand community demographics. Identifying needs and characteristics can help an agency to keep diversity in mind, as well. Diversity is critical to the recruiting mission, particularly if an agency serves a diverse community. It is imperative to have a police force reflective of their respective communities.

Research, including some compiled by the Community Oriented Policing Service (COPS), has held that determining the needs of the agency and the community goes beyond previously held minimum standards and assumptions for police recruitment. As opposed to a "warrior" personality that was the previous focus, organizations such as COPS have attributed the following traits to the best outcomes when hiring law enforcement officers:

- Integrity
- Service orientation
- Empathy
- Communication and human relations skills
- Self-control
- Team orientation
- Problem-solving skills

While it is always important for agencies to be fully staffed, agencies need to take their time to find candidates who are appropriate for their needs. This will decrease the likelihood that the vacancy will need to be refilled a short time later because the employee was not the right fit.

**Create an efficient hiring process.** Streamlining the hiring process will prevent the loss of a great candidate to another agency. Today's candidates expect a faster turnaround. This is not to say that an agency should not be as thorough as possible; however, if an organization can find ways to shave off time between testing, interviews, and background checks, that can improve recruitment.

There are several ways agencies are streamlining their hiring processes. Agencies can develop a program with more frequent and regular testing. Additionally, law enforcement agencies around the nation are now allowing applicants to schedule multiple components concurrently and in no fixed order. As a result, candidates can schedule their physical exam, polygraph, and oral interview at or about the same time, which greatly moves the process forward. Agencies also are looking at a continuous cycle of hiring. In the past, agencies have waited for full classes of recruits whereas now, agencies are more proactive and making offers to individual candidates and even hiring highly qualified civilian candidates for skilled positions that may be currently filled by sworn officers.

**Maintain a pool of perspective candidates.** As part of a continuous hiring process, many agencies have opted to retain records of perspective candidates for up to three years. This allows for quicker identification of a possible employee if a position needs to be filled.

Another option is to create and maintain a relationship with outside organizations that may contain potential candidates. These include military veterans' organizations, directors of law enforcement academies, or deans of criminal justice programs with colleges and universities. This is an opportunity to share the vision and goals developed by your agency to market the organization to the right people.

## **Resources**

Several national organizations have resources for local communities to use as a starting point for police recruitment. The International Association of the Chiefs of Police (IACP) in particular has an extensive library on its website with links to information on everything from best practices and toolkits to LinkedIn groups with access to candidates. Visit [www.theiacp.org/recruitment](http://www.theiacp.org/recruitment).

## **Conclusion**

The challenges and opportunities facing police agencies today as they fill their workforces with quality individuals are certainly substantial. Negative perceptions of law enforcement, a workforce with new expectations, and a lack of resources at the local level are all significant challenges to overcome.

As daunting as the challenges are, there are tools law enforcement agencies can utilize. The fact is that hiring officers now means thinking outside of the box and removing old processes. This means streamlining new hires, taking the full community's needs into account, and proactively looking for new candidates.

Recruiting, hiring, and retaining the right people are critical for public safety in our local communities, and CML will remain an active resource and partner for local law enforcement agencies struggling to fill their ranks.



NOT CROSS

POLICE LINE

## SHOTS FIRED! IS YOUR COMMUNITY READY FOR AN ACTIVE SHOOTER?

ACTIVE SHOOTER INCIDENTS ARE increasing in America and around the globe. Local government managers and assistants have an affirmative duty to guide preparation, prevention, and response actions to limit the loss of life in the face of this alarming trend.

Not only must these efforts knit together first responders, including police, fire, and EMS personnel, into an integrated response, but research and experience indicates that local governments must increasingly involve and educate residents and business people in what to do when confronted with such a threat or an actual shooting itself.

Big or small, no community is immune from this deadly behavior. According to the Gun Violence Archive, there were 277 mass shootings in 2014, 332 in 2015, and 191 mass shootings in 2016 up through July 16, 2016.<sup>1</sup>

Time and learning from experience teaches that there are a number of actions a local government can take to preempt a lethal shooting or effectively cope when one occurs.

### Emergency Preparedness

Make sure your organization's general emergency preparedness plan, including equipment, is up-to-date.

Get elected and management support to make it happen.

Equip and practice setting up an emergency operations center (EOC), which will be the nerve center that manages the local response to the active shooter and mass casualty incident. An EOC does not need to be a stand-alone building. It requires a large enough space that can be set-up with the necessary furniture and equipment in a reasonable period of time.

Invest in emergency training. Understand the National Incident Management System (NIMS, [www.fema.gov/national-incident-management-system](http://www.fema.gov/national-incident-management-system)). All too often, city officials give lip service to this system and its proven techniques. This system really works. Train on it so it becomes second nature.

Orient disaster service workers and plan to meet their needs during an emergency. Most importantly, exercise your plans and check your equipment quarterly, if possible, using different scenarios, including an active shooter. This way your staff will be able to move into emergency response mode with confidence and speed.

For too long, law enforcement, fire, and EMS have perceived their first-

responder roles as independent of one another. This is a major mistake. All three need to train together to provide an integrated response and must be comfortable with an integrated Incident Command Structure.

The manager must get the buy-in of the chiefs to overcome institutional bias in emergency planning and response. This is critical. Use the Rescue Task Force (RTF) concept.<sup>2</sup> The RTF is essentially a simple response model made up of multiple four-person teams that move forward into the unsecured scene along secured corridors to provide stabilizing care and evacuation of the injured.

There is also a need for common operations language using simple terms to avoid confusion during the pressure of an active shooter incident. Consider cross training law enforcement, fire, and EMS dispatchers.

Provide the necessary equipment for your first responders, including ballistic vests, helmets and eye wear, and assault rifles for your law enforcement officers. Get your first responders into major public and private facilities so that they are familiar with their layouts and train in them when possible.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [www.gunviolencearchive.org](http://www.gunviolencearchive.org): Definition of mass shooting: four or more shot and/or killed in a single incident at the same general time and location, not including the shooter.

<sup>2</sup> "Improved Active Shooter/ Hostile Event Response," a report by the Interagency Board, September 2015, p.16, and "Arlington County, Virginia, Task Force Rethinks Active Shooter Incident Response," *Journal of Emergency Medical Services*, Blake Iselin, Nov. 30, 2009.

<sup>3</sup> "Improved Active Shooter/ Hostile Event Response," a report by the Interagency Board, September 2015, pp. 8–12.



Similarly, make sure your radio and communications systems are up to snuff. This means that they are interoperable so that police, fire, public works, the schools, local cities, and the county can all talk with one another seamlessly. Create redundant systems.

It is a best practice to provide direct and simple training for residents and business people about what to do in the event of an active shooter. Many jurisdictions are using instructional videos on local cable television and at community events, service clubs, and other gatherings and are encouraging employers to show them to their employees.

The common advice is to run, hide, or fight when the shooter is active. Good examples include a video provided by Houston, Tex.: “RUN. HIDE. FIGHT.® Surviving an Active Shooter Event” ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=5VcSwejU2D0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5VcSwejU2D0)). Or one titled “Surviving an Active Shooter” by the Los Angeles, California, Sheriff’s Department ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=DFQ-oxhdFjE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DFQ-oxhdFjE)).

These videos can be disturbing, but the information they contain can help prevent folks from freezing up and becoming easy targets.

Advanced active shooter prevention requires regular and structured communication between law enforcement, mental health and social workers, schools, and community

## DATA ON ACTIVE SHOOTERS

- There is no one demographic profile of an active shooter.
- Many active shooters display observable pre-attack behaviors, which, if recognized, can lead to the disruption of the planned attack.
- Bystanders generally represent the greatest opportunity for the detection and recognition of an active shooter prior to his or her attack.
- Active-shooter incidents often occur in small- and medium-sized communities where police departments are limited by budget constraints and small workforces.
- The average active-shooter incident lasts 12 minutes. Thirty-seven percent last less than 5 minutes.
- Overwhelmingly, the offender is a single shooter (98 percent), primarily male (97 percent). In 40 percent of the instances, they kill themselves.
- Two percent of the shooters bring improvised explosive devices (IEDs) as an additional weapon.
- In 10 percent of the cases, the shooter stops and walks away. In 20 percent of the cases, the shooter becomes mobile, moving to another location.
- Forty-three percent of the time, the crime is over before police arrive. In 57 percent of the shootings, an officer arrives while the shooting is still underway.
- The shooter often stops as soon as he hears or sees law enforcement, sometimes turning his anger or aggression on law enforcement.
- Patrol officers are most likely responding alone or with a partner. When responding alone, 75 percent had to take action.
- One-third of those officers who enter the incident alone are shot by the intruder.

Source: “Addressing the Problem of the Active Shooter,” Katherine W. Schweit, J.D., *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, May 2013: <https://leb.fbi.gov/2013/may/addressing-the-problem-of-the-active-shooter>.

**Sadly, active shooters are increasingly common in civil society. Local governments must prepare for, prevent where possible, and respond to mass shootings as an important subset of public safety and emergency service.**

nonprofits dealing with at-risk populations. Too often, there are danger signs that are not shared that could have been acted upon.

Unless these agencies and their staffs actively collaborate, there is a chance that a potentially dangerous person can fall between institutional cracks and become an active shooter.

Sharing concerns and warning signals can lead to interventions that end up saving lives. This takes a shared commitment on the part of organizations that do not always work well together.

### **Saving Lives, Coping Strategies**

Empirical evidence indicates that the speed of the emergency medical response is key to saving lives. That means moving properly trained, armored (not armed) medical personnel, who are accompanied by law enforcement officers, into areas of mitigated risks — sometimes referred to as “warm zones” — as quickly as possible.

Early aggressive hemorrhage control is essential for better outcomes. All first responders need to know how to use tourniquets and hemostatic agents like gauze for severe bleeding.

Rendering life-saving care in warm zones by EMS, fire, and law enforcement is a relatively new paradigm supported by data.<sup>4</sup>

The American College of Surgeons studied lessons learned from the battlefield and the responses to active shooter events in the U.S. and has made recommendations known as the Hartford Consensus about how emergency workers should respond in these situations. The white paper ([bulletin.facs.org/2015/07/the-hartford-consensus-iii-implementation-of-bleeding-control](http://bulletin.facs.org/2015/07/the-hartford-consensus-iii-implementation-of-bleeding-control)) is well worth reading and boils down to the acronym THREAT:

T: Threat suppression

H: Hemorrhage control

RE: Rapid Evacuation

A: Assessment by medical personnel

T: Transport to definitive care

This involves tactical emergency casualty care (TECC)<sup>5</sup> and the need for integrated planning, preparation, response, treatment, and care.<sup>6</sup> The analysis deserves careful consideration. Public managers should work with their chiefs and labor groups to institutionalize these practices and procedures.

After the tragic event, the community will need time and space to grieve and heal. Social workers, therapists, and faith community members must be involved to assist individuals and groups to process their losses.

Community gatherings to remember and unite must be organized. First responders will also need help in dealing with the trauma of the shooting. Having good relationships with these support groups in place prior to an active shooter event will be beneficial when the time comes.

Expect media saturation for at least a week after the shooting incident. The public information officer will be stretched to his or her limits, so be sure the individual gets the requisite training in advance.

### **Be Prepared**

Sadly, active shooters are increasingly common in civil society. Local governments must prepare for, prevent where possible, and respond to mass shootings as an important subset of public safety and emergency service.

<sup>4</sup> “First Responder Guide for Improving Survivability in Improvised Explosive Devices and/or Active Shooter Incidents,” Homeland Security Office of Health Affairs, June 2015.

<sup>5</sup> Fire/Emergency Medical Services Department, Operational Considerations and Guide for Active Shooter and Mass Casualty Incidents, FEMA, U.S. Fire Administration, September 2013.

<sup>6</sup> “See Something, Do Something: Improving Survival,” American College of Surgeons, September 2015 Bulletin, Volume 100, Number 15.



# DRONES

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN ENSURING PUBLIC SAFETY

THE RAPID PROLIFERATION OF unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) — otherwise known as drones — has triggered a variety of responses from local governments seeking to ensure the safety and privacy of their residents. These efforts have ranged from outright prohibition to the imposition of time, place, and manner restrictions on their use. To some degree, all of these efforts are subject to legal uncertainty, as the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and courts continue to struggle with the appropriate line between federal authority over the National Airspace System and local governments' police powers. However, recent developments suggest a growing appreciation for the role of local governments.

In July 2016, the FAA published long-awaited regulations governing commercial use of UAS under 55 pounds and under 400 feet. These Part 107 regulations create operating restrictions and licensing requirements. Drones and operators must pass an FAA written examination, operate during daylight hours, yield the right of way to other aircraft, remain within visual line of sight of the pilot or an observer, and refrain from flying over people not "directly participating" in the operation. Many of these requirements may be waived by the FAA; for example, the FAA has issued more than 1,000 waivers allowing night operations.

The FAA must also authorize commercial drone operations that are conducted near airports with air traffic control towers. Licensed drone pilots may fly in the vicinity of untowered airports without permission as long as they do not interfere with other aircraft operations.

However, the regulatory framework does not apply to UAS operated for hobby or recreational purposes, provided they are flown within line of sight and, within five miles of an airport, notice is given to the airport and the tower. Such entities' permission to operate is not required; however, operation of a drone contrary to instructions from the airport or tower may constitute prohibited careless and reckless conduct. Congress has expressly prohibited the FAA from "promulgat[ing] any rule or regulation" specifically regulating such recreational aircraft.


The FAA regulatory framework does not address property rights, privacy, or illicit uses of UAS. In promulgating the Part 107 regulations, the FAA specifically noted that such issues have traditionally been the domain of state and local governments. However, UAS operators have offered considerable opposition to local public agencies in their attempts to fill this vacuum.

The FAA refers local governments to its "State and Local Regulation of Unmanned Aircraft Systems Fact

Sheet" developed in December 2015 in response to proposed state and local regulation. It starts with the general principle that local regulation that conflicts with federal law is preempted. Local governments may exercise their police powers — including land use, zoning, and privacy, trespass, and law enforcement operations — to prohibit weaponized drones or voyeurism, among other things. However, the fact sheet cautions local governments to consult with the FAA before imposing operational restrictions on where, whether, and when drones may operate. The fact sheet provides little guidance regarding where the line between federal and local authority is drawn.

In September 2017, a federal court provided the first partial answer to this question when it invalidated a drone ordinance enacted by Newton, Mass. There, the municipal ordinance required owners of drones under 55 pounds to register with the City of Newton and pay \$10. Additionally, the ordinance prohibited the operation of a drone below 400 feet over private property without the permission of the property owner; over municipal property at any altitude without permission; or beyond visual line of sight of the operator.

The court found that Newton's registration requirement was preempted because the FAA intended to be the exclusive registrar of UAS.



The court left open the possibility that the municipality could require model aircraft registration, because Congress had expressly prohibited the FAA from requiring recreational drone regulation. (Congress recently restored the requirement that UAS operators register their model aircraft with the FAA.)

The court found that the operational restrictions amounted to a “wholesale ban on drone use in Newton” absent prior permission, stating that while “Congress and the FAA may have contemplated co-regulation of drones to a certain extent,” a total ban within the jurisdiction went too far. It also ruled that Newton could not impose “limits on the methods of piloting a drone beyond that which the FAA has already designated.”

However, the plaintiff did not challenge other aspects of the ordinance, including the requirement for a permit to use municipal property for landing or take off or restrictions on capturing a person’s visual image, using a drone to harass another person, or operations over emergency response efforts. The court also noted that Newton may redraft the ordinance to avoid conflict with federal law.

The court did not conclude that all local regulation of drones was preempted merely because it impacted drone operations. Importantly, it held that the FAA “explicitly contemplate[d] state or local

regulation of pilotless aircraft.” Thus, in the court’s view, local drone restrictions are presumptively enforceable, unless compliance with both local and federal regulations is impossible or if the local law “obstructs the objectives of federal regulation.”

*Newton* is the first in what will be many cases drawing the line between federal and local authority. It is likely to prove an important bellwether in recognizing local government’s authority in this area.

Even while these judicial developments are unfolding, the FAA continues to engage stakeholders in an attempt to define, as a matter of policy, how far local governments can go. The FAA established the Drone Advisory Committee (DAC) to advise the agency on developing drone regulations and policy, including a task group to develop consensus-based recommendations for the role of state and local governments in regulating and enforcing drone rules.

The task group presented its interim work product at a November 2017 meeting. While it emphasized that its work was still ongoing, the group noted that the “general conclusion recognized by all participants is that there ought to be reasonable time, place, and manner regulations implemented at the state or local level, provided that protections are put in place to maximize the likelihood that such a significant change in the

regulatory framework for unmanned aircraft would not undermine the safety of the national airspace system, unduly impede innovation, or result in confusing, unreasonable, or unjust restrictions.” This consensus is critical, as it reflects a growing understanding that low-altitude operations present unique safety and privacy issues.

In addition, on Oct. 26, 2017, the president directed the U.S. Department of Transportation to establish a UAS Integration Pilot Program. This program allows state, local, and tribal governments to explore new approaches to integrate drones into low-altitude airspace. Under the program, selected local governments (the initial application deadline was Nov. 28, 2017) may partner with sector operators to develop new models for conducting advanced UAS operations. In addition to testing cutting-edge operational concepts — such as beyond visual line of sight, detect-and-avoid capabilities, and direct flights over people — the program is intended to identify the most effective means of balancing interests in managing UAS operations.

Data and lessons learned from the program, as well as cases such as *Newton*, are likely to play a critical role in shaping the division of authority and responsibility between federal and local governments going forward.



## SPOTLIGHT

### AN AERIAL OPPORTUNITY FOR FIREFIGHTING

*By Bob Gann, Center of Excellence acting director, and Caley Fisher, public information officer, with the Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control*

THE CENTER OF EXCELLENCE WITHIN THE COLORADO DIVISION OF FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL was created in 2014 with Senate Bill 14-164. During the legislative session, proponents of the Center of Excellence (CoE) explained that there is currently no mechanism for determining the efficacy of aerial firefighting and that there is a need for an innovative, science- and data-focused research entity. The CoE now is an integral part of ensuring the successful implementation of Colorado's own aerial firefighting fleet and is the worldwide leader in collaboratively researching and developing innovative technologies and capabilities supporting or related to aerial firefighting.

House Bill 17-1070, concerning the study of use of unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) for public safety applications, became law on June 6, 2017. This act requires the CoE to conduct a study regarding the integration of UAS into government operations as it relates to public safety. After the conclusion of the study, the CoE is required to submit a report to the legislature about the results. For this UAS pilot program, the CoE will test and evaluate various UAS platforms, sensors, and software on a variety of public safety missions. The CoE also will develop policies and procedures and advise public safety agencies on how UAS technology can improve the safety, efficiency, and effectiveness of their daily operations. The UAS study and pilot program will absorb the risk, cost, and effort of developing a meaningful UAS capability for public safety agencies in Colorado.

Since no new funding is provided for in the act, the study will begin when CoE is able to secure sufficient funds through gifts, grants, and donations to conduct the study. The benefits of donating UAS platforms, payloads, software, or other items to this effort include the opportunity to put a product in the hands of public safety practitioners who will provide unbiased feedback on its performance in a variety of missions. The CoE also will provide copies of the study evaluating the company's product.

Organizations providing gifts, grants, or donations will be supporting a unique agency dedicated to thoroughly evaluating and fielding new technologies and techniques to improve the safety, efficiency, and sustainability of public safety practitioners.

For questions regarding this legislation or how to donate, contact Garrett Seddon at 970-665-0045 or [garrettseddon@state.co.us](mailto:garrettseddon@state.co.us).







# THE WIRELESS EMERGENCY ALERT SYSTEM

IN 2017, THE INTEGRATED PUBLIC Alerts and Warning System (IPAWS) of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) received increased attention as local jurisdictions across the United States were faced with initiating mass evacuations due to wildfires, potential dam failures, and other emergencies. IPAWS is an internet-based capability for federal, state, territorial, tribal, and local authorities issuing critical public alerts and warnings.

Throughout the year, large-scale emergencies and disasters (such as the Gatlinburg Wildfires in Tennessee, Oroville Dam in California, New York bombings, hurricanes, and wildfires in California) demonstrated the need for emergency managers to have access to and understand the components of IPAWS to make large-scale emergency notifications to the public.

IPAWS includes four main components: Emergency Alert

System (EAS), NOAA Weather Radio, Internet Systems, and Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA). The EAS sends warnings through broadcast, cable, satellite, and wireline services, while the NOAA Weather Radio is a nationwide network of radio stations that includes 1,000 transmitters in the United States and territories. Internet Systems, as the name suggests, uses internet connected services and systems, including social media and websites. The WEA broadcasts alerts and warnings simultaneously to cell phones and mobile devices in a designated area of impact and is the focus of this article.

According to the FEMA website, Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) are “emergency messages sent by authorized government alerting authorities through mobile carriers.” Authorized alerting authorities include federal, state, local, and tribal agencies. The FEMA website also reports that 16 Colorado agencies

have completed the process to become alerting authorities and another seven agencies are in process. (Colorado government agencies and emergency management offices seeking information to become an authorized alerting authority can contact the Colorado Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHSEM) Communications Officer Jeff Klenda at [jeff.klenda@state.co.us](mailto:jeff.klenda@state.co.us) for information on the process and for support in completing the requirements.)

The WEA component allows authorities to issue alerts for: extreme weather and other threatening emergencies in the area; missing persons (AMBER Alerts); and from the U.S. president during a national emergency.

The WEA communication is received as a text message on cell phones and mobile devices even if the network is congested or has high

## Wireless emergency alerts allow authorities to issue alerts

for: extreme weather and other threatening emergencies in the area; missing persons

(AMBER Alerts); and from the U.S. president during a national emergency.

volume. Perhaps the greatest benefit of these alerts are that they are received by all WEA-capable devices within their designated area at approximately the same time.

An important item to remember with WEA messaging, however, is that it is only one method for sending or receiving emergency alerts. WEA should be used in combination with other emergency alerts (NOAA Weather Radio, outdoor sirens, internet services, and local options, including opt-in services). Providing early and frequent notifications to community members during emergencies increases that ability of individuals to make life-saving decisions and can reduce their fears or concerns.

Prior to becoming an IPAWS-alerting authority, a local jurisdiction must complete four steps, each of which is detailed in the FEMA IPAWS Toolkit for Alerting Authorities: select an IPAWS Compatible Alert Origination

Software; apply for a Memorandum of Agreement with FEMA; apply for Public Alerting Permissions from a Colorado DHSEM Communications Officer; and complete IPAWS Web-Based Training.

Each alerting authority must complete the FEMA independent study course IS-247.A “Integrated Public Alert and Warning System.”

Another requirement is the CYBER 175-W “Information Security for Everyone” course offered by TEEX (Texas A&M Engineering).

FEMA provides numerous resources for emergency managers and public safety officials to learn more about the IPAWS system online at [www.fema.gov/informational-materials](http://www.fema.gov/informational-materials).

After becoming an alerting authority, it is necessary and valuable to engage in regular testing of your WEA system with help from the IPAWS Joint Interoperability Test Command (JITC). JITC staff is available to provide assistance with testing or conducting

individual web-based trainings to help emergency managers better understand the process for alerting. (To coordinate testing and training sessions, contact the JITC staff at [IPAWS@dhs.gov](mailto:IPAWS@dhs.gov).)

Colorado emergency managers and public safety officials also can rely on the Colorado Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHSEM) as a resource for IPAWS support. The responsibility for IPAWS falls within the Office of Emergency Management and primarily is with the DHSEM Communications Officer Jeff Klenda; however, each of the regional field managers can provide local support. Information can be found on the DHSEM website on the “Communications” tab under the State EOC/Response heading at [www.colorado.gov/pacific/dhsem/communications-1](http://www.colorado.gov/pacific/dhsem/communications-1); under the IPAWS tab is information on the process to become an alerting authority as well as basic system information.



## COMMUNICATING WITH RESIDENTS IN AN EMERGENCY

*By Victoria Simonsen, Lyons town administrator*

DURING THE EARLY HOURS OF SEPT. 12, 2013, LYONS (POPULATION 2,035) WAS INUNDATED BY A 500-YEAR flood event, declared as a national disaster by former President Barack Obama. More than 100 homes were destroyed, and all infrastructure systems (including water, sewer, gas, electricity, and bridges) were compromised, resulting in a townwide evacuation that displaced residents for six to 12 weeks.

Even before anyone could evacuate, residents were quarantined for 36 hours immediately following the flood. The flood's torrent resulted in six "islands" across Lyons, leaving residents immobile — many of whom were stuck in the elementary school gym. During this time, communication proved difficult. Without utilities, there was very limited phone and internet access: cell phone batteries died, and most landlines and wireless internet modems were inoperable. On top of the unmet power needs for e-communication, most cellular networks were down due to damaged infrastructure and cell towers.

Yet the first three days following the flood may have been arguably the most critical. Each day, Deputy Sheriff Kevin Parker and Town Administrator Victoria Simonsen met with residents at a gathering place on each island to share information on timelines and updates from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), National Guard, and other sources. When available, municipal staff and residents sent information to family and friends located outside of Lyons, who helped disseminate that information regionally by means of social media and neighboring media sources. Otherwise, within that time, the main source of communication within Lyons remained word of mouth.

After the initial few days, the community was evacuated. Neighboring entities opened their doors to Lyons — the evacuation center was housed in a Longmont church (LifeBridge Christian), where the entire community met week after week to get up-to-date information and see neighbors and friends. The City of Longmont allowed the Town of Lyons to use its facilities for weekly board of trustee meetings. The meetings were broadcast online and through a cable network, which served as a useful tool in disseminating information to residents who were now spread throughout the county and beyond. Holding meetings remotely had its own set of challenges, as records were inaccessible, protocol disrupted, and recording capabilities compromised.

The weeks and months following the flood, when residents slowly moved back to the disarray of a community decimated by nature's strength, the many lessons learned were implemented.

A townwide e-blast system was developed. Recovery had only begun, and this system was a crucial tool in keeping the community informed, and it remains as such today. Server security and cloud backup were also top priorities (especially since the Town had a cyber attack that drained its bank account).

While rebuilding and bringing residents home remained priorities, future preparedness had an underlying precedence in continuing operations. All recovery project plans were developed with the key element of resiliency, staff safety trainings became mandatory, a plan for continuity of operations was strengthened, and new policies of formal documentation, procurement, and other processes were implemented. Within the community, Lyons Prepared was established — a volunteer-driven organization with the mission to support communications and neighborhood preparedness in an emergency. In coordination with the Lyons Fire Protection District, Lyons Prepared has established communication trees across town, including ham radio clubs, and designated points of contact on each island. There also have been discussions on utilizing solar hubs for energy stations for backup electric, as well as a landline communication center.

More than four years after the flood, there is still much to be done. The Town of Lyons has added a new layer of decision making through a preventative and preparedness lens. Lyons is still in recovery, with a couple of more years to go. Yet, from the devastation, the community has become stronger and more resilient.





# COORDINATED WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT

WILDLAND FIRE CROSSES jurisdictional boundaries and exceeds the capabilities of individual agencies, which necessitates a cooperative, interagency approach for successful and effective wildland fire management.

Wildland fire management in Colorado is an interagency partnership among local, state, and federal agencies across the nation. As a lead state agency, the Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control (DFPC) works with the other governmental agencies to coordinate wildland fire management on a statewide basis. The DFPC's priority mission is to provide support, service, and assistance in addition to filling needed gaps for counties and local fire agencies.

DFPC represents the State of Colorado and its partners on numerous multi-state and national level committees and work groups. Through its Wildland Fire Management Section (WFMS), DFPC provides a variety of programs and services in wildfire preparedness and planning, suppression and response, and prescribed fire management.

## Wildfire Program Framework

A strong preparedness program is the foundation for successful wildland fire management, which is accomplished through DFPC fire management officers (FMOs) and other staff. The

basis of the program is a series of agreements with county, state, and federal agencies, which provide the authorities and framework for successful cooperative, interagency wildfire management. FMOs facilitate and coordinate multi-agency planning, dispatching, and response for wildfire incidents, including county and state level annual operating plans.

DFPC provides assistance and support for wildland fire training and qualifications, including the administration of the Incident Qualification System (IQS) and facilitating entry of county and local fire agencies into the Resource Ordering and Status System (ROSS). DFPC allows these resources to participate in the National Response Plan and be available for incidents in Colorado and across the country if needed.

## Response and Incident Management

The primary focus of wildland fire management is early detection and reporting of fires, and rapid initial attack on those fires that need to be suppressed. DFPC accomplishes this with a variety of resources and programs:

- Two fixed-wing **multi-mission aircraft** (MMA) are based in Centennial. These provide detection, extended surveillance, and support, as well as all-hazard at times.

- DFPC may contract for up to four **helicopters**; those currently are a Type 3 with Helitack crew in Cañon City, another Type 3 with Helitack crew in Montrose, and a Type 2 restricted (bucket) only in Boulder. These helicopters perform a variety of tasks, such as recon, transport of personnel and supplies, and water delivery.
- DFPC also may contract for up to **four single-engine air tankers** (SEATs). Currently, two are pre-positioned around the state based on fire indices and activity.
- DFPC has **seven engines and one squad** at multiple locations around the state, supporting and assisting local and federal agencies when requested. These also are available for a variety of training, fuels management, prescribed fire, and other fire program functions.
- **Fire management officers** (FMOs) provides technical support and assistance on ordering of resources, tactics, and management of incidents to local fire agencies and county sheriffs.
- **Funding** is available through the Emergency Fire Fund, Wildfire Emergency Response Fund, and Colorado Firefighting Air Corps.

For more information, visit [colorado.gov/dfpc](http://colorado.gov/dfpc)

## GET TO KNOW ...

## DOUG HALL WESTMINSTER FIRE CHIEF AND CML FIRE CHIEFS SECTION CHAIR

### **How did you end up in public service?**

During my first attempt at college, I was enrolled in a pre-med program pursuing the goal of becoming a pediatrician. I landed a job as a fire/police dispatcher in a very small rural community. There was one firefighter on duty. He would come in at night with his moon pie and RC Cola to chat. Through his stories, I became more intrigued with the fire service and subsequently joined the volunteers. The rest is history.

### **What do you enjoy most about your position?**

I get energized with the leadership accountability and responsibility for the delivery of fire services and EMS to our residents and businesses. I am

an advocate for the "community first" service philosophy. Although cities and towns face similar issues and problems, each community is a little different, and this brings some interesting opportunities and challenges to our mission of delivering exceptional value and quality services.

### **What is the most challenging part of your position?**

There are two ongoing challenges.

The first is ensuring our services are effective, efficient, and offer equity to the community.

The second, and likely more challenging, is integrating the principles of adaptive leadership into our decision-making processes. The fire service, in general, has an entrenched mindset that the solution to our problems can be resolved with additional funding, staffing, apparatus, and/or stations. To actually achieve definitive progress in addressing community issues, we need to embrace adaptive thinking and utilize strategic analysis in identifying solutions.

A third pending challenge coming in 2018 is collective bargaining with our International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) union. There is much to learn about this process. This opportunity presents a different scope

of challenges, and I am confident our collaborative approach will produce positive outcomes.

### **What are some exciting things going on in Westminster?**

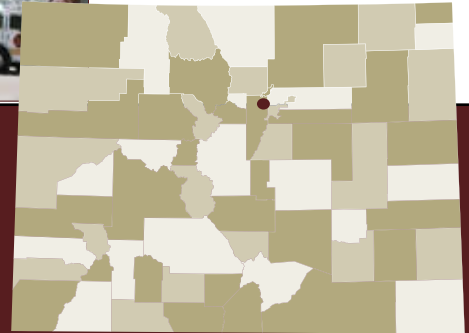
Development and redevelopment activities are at an all-time high. Two of our flagship projects, Downtown Westminster and the Westminster Station transit-oriented development, are beginning to evolve into dynamic and exciting opportunities. The Westminster City Council and municipal staff throughout the organization are aligned in a common vision in utilizing development strategies and initiatives to ensure Westminster continues to be a great community for families, businesses, and visitors to thrive. Assessing the impact of development on services is exciting, challenging, and brings tremendous reward through our collaborative leadership.

### **What project or undertaking are you most proud of and why?**

The City of Westminster recently received an ISO rating designation of 1, the highest recognition level in its fire suppression rating system. This achievement is due to the great services provided by all departments that complement and support fire and emergency medical services.







## GET TO KNOW THE CITY OF WESTMINSTER

- The City of Westminster incorporated in 1911
- Population: 112,737
- [www.cityofwestminster.us](http://www.cityofwestminster.us)

The accreditation process through the Center for Public Safety Excellence is another exciting undertaking. The accreditation process is recognized by ICMA, ISO, International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC), and several other professional associations as the gold standard for fire agencies. What I appreciate most about the accreditation process is the strategic leadership and management perspective it brings to an organization.

### What do you see as current issues in public safety?

Presently, the well-being and mental health of first responders is a hot topic throughout the country, as is the risk of cancer. The always-evolving emergency medical issues, sustainability of the built environment, increasing demand with emergent and nonemergent service calls, and increasing costs to provide fire services and EMS. Costs continue to rise with salaries, apparatus, equipment, and training needs. On the Front Range, we are experiencing fire agencies merging, some dissolving and others contracting for services, and there is a growing trend toward regionalization. The question that often arises is what value do we bring based on the financial investment of taxpayer dollars.

### What is the funniest or strangest thing to happen while at work?

My initial response would be my appointment as fire chief. There are many people that believe it to be funny and likely just as many, if not more, see it as a very strange occurrence. Who would have guessed?

### What website(s) and/or publication(s) do you refer to when seeking information?

For local and state business and governance issues, I look to the CML website and publications, *The Colorado Statesman*, *The Denver Business Journal*, and various chamber of commerce newsletters. I subscribe to *Bloomberg*, *Forbes*, and the *Harvard Business Review* magazines. There are several websites I monitor to keep abreast of local government trends: American City and County, American Planning Association, Center for New Urbanism, Governing, International City/County Management Association, National League of Cities, and SmartBriefs on Business and Politics. For fire service topics, the publications and websites are the International Association of Fire Chiefs, National Fire Protection Association, National Fire Sprinkler Association, and U.S. Fire Administration.

### What book are you currently reading? Are you enjoying it?

At present, I am focused on Simon Sinek's works, *Start with Why* and *Leaders Eat Last*. Sinek offers great leadership insight that closely aligns with adaptive leadership principles. Very enjoyable and refreshing perspective. I am also very much enjoying getting to know some Colorado authors, and two of my favorites are Emily Littlejohn and Kevin Wolf. Each has authored two mysteries set in small Colorado towns. Emily's latest release, *A Season to Lie*, has the same main character from her first book, *Inherit the Bones*. When I need regrounding I turn to *The Daily Stoic* by Ryan Holiday.

*Doug Hall is the fire chief for the City of Westminster. He has served for 39 years. A graduate of Regis University, Doug also completed graduate work in political science and public policy at University of Colorado Denver. He graduated from the Center for Creative Leadership, University of Denver Public Safety Leadership Program, Metro North Chamber of Commerce Leadership Program, and Executive Fire Officer Program. Doug serves on the Colorado State Fire Chiefs Board of Directors as treasurer and is its policy liaison to CML. He also is first vice-president of the Missouri Valley Division — IAFC, as well as a member of several professional associations and the Westminster 7:10 Rotary Club. Married with three children, he and Lisa are now adapting to the wonderful world of grandparenting.*



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