



# THE REVIEW

Central Arizona Fire and Medical - 8603 E. Eastridge Dr., Prescott Valley, AZ 86314 – **April 22, 2022**

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“It is hard to fail, but it is worse never to  
have tried to succeed.”

Theodore Roosevelt



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## The Chief's Desk

It's early Wednesday morning as I sit writing the draft of *The Review* for this week. Chief Durre and I spent Tuesday attending two meetings regarding the Crooks Fire. One was the cooperators' briefing in the early afternoon and the other was the Type 1 IMT in-brief at 2000. During the first meeting, the Type 3 Team talked about a decent line they had created to hold the fire; however, within a very short time that line had been lost.

Losing the line was not for a lack of effort; rather, it was the high winds and loss of air assets as a direct result of those winds. By 2000 Tuesday evening the fire had topped 1200 acres and was progressing at a steady rate. As with most deep-rooted wildland fires, it's in some tough terrain located in an area that has a lot of fuel.

I was also in contact with Chief Mark Gaillard, the Flagstaff and Summit Fire Chief, regarding the Tunnel Fire. He said that they had lost at least two dozen homes and likely more in areas that they were unable to access. Crews from Flagstaff FD, Summit FD, and Highland Pines worked feverishly alongside their Forest Service partners to contain the fire. Like the Crooks Fire, efforts of the crews on the Tunnel Fire were thwarted by high winds and the inability to fly air assets.

It's not lost on me that it is mid-April and not the time of year we typically see this type of fire activity in our state. We discussed that the potential for heavy fire activity in our area would likely begin mid-May and last through June at our recent cooperators' meeting. For perspective, the heavy fire activity for the basin is typically seen over a three-week period in June. I realize that those time frames are not hard and fast rules, but in general terms that would be considered more normal for fire activity.

Seeing these types of fires earlier in the year is creating some challenges related to resources. We've had crews and team members assigned in Tennessee, Texas, and New Mexico already this year. As those personnel are released, we are pulling them back to Arizona and holding them in place for local, regional, and in-state deployments.

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### Upcoming Events:

April 25: Board Meetings  
April 26: Meeting in Phoenix, Chino Town Council  
April 27: Possibly at the Capitol  
April 28: AFCA Meeting, Yavapai County Chiefs Meeting, PV Council Meeting  
April 29: Statewide Mutual Aid meeting

### Board Meetings:

April 25: Administration  
CVFD – 1600-1630  
CYFD – 163-1700  
CAFMA – 1700-1830

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## **FDNY, Twin Towers and Organizational Change**

**By: Gregory Shea, Paul Brown, Andre Kotze**

Organizational change requires energy. People must feel a need, either to stop doing something that they are doing or to start doing something that they aren't doing. Organizational trauma can create such a need, but utilizing that felt need for change falls to leadership. For example, a traumatized organization can turn inward or look outward.

The tragedy of the Twin Towers led FDNY not to cover up but, quite the contrary, to turn outward and, so, to change.

Prior to the events of 9/11, FDNY qualified as a uniquely insular department. It possessed enough equipment and personnel to never need outside support. Firefighters and higher-ups came from around the world to learn how FDNY operated. Rarely, if ever, did FDNY venture out to learn from others. FDNY taught itself, learned its lessons internally, and created tactics and procedures from its experiences from within the city's boundaries.

By the fall of 2001, all senior leaders had gained tremendous firefighting experience during the "War Years" of the '60s and '70s. Simply put, they knew how to fight fire and didn't feel the need to look outward for help. This insularity led former FDNY Commissioner Sal Cassano to declare that the department had "150 years of tradition unimpeded by progress."

The collapse of the World Trade Center killed 343 FDNY firefighters, including many of its senior leaders, and destroyed hundreds of firefighting vehicles. Convulsed, FDNY could have turned inward, took its own counsel and treated the events of 9/11 as a black swan, one never to occur again. It could have defined renewal as rebuilding of what existed on 9/10. Instead, FDNY allowed outsiders in, accepting their help, and began its own passage to becoming a more open and learning organization.

[Firehouse.com](http://Firehouse.com)

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## **Leadership against all odds: Every officer should know the story of Ernest Shackleton**

**By: Linda Willing**

History can provide some important lessons for fire service leaders. One name from history that every fire officer should know is Ernest Shackleton.

By 1914, Ernest Shackleton was already a national hero in Great Britain. In 1909, he led an expedition that reached within 100 miles of the South Pole, the closest anyone had gotten to this last great prize of exploration on the planet. Members of the expedition also did the first ascent of Mount Erebus, the highest point on the continent. When Shackleton returned to England, he was knighted for his achievements.

After Roald Amundsen reached the South Pole in 1911, Shackleton turned his sights to being the first to lead a transcontinental expedition across Antarctica via the South Pole. So Shackleton and his crew of 27 men headed south in the latter part of 1914. To say that things did not go as planned is beyond understatement.

## **AN UNIMAGINABLE EXPEDITION**

Their ship, the Endurance, became encased in pack ice just one day from reaching land. They drifted north in the ice for 10 months through the southern hemisphere winter, still hopeful that they could resume their journey when the ice broke up in the spring. However, the spring thaw led to large ice blocks crushing and sinking their ship.

They lived on the shifting and diminishing ice pack for more than four months until they were finally forced to put all 28 men into three lifeboats, the largest of which was 22 feet long. They were at sea for six days before finally landing on desolate and uninhabited Elephant Island. Crewmembers were exhausted, hungry and dehydrated, and suffering from illness and injury, including severe frostbite. One member had a heart attack. They were hundreds of miles from any other human being, and no one knew where they were.

[Firerescue1.com](http://firerescue1.com)

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## **Chief's Desk Continued**

The Feds are struggling to recruit seasonal firefighters, and the state is having similar issues. This means that resources are thin, so there is more reliance this year on local assets, i.e. local fire agencies who are involved in wildland. The issue for us, at least thus far, is that we are finding it difficult to get backfill for personnel deployed on wildland events. Ultimately, this means we will accept fewer wildland assignments because we cannot get enough resources to for our primary mission.

I'm not sure if the difficulty with staffing is a timing issue, e.g. it's April and we're not normally deployed as much, or an issue with burnout given the amount of OT over the last couple years along with our increased call volume. Let's face it folks, we're busy and we simply cannot be all things to all people all the time. Everyone needs a break.

That said, our area and some of our neighbors are being significantly impacted by wildfire early this year with no sign that things will slow down. Be mindful that there may be calls to backfill stations in the coming weeks. This will likely not be the result of sending crews to other states; rather, the calls may come because of utilizing local resources to protect local assets.

Let's be honest, I've been here over eight years and am certainly not a wildfire guru. Having said that, there has not been a year yet that I have not heard that it's going to be bad wildfire season. Too much rain and the fuels grow, dry out, and become a problem. Too little rain and the fuels are dryer than normal and the potential for rapid spread is high. From what I have witnessed, it's a no-win proposition.

The fire activity so far this year seems out of the norm. PNF has already shut down the forest, and likely other forests will do the same earlier than we would typically see.

Let me be clear, we are not shutting down off-district, nor are we backing away from our wildland response activities. Our participation in off-district wildland assignments is vitally important to our agency as well as our communities. The education, knowledge, and expertise you all bring back from those experiences has made a difference each time our area has faced a wildfire event. However, if we cannot fill the stations with backfill to cover folks off-district, then we cannot send personnel off-district. Our primary responsibility is to the communities we serve. And, I've heard rumor that mandatory overtime is not very popular.... Who knew 😊

I'm certain that by the time this comes out Friday, conditions on the Crooks Fire and the Tunnel Fire will have changed. Whether that will be for better or worse is yet to be determined. I'd also hazard a guess that there will be additional starts between Arizona, New Mexico, and other places in the United States. The number of large fires is so significant already this year that the Southwest Teams are stretched thin. In fact, it is a Type 1 team out of California that is managing the Crooks Fire.

For now, stand by to stand by. Not only is our normal call volume up, but it seems that we may be in for some larger events in the wildland arena. We need all hands-on-deck to handle the multitude of emergency events unfolding around us. It's not that we are short-staffed; to the contrary, we are fully staffed in Operations. However, call volume and fatigue are factors we must consider. Hopefully, our bid for a SAFER Grant will be successful and five additional Operations positions will make some level of impact. Unfortunately, those positions may still be a year or more out.

As Chief Feddema says, wildland season is a marathon not a sprint. Get some rest, be safe, and be ready.

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