



# THE REVIEW

Central Arizona Fire and Medical - 8603 E. Eastridge Dr., Prescott Valley, AZ 86314 – April 5, 2024

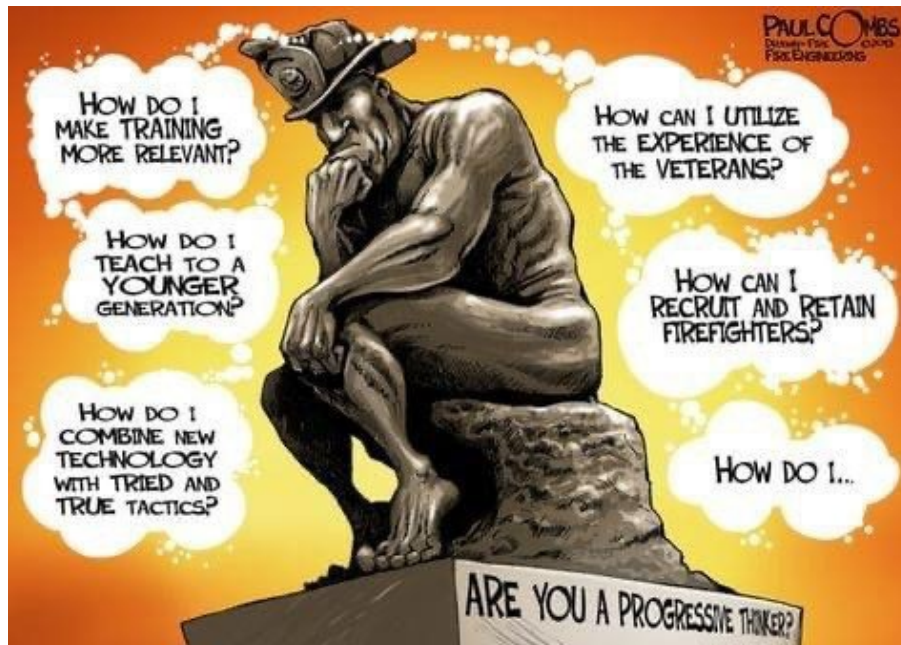
## This Edition:

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**"If you didn't hear it from the horse's mouth, stop listening to the ass who told you."**

**Unknown, but completely applicable here**

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## The Chief's Desk

**(Note: Given the current situation, please keep your eyes open and head on a swivel. We've added PVPD to certain types of calls as an additional level of protection. Remember, no information anywhere other than to law enforcement authorities, and any pictures or videos go straight to the office and not on social media.)**

Well, I wonder what we should talk about this week... Any ideas? I have to be very careful what I say about the Legado fire as it is still under investigation by CAFMA, PVPD, YCSO, and the ATF. At this point, I believe ATF is the lead.

Why the ATF? This event represents the loss of a building and parking garage measuring 685,000 sq ft, with an associated cost in the multiple of millions of dollars. When a community experiences a loss of this magnitude, it's standard practice to ask for the assistance of the ATF. They come with a large number of resources all of whom are subject matter experts in their field. Local agencies simply don't have the resources needed to investigate an incident of this magnitude.

CAFMA staff has not yet discussed how we will handle the AAR. Chief Durre and I discussed it briefly, but not in any great detail. The two of us do feel it would be best to find an auditorium or other large space to bring folks together in person. More on that as we work with CAFMA and Prescott staff to develop a plan.

While I can't talk about the specifics of the fire, I can touch on a couple of things I think are important. First and foremost, I could not be more proud to work alongside some of the best responders in the business! Our first due company officers made sound tactical decisions upon arrival that saved multiple properties around the Legado complex. It's sad to say that Legado was lost before we arrived. However, the Homestead Apartments, BMO Bank, and other commercial properties represented a significant exposure challenge. Your efforts limited the damage to all of these surrounding buildings. Homestead sustained relatively minor damage, and I believe BMO bank was spared from any damage.

Chief Merrill, in my opinion, maintained a calm and controlled command presence on the radio, and worked with incoming units to establish a defensible perimeter around the structure. Necessary resources were requested early, and a command structure was established that ensured we had a coordinated attack that also accounted for the safety of our personnel. We'll learn more when we hold the AAR, but at first blush, things seemed to go very well.

This event highlights the importance of the partnership that exists between CAFMA and Prescott. From quarterly training to joint staff meetings, we truly operate as one. The only real difference between us operationally is the logo we wear. It's this relationship that allows us to work seamlessly together to ensure the best outcomes for all those we serve. **Cont. Page 3**

### Upcoming Events:

April 8: Board budget work study session

April 8-10: CPSE in Town to work with staff on Standards of Cover. ATF in town with PVPD, YCSO, and CAFMA. Briefings each day.

April 11: Chief on vacation, maybe, for Jen's family reunion in Scottsdale. Depends on the status of things.

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### Board Meeting:

Board Meeting: April 22  
CAFMA – 1700-1830

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## Chief's Desk Cont.

We called for countywide and then statewide mutual aid early on. While CAFMA and Prescott had Legado surrounded, we needed resources to backfill our stations to ensure that if someone called 911, they would still receive the services that are expected from us. And call 911 they did! Holy crap, I did not think that many people would be up that early on a Monday morning. Our mutual aid units were busy! We will be pulling the data to see exactly how many calls they ran between CAFMA's jurisdiction and the City of Prescott.

Why statewide aid? Because when we first requested countywide aid, we didn't get a response. It's tough to get ahold of people at 0200 on a Monday morning – who knew?? When dispatch advised that they had not had any response to our initial request, I asked them to request statewide aid. Fortunately, statewide aid committee co-chair, and Phoenix FD Assistant Chief Tim Kreis answered my early morning phone call and immediately went to work coordinating Valley resources. Not long after we made the state request, we started getting resources from within the county. We did receive resources from Flagstaff as part of the statewide request. In short, the system worked as designed.

We cannot thank our mutual aid partners enough for the resources they sent to assist!! We did use Cottonwood FD's new ladder 411 to provide an additional elevated master stream. This was their ladder's inaugural structure fire.

As we discuss our resource needs – both the needs of Prescott and those of CAFMA – we often describe our area as an island. We have a limited number of resources, and our closest back-up is an hour to two hours away. If you look at the dispatch records, it took about two hours for additional resources to start arriving. This is why it is imperative that we have adequate resources to provide a robust response to large incidents, and that we have the number of resources we need to handle our ever-increasing call volume. As for CAFMA, we need more people, we need at least one new station today, and we need additional apparatus capable of responding to the ever-increasing number of multi-story buildings. Stay tuned, I have some requests....

While this fire represents a significant disaster, there are a number of things related to that night and the incident that I truly believe are blessings. First, there was no loss of life and no injuries. Second, the rain and westward winds gave us a much better chance of saving other properties. As you can see in several videos and pictures, the ember flow was significant. If this fire occurred a month from now with higher winds and drier conditions, our exposure problems would have been far greater as embers could have caused fires in the surrounding neighborhoods, surrounding commercial buildings, and within the interface.

I would be remiss if we did not mention a part of this disaster that many normally don't consider. In the early morning hours of Monday, April 1, 2024, many members of our community lost good paying construction jobs. Many of our local contractors lost tools and equipment needed to work on other jobs. Yes, insurance will eventually kick in and cover at least some of their losses. But as we know with insurance, it's not always instantaneous.

For our part, I think it's important for us to acknowledge the strain this fire has placed on a number of families in our community. To all of you, I'd offer our sincerest thoughts and prayers.

One final note. The Legado fire proves that it can happen in our community. We must be prepared which means we must have the people and equipment necessary for large scale events.

**My mind just isn't in a place this week to look for other articles for *The Review*. More to come next week.**

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