



THE RURAL HITCH

DECEMBER 2007

**A publication of
Lakes Region
Mutual Fire Aid
Association**

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www.lrmfa.org

Local Fire Departments Support WLNH Children's Auction



Shown here are representatives from Alton, Belmont, Gilford (shown at right), Laconia and Meredith Fire Departments delivering their donations to the WLNH Children's Auction.



By Debbie Kardaseski

2007 marked the 25th anniversary of WLNH's Children's Auction and to celebrate that milestone, \$235,302.13 was raised, breaking 2006's record! Helping break that record were five Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid departments: Alton, Belmont, Gilford, Laconia and Meredith. These departments have been participating for a number of years by holding boot drives at Thanksgiving. Each department picks a local shopping mall or department store and stands outside the entrances with boots, asking for donations.

This year, the departments presented checks totaling \$10,725! Alton collected \$2,125; Meredith, \$1,000; Laconia, \$2,000; Gilford, \$2,500; and Belmont, \$3,100.

The Auction lasted five days and was seen on the local channel on Metrocast with updates being broadcast regularly on WLNH radio. Five thousand volunteers were involved, with some answering phones while callers bid on over 2,500 donated items. All money raised went to local charities — not one cent is kept as administrative expenses are covered by area businesses. It is a huge effort and local fire departments are proud to be a part of it.

This year, Franklin Fire Department and Tilton-Northfield Fire Department volunteered at the event with an eye toward joining the other five departments with their own boot drives next year. 

SEND YOUR DEPARTMENT NEWS TO debbie@irmfa.org
Please send information and photos of new employees, promotions, retirements, and general personnel news.

If you have an idea for an article or would like to send an article about something of general interest, please feel free to do so. Articles will be published as space allows. Photos are also welcome.



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Featured department...

Bristol Fire Department



Chief Norm Skantze
Bristol Fire Department

04 — BRISTOL FIRE DEPARTMENT

Fire Chief: Norm Skantze

Address: 85 Lake Street
Bristol, NH 03222
603-744-2632 (Office)
[Normskantze@
metrocast.net](mailto:Normskantze@metrocast.net)

Business Hours: 8:00–5:00

Officers: Deputy Chief John "Skip" Moyer
Deputy Chief Geoffrey Lewis
Capt. Mike Goss
Capt. Mark Chevalier
Capt. Maggi Fellows
Career FF Ben LaRoche
Career FF Steve Thompson
Career FF Scott Lewandowski
Call Lt. Marc Hewitt
Call Lt. Chris Dolloff

Shift Coverage: Rotating 48-hour shifts; 24-hour coverage.

Apparatus: 2 Engines (1 is also a tanker)
1 Aerial/Ladder
1 Rescue
1 Forestry Truck
Zodiac Rescue Boat

Emergency Management Command Post
Trailer
1 Command Vehicle

Hired in 2000, Chief Norman W. Skantze is Bristol's first fulltime Chief — just one of several "firsts" in Chief Skantze's life! He was Amherst, NH's first fulltime fire inspector (1985) and in 1987, became Gilmanton, NH's first fulltime fire chief when the town made the decision to merge the Gilmanton Corner and Gilmanton Iron Works' departments. His experience in fire service goes back many years, to when he was a volunteer firefighter/EMT with Gilmanton IW (1977–1980) through his years in college when he worked as a call firefighter with the Keene Fire Dept. and time spent as the Chief Coordinator for Lakes Regional Mutual Aid (1994–1996).

Bristol is a town of approximately 3,500 people; however, like many towns in the mutual aid system, its population triples during the summer months. The Fire Department has seven career personnel who cover rotating 24-hour shifts (the chief, three captains and three fire-

fighters). Additionally, there are 30 *per diem* and call firefighters. The town also has a CERT coordinator who works for the Town's emergency management agency and is paid for one day per week. The CERT coordinator works under the direction of Chief Skantze, who is also the Town's Emergency Management Director.

LOOKING AHEAD

In 2006, the department responded to 945 calls: 583 medical and 97 motor vehicle accidents, with the remainder being fire and service calls. 2007 saw the department hit 960 calls, indicative of the growth the area continues to see each year!

This growth is where Chief Skantze focuses his plans for the department. He knows his depart-

BRISTOL — CONTINUED ON PAGE 5



Bristol Fire Department

ment will have to continue to meet the increasing demands of the area, including being prepared for an "all hazards" approach beyond the traditional — fire, medical and hazardous materials emergencies — often while working with other departments in the region. He feels the Newfound Area Chiefs Association, an organization that includes seven local fire and police chiefs, is a good step in the direction of combining efforts and interagency cooperation. This group allows area public safety leaders who have a vested interest, to meet and work together before an actual emergency situation. Working with a local fire or police chief for the first time during an emergency is not the ideal time to get to know each other!

The department also looks to the future by helping train future fire-fighters. There are two student interns from Laconia Community Technical College at the station now. They work sixteen hours per week, living at the station while working. One is from Londonderry, NH and the other is from Orland, ME (near Bangor). This is the third year the Bristol Fire Department has participated in the intern program and the Chief feels it is definitely worthwhile.

EMERGENCIES THROUGH THE YEARS

Through the years, Bristol has found itself in situations requiring a cooperative effort. On July 16, 2003, Bristol Fire Department responded to Box 33, Freudenburg-NOK, one of the largest employers in the area. The fire in the plant's case treat division went to three alarms and resulted in over \$1 million in damage before it could be contained. In addition to local fire departments being on scene, the Central NH Haz-Mat team had to be called in.

And in 2006, Bristol faced one of the worst natural disasters in re-



1855 Hunneman, No. 468. Bristol Fire Department is fortunate to still have this in their possession.

cent history when record-breaking rain forced the evacuation of a large part of the downtown area and the dismantling of two dams. That combined effort required many local departments, Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid, State Police, National Guard, Dept. of Transportation, the Sheriff's Department and many local public officials. Bristol Fire Department played a key role in the operations and underscored the need for cooperative efforts and advanced preparation for major disasters — all things Chief Skantze focuses on when planning the future of Bristol Fire Department.

RECENT FIRES

This past Fall, Bristol Fire Department had a string of multiple alarm fires. They responded to a fire alarm activation at 1447 on October 7, 2007 at the newly-renovated Bristol Bakery and Neighbors Pizza building, located on 8 Central Square. The property is part of the historic Bristol downtown and is attached to a row of two-story brick and wood frame buildings with mixed occupancies. On arrival, Engine 2 reported smoke in the building and requested a first alarm. A 1-3/4" hose line was stretched to the front door and advanced to the basement, where a small fire was found and extin-

guished. Apartments on the second floor, slated for occupancy in the near future, were not affected by the fire but received smoke damage. There was substantial smoke damage to the first-floor bakery and restaurant and the basement storage area. The recent renovations were part of a plan review process by the fire department, which required the expansion of the fire alarm, introduction of fire-rated storage areas in the basement,

BRISTOL — CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



Above and below: scenes from the Bristol Bakery fire, Oct. 7, 2007.



BRISTOL — CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

enclosure of vertical openings and fire walls between tenant spaces.

An investigation of the fire revealed the careless disposal of rags used to stain and poly trim boards located in the basement caused the fire as a result of spontaneous combustion. Both businesses are now back in full operation.

Bristol firefighters responded to yet another building fire on October 27, 2007 at 2130 hours. LRMFA dispatched it as an automatic first alarm. While enroute to the station, Bristol Lieutenant Marc Hewitt drove by the building, observed a working fire and requested a second alarm. The pictures at right show the intial crew stretching a 1-3/4" hose to the A side of the building under the supervision of Lt. Hewitt. Once inside, the crew encountered heavy smoke. Lt. Hewitt fell in a hole in the floor, ending up covered in red paint being used to repaint the building, which was undergoing renovations.

Other pictures show mutual aid compaines working with Bristol, including: Alexandria firefighters venting the roof, mutual aid companies staged on Lake Street, the hole in the floor and Lt. Hewitt covered in red paint.

The fire was determined to be accidental, starting in the oil burner room and extending along a cold air return, which was the reason for the unstable floor where Hewitt fell through. This is a good example of a near-miss situation, demonstrating the importance of good training and team work. It also illustrates how the view of the building's exterior does not always match what is going on inside!

An improper woodstove installation caused a fire to engulf a barn and house on Monday, November 5, 2007. The department responded to a fast-moving blaze on New Chester Mountain Road. Within minutes a second alarm was called and approximately 20 minutes later, a third alarm was called. The barn was a total loss and the house 80% destroyed, displacing twelve occupants. There were no injuries but the blaze kept area departments busy for many hours. 

**Oct. 27, 2007
fire at the
former TNT
Fitness
building.**



Scenes above and left from the Nov. 5, 2007 third alarm fire on New Chester Mountain Road. (PHOTO FROM HILL FIRE DEPARTMENT)

New Employees, Promotions, Retirements...



Jeff Quesnell
Campton-Thornton
Fire Dept.
New Firefighter/
Paramedic



Roger Thompson, Jr.
Campton-Thornton
Fire Dept.
New Firefighter/EMT



Chief Bob Woods
Center Harbor Fire Dept.
Retired



Chief John P. Schlemmer
Center Harbor Fire Dept.
New Chief.

Chief Schlemmer began his fire service in 1970 in Smith, RI, making this his 37th year! He moved to Center Harbor in 1987 and was elected a deputy chief the next year. He did a brief stint as

chief, returned as deputy chief, and later went to Moultonboro as a training officer. In 2006, he was asked to return to Center Harbor and help with the reorganization of the fire department, working with Chief Bob Woods. In October 2007, he was hired by the town as Chief. Schlemmer, who has an Associate's Degree in Fire Science, teaches fire and rescue classes and is a staff instructor at the Fire Academy.

Chief Schlemmer lives in Center Harbor with his wife of 30 years, Cindy. They have three children and two grandsons.



Firefighter Matthew
Gray. Bristol Fire Dept.
NH Community Techni-
cal College Student
Intern. Hometown
Orland, ME. Assigned
A Shift.
New Firefighter



Firefighter Dan
Fitzgerald. Bristol Fire
Dept. Hometown Lon-
donderry, NH. Member
Londonderry Fire Dept.
NH Community Techni-
cal College Student
Intern. Assigned B Shift.
New Firefighter



Captain Maggi Fellows,
NREMT-I. Bristol Fire
Dept. 2001-2007. Ash-
land Fire Dept. Call Fire-
fighter 1993-1999.
C Shift.
Promoted



Chief John DeSilva
Sanbornton Fire Dept.
New Chief.

Chief DeSilva became Sanbornton's fire chief on Oct. 1, 2007. Before that, he'd spent four years as the Chief of Amherst Fire Department.

He has spent more than 20 years in the fire service, with more than half of that time in a supervisory position. Chief DeSilva graduated from Rivier College with a Bachelor of Science in Fire/Emergency Management, preceded by an Associate in Science in Safety Studies.

In addition to his duties as Chief, he is a member of the NH Board of Fire Control and the NH Trauma Medical Review Committee, plus is a senior instructor for the NH Fire Academy in Concord.



Firefighter Scott
Lewandowski, NREMT-I.
Bristol Fire Dept.
Hometown Swanzey, NH.
Member Swanzey Fire
Dept. AS in Fire Science.
Former student intern
Alton Fire Dept.
Assigned C Shift.
New Firefighter Level II
EMT-Intermediate



Steve Dunshee.
Campton-Thornton
Fire Dept.
New Firefighter/
EMT-Intermediate



Chief Eleanor Mardin
Holderness Fire Dept.
New Chief.

Chief Eleanor Mardin became Holderness Fire Chief on Oct. 1, 2007, following in her father's footsteps. She is the first female chief in the Lakes Region system. She began her career in the Navy as an engineman and assisted in fire parties. After her service in the Navy, Chief Mardin received an Associate's Degree in Fire Science. Additionally she's been to Officer's School at the NH Fire Academy, is certified as an EMT-I and Firefight-

er, and has finished ITRS training.

Chief Mardin worked with the Plymouth Fire Department for 12 years, the NH Div. of Forests & Lands for three years, and has been with the Holderness Fire Department since 1988.

She grew up in Holderness, where she continues to live.

Customer Service: Where Am I?

By Kevin LaChapelle, Captain, Franklin Fire Department — A Shift

This is the final installment of a three-part series. Last, but not least, we will evaluate our **Customer Service**. I have received positive feedback about the last two articles and would appreciate input on this one as well.

“Customer Service” seems like something we’d see at the front counter at “Wally World” or some mall store. In today’s fire service, it has become increasingly relevant and fire chiefs and departments are encouraged to write strong vision and mission statements preaching good customer service. There must be a reason — and I don’t think it has anything to do with return items or putting a rockin’ downtown fire on layaway.

In the last two decades, larger fire departments, such as Phoenix, Atlanta and Kansas City started crusading about this vision of fire department customer service. Our departments may not be large full-time departments like the three previously mentioned; however, we do provide the same services, on a much smaller scale. If you do further research on the history of any fire department that has preached customer service, you will find they have built a solid foundation of community trust and they have members who are dedicated and believe in the service they provide.

Let’s dissect customer service a bit. Who is the customer? First and foremost, it is the taxpayer who pays for our existence; it is also those people who live, work and play in our communities. In a nutshell, the customer is anyone you come in contact with while providing service. Service could be broken down into many categories. But what are we paid to do? We are paid to mitigate emergencies in the following areas: fire suppression, EMS, hazardous materials and technical rescue. We also perform many non-emergency functions such as fire prevention, forest fire permits, regulation enforcement, car seat safety programs, etc. We must not forget groups that are affiliated with our departments either, such as firefighter associations, ladies auxiliaries and unions. They, too, advocate for our fire departments.

Last issue, I talked about conduct. How do we conduct ourselves when providing the services that we do? When I first started in this business a wise captain told me, “Treat everyone you come in contact with as you would treat your grandmother.” There are six basic rules of thumb when talking about the expectations in *fire department customer service*.

Quick. Our customers want immediate results. This not only pertains to quick response times, it could be a

case of checking a brush pile or information about codes.

Skillful. We must stay sharp. Have your “A” game on at every incident. The public thinks when they call 911, we will arrive in a Black Hawk with three paramedics, or even shut the valve off and the fire will go out. What I’m trying to say is our customers have high expectations for us; let’s try not to disappoint them.

Caring. Treat most everyone as you would treat your grandmother. The reason I say “most” is its very difficult for us to be caring to the drunk who spit in your face just before they were tased by the police. We should try to stay neutral at these incidents. There may be underlying circumstances — maybe they just suffered a major loss.

Standard. We have SOPs and SOGs for a reason. Our customers expect the same answer no matter who they talk to in the department. When we issue fire permits, there really is no grey area. The regulations are clearly stated. But what about the customer who comes in and says, “Well, the guy who wrote me the permit last week said I could burn plywood”? If we play by the rules where there are rules, then we usually don’t run into this problem.

Professional. How do you conduct yourself in public? Do you have a big wad of chew in, spitting onto Route 3 at the MVA? Does your fire department ball cap double as a grease rag? Our adult customers do not want to be spoken as if they were in second grade. Use clear terminology and have the facts straight the first time. If they find out later on that you were slinging a line of bull, you and the department will lose credibility.

Resourceful. Always be thinking. You don’t need to know everything, but it’s handy to know someone who does know the answer to a question. There is a lot of history behind our fire departments — don’t be afraid to call upon someone who is a part of that history. Know your resources.

The customer may not always be right, but if things get nasty, they will usually have the final say! The customer does not care whether you are call or full-time; they expect nothing but respect!

I leave you with a challenge. Take a step back, do a quick evaluation of yourself and ask, “**Where am I?**” in **customer service**.

Stay SAFE and Make it SAFE!



Departments Work Together

Several departments in the Lakes Region have agreed to collaborate in a grant request in order to purchase building pre-plan/inspection software and hardware. Franklin, Tilton-Northfield, Belmont, Gilford, Laconia, Sanbornton, Ashland, New Hampton, Plymouth, Alton, Bristol, Hill and Meredith are looking to purchase software capable of being used on laptop computers from the apparatus to view pre-plans, inspections, floor plans and mapping. This information can be shared with other departments and agencies.

The core group has already met twice and decided to purchase software called Mobile Eyes™. This group will also be looking to fund laptop computers for some apparatus in each department. There is the possibility of other towns who are not interested in purchasing the software being included in the read-only responder or pre-plan portion. The laptops will be capable of wireless and cellular connectivity, have touch screen technology and a GPS receiver.

If your Department is interested in participating, please contact Captain David Hall of Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS. E-mail dhall@tnfd.org 

Training Resources

Are you aware of the FEMA Training Resources page? If not, go to www.training.fema.gov/ and you'll see links to several training resources. You'll find an NETC Virtual Campus, which includes 13 self-study courses offering certificates when completed. There is also a link to an NFA page that offers an additional 13 courses. Both of these links allow you to complete courses and receive credit for the training.

IS 100, 200, 700 and 800 courses may be accessed through www.training.fema.gov/emiweb/IS/crslist.asp.

Another great option is a training program called "Coffee Break Training." This can be found at www.usfa.dhs.gov/nfa/coffee-break. If you access this training, you may provide feedback to Program Manager Robert Neale at Robert.neale@dhs.gov. He is also interested in receiving comments regarding these programs.

All of these resources are a great way to learn at a time and pace that's convenient for you. 

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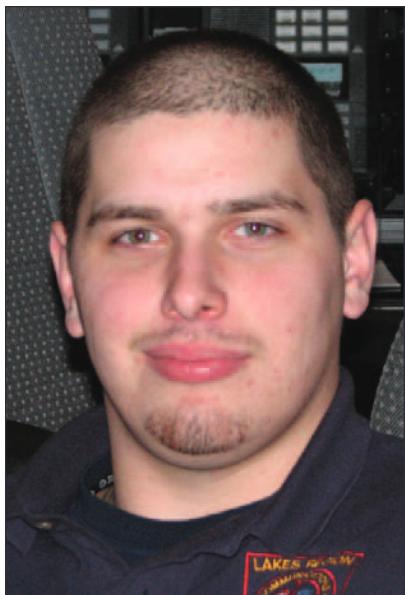
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Employee Spotlight...

Rob Frame



At 21, Lt. Rob Frame is the youngest Lieutenant at Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid. He began his career here as a part-time person in August 2004, becoming fulltime in June 2005. Not only is he the youngest Dispatcher now, he was the youngest hired part-time (age 18), youngest hired full-time (19) and the youngest promoted to Lieutenant (20)!

He is a New Hampton firefighter and a Lieutenant with the Hill Fire Department. Rob began in the fire service at age 14 when he became an Explorer with the New Hampton Fire Department. At 18, he became a member of that department. When asked why he is a member of two departments, he replied that he lived close enough to both to be involved in both and wanted the additional experience.

Rob enjoys the people he works with at the communications center and likes the challenge presented when it gets busy. He, like the others interviewed to date, also likes the rotating schedule.

On his days off, he tries to be outside as much as possible. In his spare time he works on cars and helps people with yard work, cutting trees down, chopping firewood, etc. For fun, Rob fishes and target shoots. He has the usual assortment of "toys" — a boat and snowmobile! He is currently looking for a house in the New Hampton area.

Fourth Quarter Statistics...

From October 1, 2007–December 31, 2007

Incidents Dispatched:	October 2007	1,549
	November 2007	1,674
	December 2007	1,787
	Total Fourth Quarter	5,010
	2007 Total	21,591

Resources Available:

Engines	102	Tankers	15
Ladders	9	Rescues	21
Forestry	32	Ambulances	38
Utilities	5	Fire Boats	14
Towers	3		



Statistics:

- Began operations in September of 1971. Moved operations to our current facility in June of 2000.
- Dispatches Fire and Medical Emergencies for 36 communities and 37 Fire and EMS Agencies.
- Serves a population of 117,518 residents (2006 Estimate).
- Is spread over 5 NH Counties, covering a geographical area of 1,494 square miles (16% of the area of the State of NH — 1.5 times the size of the state of Rhode Island).
- Protects over \$20.4 billion dollars of property (2006 Valuation).
- Has an operating budget of \$906,978 (2007 budget).
- Has 10 full-time and 8 part-time employees.
- Dispatched 21,295 incidents during 2006 (58.34 calls per day).
- Dispatched 21,441 incidents during 2005 (58.7 calls per day).
- 20,001 incidents during 2004 (54.7 calls per day).



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Demo Deal of the Month



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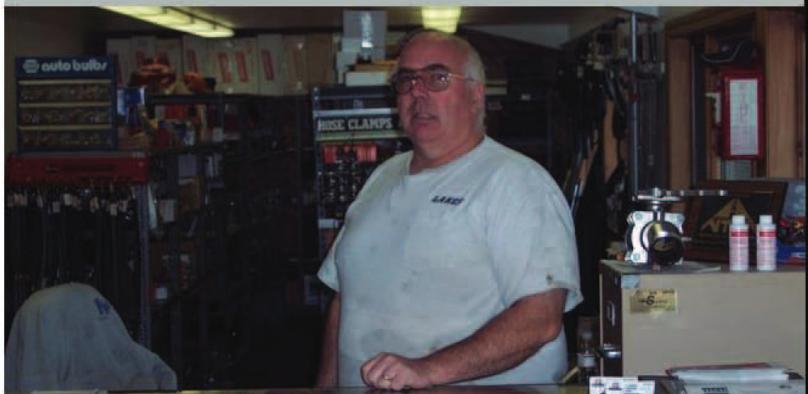
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Available now for delivery to your department or give us a call for the complete specification and demo!

It's all about Service!
Lakes Region Fire Apparatus Inc
is pleased to announce, the newest addition to our staff
Service Manager
Shawn Mulcahy

Shawn recently joined our ranks as manager of our service department bringing with him an impressive resume, which includes over thirty years of fire-fighting experience holding rank from probationary to Chief & twenty five years of service & repair from a major equipment company where Shawn specialized in engines, transmissions, as well as hydraulics and electronics all of which we repair on a daily basis. Give Shawn a call or perhaps email and welcome him aboard!

603-323-7117 phone or email: shawn@lakesfire.com



Thank you to all of our LRMFA customers for your years of continued patronage!

New Equipment...



Campton-Thornton. 35A1

2007 Ford E-450 with a Horton Box. Built by Greenwood Fire Apparatus. Equipped to the ALS Paramedic Level.



Alton. 1E1

Carries 1,250 gal. water, 50 gal. class A foam, 1,000' of 4" LDH Hose, 3,000w light tower, 1,500 GPM Elkhart remote control master stream deck gun, 2,000 GPM pump, three pre-connected cross lays (2 foam capable if needed), and one 2-1/2" pre-connected attack line, also foam capable.

ASSOCIATION MEETING SCHEDULE

JANUARY 24, 2008 @ 1900 @ CAMPTON-THORNTON

MARCH 27, 2008 @ 1900 @ GILMANTON

Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid Association
62 Communications Drive
Laconia, NH 03246

