



THE RURAL HITCH

SECOND QUARTER 2010

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

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62 Communications Drive
Laconia, New Hampshire 03246
603.528.9111
www.lrmfa.org

New Deputy Chief Coordinator Named at LRMFA

Chief Douglas M. Aiken of Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid has announced the selection of James R. Hayes of Laconia as the new Deputy Chief Coordinator for the mutual aid system. Hayes recently retired from the position of chief of the Gilford Fire and Rescue Department.

Hayes' duties will include providing assistance to LRMFA member departments in a variety of areas in addition to responsibilities in training, standardization and emergency management. He will serve in the position as a part-time employee.

Hayes brings thirty-two years of experience to the position having served as a firefighter in Concord, NH and as a firefighter, lieutenant, deputy chief and chief in Gilford. Aiken stated that he was pleased to have a person "with Jim's background and depth of knowledge join the LRMFA staff."

Hayes will begin his new duties in early July. 



2010 EMS Awards Presented

The 2010 EMS Awards dinner was held recently at the Shalimar Resort. Dinner was provided by LRGHealthcare followed by desserts furnished compliments of the hospital staff. The following awards were announced:

- **EMS Provider of the Year — LRGH:** Chuck Campbell, Gilford Fire and Rescue Department.
- **EMS Provider of the Year — Franklin Hospital:** Ben Burlingame, Sanbornton Fire Department.
- **Paul Racicot Award for Excellence for Outstanding Patient Care and Commitment to Education:** Mike Foss, Laconia Fire Department.
- **Paul Racicot Award for Excellence for Dedication to the Lakes Region EMS Providers:** Dr. Dave Strang.
- **Lifetime Achievement Award:** David Mack, Stewart's Ambulance, for 25 dedicated years of serving the Lakes Region.
- **EMS Unit of the Year:** Center Harbor Fire Department.
- **Unit Citation:** Gilmanton Fire Department, for a cardiac arrest call.

Congratulations to all recipients. Please see page 9 for photos. 

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Featured department...

Meredith Fire Department

14 — Meredith Fire Department

Fire Chief: Ken Jones

Address: PO Box 494

Meredith, NH 03253

603-279-6061

www.meredithfire.org

Office

Hours: 8 a.m.–5 p.m.

Officers: 1st Deputy Andre Kloetz

2nd Deputy Tom Joslin

Capt. Jay Haines

Capt. Mike Taggett

Chief Engineer Hank Denison

Lt. Bill Taggett

Lt. Sandy Ambrose

Lt. Dave Parker

Lt. Jeff Marts

Lt. Jason Cornelissen

Engineer Ames Sorell

Engineer Norman McGuigan

Apparatus: 4 Engines

1 Tanker

1 Tower

1 Rescue

2 Forestry

2 Boats

2 Snowmobiles

1 Argo

1 Air Trailer

1 Command Vehicle

1 PWC on loan

DEPARTMENT HISTORY

This year marks the 151st birthday of the Meredith Fire Department! It was started in 1859 by a group of 50 men who worked together to purchase the first apparatus: a second-hand Hunneman Hand Tub fire pump. It came from the city of Lowell, MA and cost the



Chief Ken Jones
Meredith Fire Department

grand sum of \$545. The lettering on the side of the truck was so beautifully done the Meredith group decided to keep it and the name which is why Meredith Fire Department began as the Wamesit Engine Company. Wamesit was the original Indian name for the Lowell area of Massachusetts and the name continues to play a role in Lowell history.

The hand tub was the sole piece of apparatus in Meredith until 1895. It was cumbersome to operate and had limitations. In 1894, the town began building its present-day water system, which included a system of hydrants within the village area. These hydrants, with a water source off Parade Road, improved the in-town firefighting capabilities.

The old hand tub company was disbanded in 1895 and the Mere-

dith Fire Department came into existence. The Wamesit name continued to be used by two hose companies and the hook and ladder company. Monthly meetings were held and it was decided at one of the first meetings to pay \$10 per man as their yearly compensation!

The location of the department hasn't changed much through the years. The first building was in Corporation Square and the second building was on Water Street near the canal.

The current building was originally built in the early 1950s at a cost of \$40,921.17! In early 2008, a major addition/renovation was begun and in May 2009 an open house was held to celebrate the expansion. The new state-of-the-art facility should serve the town well for many years to come.

With the new station came the immediate purchase of 14 Tower 1. Tax dollars had been raised over the years and placed into an apparatus reserve account, which allowed Meredith to purchase its first aerial. And – the town now had the ability to house this much larger piece of apparatus.



The Wamesit logo on the side of the Ford on display at the Meredith Fire Department.



Circa 1850s Hunneman Hand Tub on display at the Meredith Fire Station. This is the first piece of apparatus owned by the department when it first began, 151 years ago as the Wamesit Engine Company.

The completion of the new station also allowed the initiation of a Student Intern Program to assist with the daily building maintenance, equipment checks and routine inspections. Meredith currently has four students in its program.

THE DEPARTMENT TODAY

The department currently has 45 members on its roster. The only full-time person is the Chief, Ken Jones. Calls per year average 350. Like all

volunteer departments, staffing issues can arise during the day.

And, being a summer resort community, Meredith faces the same issues many other Lakes Region towns face. The winter population of approximately 6,800 swells to as high as 30,000 during the summer. On any summer weekend, traffic may be a major problem as the intersection in town can be a huge bottleneck.

Additionally, the department is responsible for 42 islands on 11

bodies of water. There are portions of five major lakes in town: Winipesaukee, Winnisquam, Waukewan, Wickwas and Pemigewasset Lake. Of the 54 square miles composing Meredith, 15 are water. This adds another dimension to firefighting/rescue operations.

On February 28, 2010 one of the worst fires in recent history was a structure fire that resulted in one fatality. This was the first fatality in over 25 years of Meredith firefighting history. The home was a total loss and one firefighter was injured while fighting the fire.

CHIEF JONES

The current Chief, Ken Jones, grew up in Livermore Falls, Maine. His father is a firefighter there and spent some time as chief. Ken became involved with the Livermore Falls department at a young age, with his "official" time beginning at age 18, making his time with that department total 31 years. His Dad is still active in the department, with his total time approaching 55 years!



The first engine purchased has been recovered and restored. It is on display at the station.

Chief Jones was the Livermore Falls Chief for 15 years. It was never a fulltime position so he worked in the local paper mill for over 29 years, starting there right after going to Husson College for business. He spent the last 19 years as the emergency coordinator at the mill. Before the mill closed, he decided to relocate and became the chief in Meredith in June 2008. Overall he's enjoyed the job and looks forward to continuing to maintain the department's current capacity and quality of service.

When asked what his future plans were for the Department, the Chief replied he is currently reviewing the recent past years' response-to-incident data to determine the next feasible move for Meredith regarding apparatus purchase. The department continues to review response during the daytime hours, Monday through Friday in both firefighter numbers and response times. Currently, the department is able to roll at least one piece of apparatus; this may change in the future with the current staffing.

Meredith Fire Department contracts out ambulance service and Chief Jones said it would continue to do so as long as it remained an economically viable option.

MEETINGS AND EVENTS

The Wamesit Engine Company Association meets the first Wednesday of each month. If you'd like to become a part of the Meredith Fire Department, plan on attending one of these meetings.

The Association sold popcorn and sno-cones on the Fourth of July as a fundraiser. Steve Nadeau, a local hot dog vendor, donated all of the proceeds from his sales on the Fourth to the Association in memory of his brother John.

On July 10 and 11, the department trained at the former Belknap Family Health Center. 



Meredith Fire Department Central Station



Meredith Fire apparatus in upper bay.



Meredith Fire apparatus in lower bay.



Meredith Center station.

Pemi Valley Water Extrication Team (W.E.T.)

By Chief David E. Tobine, Campton-Thornton Fire/Rescue

On May 26, 2010, fire departments from Ashland, Bristol, Campton-Thornton, Holderness, New Hampton and Plymouth held a meeting to discuss the formation of a swift water rescue team for the northern end of the Lakes Region Mutual Aid System. After several meetings working out the details, all present agreed to formally form the Pemi Valley Water Extrication Team (W.E.T.).

We are in the early stages of the organization with much to learn. As the team gets formed we will add officers. We have chosen some staffing for the team. They are: Team Leader Chief David E. Tobine, Campton-Thornton FD; Training officers Tim Joubert, Ashland FD and Stanley Graton II, Holderness FD; and



Secretary Benjamin LaRouche, Bristol FD. On April 17 and 18 a swift water rescue class was held in Ashland and Tilton and 22 members were certified as technicians.

All departments have certified technicians and will bring other resources to the team in the form of equipment.

The geographical area of the six towns is very large. The response for a swift water team will probably come from three towns and the

other towns will be a backup resource. The team feels we will have a better chance for success by having a two-tier response.

We met with members of the Three Rivers Team and expressed interest in training with them as well. There was a positive response from them and we look forward to training together. We will be training quarterly and hope to have the team ready for responding to emergencies soon.

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Gilford Fire-Rescue Plans Firefighter Training Facility

Gilford Fire-Rescue has decided to fill the gap left by the loss of the Lily Pond Training Center. Currently, the only training facility for Lakes Region departments is in Concord at the Fire Academy. Training at the NH Fire Academy site involves lengthy travel, loss of coverage in the local station and the limited availability of acquired structures.

The Gilford department feels it is essential to have a more local training site to develop and retain skills through realistic training scenarios. Community safety begins with rigorous, high-quality and consistent training.

Consequently, the department is going to build a training facility at the Gilford Recycling Center located just off Lily Pond Road (11C). It will be constructed using Connex shipping containers which will be modified to suit the final purpose. Work will be done by Gilford firefighters and public works personnel as well as volunteers from the area. This summer the shipping containers will be set in place and in the fall they will be modified and prop construction will begin. It is planned to have training begin late fall this year, with continuing development of the site and ongoing prop construction.

Cost estimates total \$30,000 and include money to purchase the containers, site work, base pad, container modifications, prop construction, purchase of safety equipment, etc. Funding will be through grants, donations and fundraising events. To date, Meredith Village Savings Bank and Laconia Savings Bank have donated as well as numerous private donors. Several fundraising events have been held as well.



The site will be open to LRMFA member agencies for a modest fee. Fees will be used to maintain the site and replace consumables.

If you would like more information, please contact the Gilford Fire-

Rescue Department at 527-4758 or email firerescue@gilfordnh.org. Donations may be mailed to Gilford Firefighters Relief Assoc. Training Facility Fund, 39 Cherry Valley Road, Gilford, NH 03249. 

The Training Facility is making progress! This photo was taken in early July and, as you can see, the shipping containers have arrived and are stacked in place. An additional container is nearby and will be used to house training supplies.



EMS Awards Photos — Story on Page 1



Chuck Campbell, Gilford Fire and Rescue Department (left) was awarded EMS Provider of the Year — LRGH.



Chief John Schlemmer (left), Center Harbor Fire-Rescue Department is shown here with the EMS Unit of the Year.



Chief KG Lockwood, Gilman Fire Department (second from right) with members of the department. Gilman Fire Department was awarded a Unit Citation for a cardiac arrest call.



TRAINING DIVISION OFFERINGS

Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid's Training Division has two important classes coming up this summer. In conjunction with the NH Fire Academy, the Training Division will be offering **Fire Fighter I** at the Franklin Fire Department beginning on August 3, 2010. This class will run through December 16 and be held Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 6:30–9:30 with an occasional 8:30–4 session held on a Saturday. The class is currently full but may be offered again at a later date.

Also beginning in August, **Fire Fighter II** will be held at the New Hampton station. The course will start August 9 and end November 22. Hours are the same as Fire Fighter I, including some Saturday sessions. The class size is limited.

The Training Division is hoping to offer the **Rescue Skills Module** of Fire Fighter III in Plymouth this fall. This is included in the Level II course and is needed in order to take Fire Fighter III. If you have Level II certification that was obtained more than 4–5 years ago, you may need this module to take Level III.

Later in the winter, perhaps in January 2011, another **Fire Fighter II** will be held in New Hampton.

If you would like more information or to fill out an application, please go to the NH Fire Academy web site (www.nh.gov/safety/divisions/fstems/trainingcert/programs/). Once you've completed an application, it should be faxed to Lakes Region Mutual Fire, Training Division, 603-528-5989. 

LRGHealthcare Paramedic RTP

Mark your calendars now for Paramedic RTP classes. This course will be offered on the following dates: Sept. 28 and 30, and Oct. 5, 7, 12 and 14. All classes will be held in the Woodside Room, Taylor Community, 435 Union Ave., Laconia from 0800 to 1700hrs. This program will include ACLS, PALS and CPR. There will be more details forthcoming.

If you are interested in signing up or would like more information, please contact Shawn Riley at 524-6881 or Kelley Shastany at kshastany@LRGH.org. 

EMS UPDATE:

Healthcare Reform and How It Affects You

"HEALTHCARE REFORM? It doesn't affect me...I only do ambulance calls." You couldn't be further from the truth.

The healthcare reform bills are the largest, most sweeping healthcare legislation seen since the formation of Medicare in 1965. It is actually two laws: The **Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act** (PPACA) and the **Healthcare Affordability Reconciliation Act of 2010** (HCEARA).

The goal is to have 94% of the population receiving healthcare coverage within the next 10 years. One method of achieving this goal is by increasing the number of people on Medicaid, which is a double-edged sword for the ambulance industry. Medicaid currently reimburses far less than the cost of ambulance service, which means more people will be paying their bills (through Medicaid) but at a far lower dollar amount per call. As a benefit to private insurance policy holders, this bill mandates greater protection and more coverage with fewer co-pays.

PPACA has a provision for four contracts or competitive grants to develop "innovative models of regionalized, comprehensive and accountable emergency care and trauma systems" and "expand and accelerate EMS research for patient outcome data." The government is encouraging EMS providers and hospitals to create new methods of building cost-effective quality systems of care. It's no secret that EMS and Emergency Room visits eat up a huge portion of the national healthcare budget. Documentation will be important to show what we do in the field is "worth" doing. As healthcare evolves, ineffective services will no longer be covered.

The estimated cost of \$848 billion for these initiatives will be paid for through a combination of cost controls, subsidies and mandates. Some of the cost recovery methods include a tax on "Cadillac" healthcare plans and more aggressive enforcement of Medicare and Medicaid fraud and abuse. The most worrisome for EMS providers are the new regulations regarding Medicare and Medicaid.

In March of this year, 70% of the patients transported by the LRGHealthcare/Laconia Fire EMS Program had Medicare as their primary insurance. Medicare is not an insurance policy, it is a law, with harsh penalties for violations. Penalties are assessed even if your billing error was an "honest mistake." Most Americans over the age of 65 qualify for Medicare and many people utilizing EMS services are over age 65.

PPACA has \$350 million dedicated to addressing fraud and abuse issues among Medicare Part B suppliers. The US government believes billions will be saved through fraud and abuse prevention.

Until 2011, having a compliance program in place will be voluntary. At that time, the Inspector General (OIG) will require all Medicare Part B suppliers to have compliance programs.

Recovery Audit Contractors (RACs), also known as “Bounty Hunters,” are organizations who focus on finding errors in Medicare billing. They operate on a commission basis, collecting 30% of all funds recovered, which gives them huge incentive to find errors. They use techniques like data mining and trend analysis. A RAC was involved in a Medicare issue with Rockingham Regional Ambulance recently.

One of the largest misconceptions among emergency ambulance providers is Medicare pays for all calls that come through 9-1-1. Or, if the claim doesn't meet medical necessity, bill Medicare anyway and let them make the decision. However, that doesn't work. Medical necessity must be met on every call and be clearly evident in the EMS providers' documentation on the PCR. Even a physician certification statement (PCS) doesn't mean the call was medically necessary. The burden of proof falls solely in the documentation of the EMS provider, which makes correct documentation even more important now. If a call does not warrant an ambulance transport, **DO NOT** bill Medicare or Medicaid. If your organization receives federal funds from “up coding” or improper billing, your organization (and the provider) are on the hook.

Another area where mistakes and out-and-out fraud frequently occur is mileage. You *must* be using

accurate odometer readings for loaded miles. If you only guess at your mileage and *you guess wrong*, you could be defrauding the government or, if you guess low, depriving your service of funds it's entitled to. If you're the one who recorded an incorrect mileage, *you are the one who committed fraud*, along with the person who billed it and the agency receiving the funds.

Items to check are:

- Make sure no one in your organization, or any supplier to your organization, is on the Office of the Inspector General's exclusion list, which can be found online. If a person is on this list, they cannot bill Medicare for their services.
- Develop a compliance program which integrates quality of care issues.
- Review any contracts you have to ensure they do not violate the Anti Kick-Back Statute (AKS). A high risk area for this is Skilled Nursing Homes (SNH's) and Home Health and Hospice Agencies.
- Work with organizations, such as the New Hampshire Ambulance Association (NHAA), to work towards Medicaid parity with Medicare.
- Make sure everyone in your organization has excellent documentation skills. If not, get them extra training.
- Promptly refund any Medicare overpayments.
- Make sure your mileage is recorded accurately every time.

Never submit a reimbursement request without being 100% sure of your documentation. In this brave new era of healthcare reform, you will be caught.

Please contact me if you would like more training in healthcare reform and/or documentation: Shawn Riley, 524-6881. 

**SEND YOUR
DEPARTMENT
NEWS TO
debbiek@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.

Fight as We Train – Train as We Fight

We often hear this phrase used but do we actually follow through on it? To an extent we probably do; but are we including all aspects of our emergency operations in this training? The vast majority of the training we do within our departments is just that: *within our departments*. Yet how frequently do we need the assistance of one or more mutual aid departments to handle a fire situation or a significant motor vehicle accident? When we train, do we include the departments that would respond to assist us? If we do not include them in our training, how can we expect emergency scene operations to flow smoothly with a quick, positive outcome?

Mutual aid drills used to be a common occurrence within the Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid system. The majority of these drills were typically focused on water supply issues. Many drills incorporated shuttling water with tankers and others were long-distance relays

through large diameter hose. Both of these scenarios must be drilled on frequently for operators to stay proficient at moving large amounts of water. These drills also help our people become familiar with water supply locations and capacities in our own as well as other communities. Have you ever been in a situation where you were told to set up a draft site and you had no clue where the site was or what the capacity was? Some draft sites may require a particular configuration in the set up in order to achieve maximum efficiency of moving tankers or achieving maximum flow rate on the relay. Just as important as the ability to move the water is the ability to command a water supply operation. The incident commander is responsible for all aspects of the fire scene; however, if a water supply is established based on either a tanker shuttle or relay pumping, someone else must be put in charge of that operation. Therefore it is necessary to drill on establish-

ing and commanding the water supply operation just as much as it is the actual water movement portion.

Mutual aid drills should not be limited to just structure fire scenarios with water supply objectives. Many other scenarios require us to use mutual aid such as multi car/multi patient accidents with entrapment, wildland fire operations, haz mat, etc. All of these scenarios should result in a drill being conducted within our mutual aid system. One of the areas of responsibility for the Deputy Chief Coordinator is to assist communities with the planning and implementation of mutual aid drills. If your department is interested in conducting a mutual aid drill please contact Deputy Hayes at 524-8911. 

Have You Seen #41?

LRMFA “Member Guide” number 41 is missing and therefore can’t be updated. If you have this manual, please contact Debbie Kardaseski at debbiek@lrmfa.org so she can get the updated pages to you. The number is written on the back cover of the manual’s binder. 

September ALS Breakfast

The September 1 ALS Breakfast will be held from 8:30 to 10:30 at LRGH Conference Room 1A and B and will be teleconferenced to the FRH Board Room. This breakfast is titled “STEMI Rounds” and will be presented by Dr. Klinker. EMTs, EMT-Is, Paramedics and Nurses are all welcome to attend. 

Training Opportunities

 **LRGHealthcare Paramedic RTP.** All classes are held at the Taylor Community in the Woodside Room, 435 Union Avenue, Laconia. 0800-1700. This program includes ACLS, PALS, and CPR. To sign up, please contact Shawn Riley at 603-524-6881 or Kelley Shastany at kshastany@lrgh.org.
Dates: Tuesday, September 28

Thursday, September 30

Tuesday, October 5

Thursday, October 7

Tuesday, October 12

Thursday, October 14

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Second Quarter Statistics...

From April 1, 2010 through June 30, 2010

Incidents Dispatched:	April 2010	1,592
	May 2010	1,766
	June 2010	1,855
	Total	5,213

Resources Available:

Engines	93	Tankers	10
Ladders	11	Rescues	22
Forestry	36	Ambulances	39
Utilities	17	Fire Boats	25
Towers	4		

Statistics:

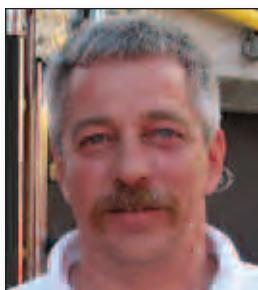
- Began operations in September of 1971. Moved operations to our current facility in June of 2000.
- Dispatches Fire and Medical Emergencies for 36 communities and 37 Fire and EMS Agencies.
- Serves a population of 118,757 residents (2008 Estimate).
- Is spread over 5 NH Counties, covering a geographical 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 \$21.7 billion dollars of property (2008 Valuation).
- Has an operating budget of \$967,216.84 (2009 budget).
- Has 10 full-time and 8 part-time employees.
- Dispatched 19,837 incidents during 2009 (54.35 calls per day).
- Dispatched 21,508 incidents during 2008 (58.92 calls per day).
- Dispatched 21,591 incidents during 2007 (59.15 calls per day).

LRMFA HEADQUARTERS, LACONIA, NH



PHOTO COURTESY BILL HEMMEL. LAKESREGIONAERIALS.COM ©2009

New Employees, Promotions, Retirements...



Chief James Davis
Belmont Fire Dept. — Retired



Chief James Hayes
Gilford Fire Dept.
Retired. New Part-time Deputy
Chief Coordinator at LRMFA



Chief John Beland
Gilford Fire Dept. — Promoted to
Chief



Chief Mark Tetreault
Barnstead Fire Dept. — New
Fulltime Chief



Chief David Parenti
Belmont Fire Dept. — New Chief



Julie O'Neill
Campton-Thornton Fire/Rescue
Dept. — New — Fulltime
Administrative Assistant

New Equipment...



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for access to Amkus power
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- Ladders & suction through the tank
- 1,250 Hale pumps
- Class A foam





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

Training Opportunities

- **Trauma Grand Rounds.**
First Thursday of each month. Noon–1 p.m. at LRGH, Conf. Room 1B and FRH, Board Room. Lunch provided. For information, contact Shawn Riley at 524-6881.

Association Meetings

July 22, 2010 / Alexandria
September 21, 2010 /
Center Harbor
November 18, 2010 / TBA

**Check www.LRMFA.org
for locations.**

SAVE THE DATE!!!

**NEW HAMPSHIRE STATE
FIREMEN'S ASSOCIATION
113TH ANNUAL MEETING AND
CONFERENCE**

September 10–12, 2010

Town and Country Motor Inn

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For updates, visit our website: www.nhsfa.org
More information will be mailed in June with the
annual mailing.