



THE RURAL HITCH

SECOND QUARTER 2011

**A publication of
Lakes Region
Mutual Fire Aid
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LRGHealthcare EMS Banquet Held on May 19

This year's awards banquet was held at the Steele Hill Resort on Thursday, May 19. Shawn Riley, Aleda Nichols, Deb Livernois, Paul Racicot and Tom Clairmont made opening remarks before the awards were presented.

After "Years of Service" awards were presented by Jamie LaRoche and Stephanie Caldon, the Paul Racicot Award was presented by Dr. Dave Strang to Stewart's Ambulance for "dedication to the development and implementation of the LRGHealthcare STEMI system of care, aka, the REACT program."

Hannah Epstein and Chief Joe Hempel presented the LRGH Provider of the Year award to Dennis Comeau followed by Drs. Racicot and Cooper's presentation of the Franklin Regional Hospital Provider of the Year to Scott Taylor.

EMS Service of the Year award was presented by Shawn Riley on behalf of Kathy Waldron to Best Care Ambulance for providing outstanding professionalism and service to the community for over 20 years.

Steve Marsh gave Stewart's Ambulance Service a Unit Citation for their lifesaving performance at the Pond Hockey Tournament on February 4, 2011.

A second Unit Citation was given to the Tilton-Northfield Fire Department by Chief Brad Ober. The following were cited in recognition of their lifesaving performance at the Tilton School on March 9, 2011: Capt. Greg Michaud, Robert Laraway, Jonathan Powell and Ian Mercaldi. The patient was also in attendance to help present the award.

The Laconia Police Department received a Unit Citation in recognition of a lifesaving performance during a water rescue on July 10, 2010. Sergeant Al Lessard, Sergeant Tom Sweet and Officer Derek Gray were recognized by this award presented by Jay Ellingson, Police Chief Chris Adams and Fire Chief Erickson.

Also given a Unit Citation by Chief Erickson for their performance at the same water rescue were Laconia Fire Department members Lt. Kirk Beattie, FF/Paramedics J.P. Hobby and Brian Keyes, and FF/EMT-I's Rick Hewlett, Jay Ellingson and Nate Lemay.

Special recognition for heroism at the water rescue was given to Sergeant Al Lessard for risking his own life to perform a lifesaving water rescue. Sgt. Lessard's award was presented by Jay Ellingson and Laconia Police Chief Adams.

The final award of the evening was presented by Deputy Chief Deb Prendergast — the Lifetime Achievement Award. It was proudly presented to Mike Shastany in grateful recognition of over 24 years of dedicated service to the community. 🚒



**Lifetime Achievement
Award presentation. Left
to right: Deputy Chief
Deb Prendergast, Mike
Shastany, EMS Deputy
Chief Shawn Riley and
Tom Clairmont.**

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From the Chief...

Chief James R. Hayes



There is only one thing for certain in life and that is: *things change*. The major change for LRMFA is the departure of Chief Doug Aiken. After fourteen years of service with Lakes Region, Chief Aiken has taken a position with the International Municipal Signal Association. He has been affiliated with the IMSA for many years and, as such, he represents the fire service on many national level committees that deal with creating standards for fire alarms and emergency communications. Chief Aiken, we wish you well in your different (not really new) venture and thank you for

the service you gave the LRMFA over the years. With Chief Aiken's departure, the Board of Directors appointed Deputy Chief Hayes to the position of Chief Coordinator, effective May 25th.

Many of our member departments have completed the reprogramming of their radios through the State of NH Interoperability Program. Some departments have had the MDC Unit ID feature on their radios activated at the same time. We encourage all departments to have this feature enabled as it identifies the radio that is transmitting. Enabling this feature, however, does have to follow the policy that was adopted by the Board of Directors. That policy defines the alpha/numeric sequencing for identifying the radio. Using this set sequencing and the radio's alias capabilities, each department should be able to satisfactorily identify all of its radios. If you have any questions about the MDC Unit ID or the Emergency Call features, please contact the Communications Center.

The Training Division has been busy coordinating Firefighter I and II classes over the past nine months. It has also been busy working on developing some other programs for field delivery as well as a planned Fire/EMS Training Weekend for September 2011. More details are found elsewhere in this newsletter. I would like to encourage departments to have your members come by the communications center to tour and observe the operations of **YOUR** communications center. Come learn what goes on behind the radio and have a better understanding of why we operate the way we do. A clear understanding of emergency communications procedures helps to improve the efficiency in which services are provided to the public and it improves firefighter/first responder safety. 🚒

THE RURAL HITCH

is published quarterly by
Lakes Region
Mutual Fire Aid Association

Chief

James R. Hayes

Editor

Debbie Kardaseski

Email all submissions to:
debbiek@lrmfa.org



Featured department...

Plymouth Fire-Rescue Department



Chief Casino S. Clogston
Plymouth Fire-Rescue Department

Fire Chief: Casino S. Clogston
Address: 42 Highland St.
Plymouth, NH
03264
603-536-1253
603-536-0035 (f)
Office Hours: Monday-Friday
8 a.m.-4 p.m.
24/7 Coverage
Officers & FF: Dep. Chief Tom Morrison
Capt. John Olmstead
Capt. John Keller
Lt. Steve Vachon
Lt. Brian Tobine
FF Thomas Beaumont
FF Kevin Pierce
FF Ben Thibault
FF Jeremy Bonan
Call Officers: Lt. Scott Cathy
Lt. Kevin Lincoln
Lt. Roger Thompson, Jr.
Secretary: Bonnie Stevens
Apparatus: 3 Engines
1 Tower
2 Ambulances
1 Utility
1 Mass Casualty Trailer
1 Cascade Trailer
1 Haz-Mat Trailer
2 Command Vehicles

HISTORY

Plymouth Fire-Rescue Department began life on July 1, 1831 as "The First Fire Engine Company in Plymouth," a corporation set up by 22 gentlemen who "associated themselves together as a fire engine company." On an annual basis, from then until 1843, the town chose two to five fire wardens.

April 24, 1888, the Plymouth Village Fire District was created. This was basically a town within a town with specific limiting boundaries that did not cover the entire town of Plymouth. In 1899, the Plymouth Village Fire District purchased the properties of the Plymouth Aqueduct and Water Company for the princely sum of \$35,000. At the same time, the District enlarged the water supply through a system of wells. This water system supplied both domestic water and fire protection to the area.



It is not clear what became of The First Fire Engine Company in Plymouth, but, in 1965, the Village Fire District became the Plymouth Fire-Rescue Department. At some point, one of the departments, either the First Fire Engine Company or the Village Fire District, occupied a building on Main Street now occupied by the youth center. In 1937, the Village Fire District was located in a building on the same site as the current station. When



The original Highland St. Station of the Plymouth Fire-Rescue Department.



Current Plymouth Fire-Rescue Department station, built in 1968.

the Fire District became the Fire Department, plans were put into action to build a new station. The old building was razed and the current building was built in 1968 and occupied in 1969. At that time, the department handled about 95 calls per year.

CHIEFS THROUGH THE YEARS

Creating a timeline of fulltime fire chiefs takes little effort! Louis Sleeper became the first fulltime chief in 1968. Chief Sleeper was the current Chief's grandfather. Chief Sleeper served until 1998, when Buddy Thibeault became the second fulltime chief. Chief Thibeault retired in 2008, after serving with the department for over 30 years. At that time, Casino Clogston became the third and current chief.

Chief Clogston has a long history with the department. He remembers "hanging out" at the station as a youngster and catching a ride home with his Grandfather Sleeper. As soon as he turned 16, he took the forestry class so he could fight forest fires. He was a member of one of the first Explorer classes and considers the Explorer program an asset to any department. At age 18,

he became a call firefighter, eventually becoming a call lieutenant. In 1990, he was hired fulltime by the department, working his way up through the ranks to chief.

Other than two years in New Jersey, Clogston has lived in Plymouth all of his life. He met his wife Heather at the department, when she was a call EMT. They have three children, Grace (age 6), Ruby (4) and Louis (2) — named after his grandfather!

LOCAL FACTORS IMPACTING THE DEPARTMENT

When asked how having a major university in town impacted the department, the answer was surprising. Only about 10% of the calls are directly related to the university.



The first fulltime Chief, Louis Sleeper.

Most of those are sofa or dumpster fires — it's amazing how many sofas will find their way into the street and then burn! The town of Plymouth has a life/safety agreement with the university whereby it pays 28% of the total fire department budget.

Plymouth's "fulltime" population is about 3–4,000, but swells to around 7,000 when PSU is in ses-

PLYMOUTH — CONT. ON PAGE 6

sion. The 28-square-mile-town may seem small; however, it is a hub of activity for a large surrounding rural area. People come to town to shop, be entertained at the many venues offered by both the university and the town, to work and receive medical care. The department has seen a definite rise in the number of motor vehicle accidents as more and more stores and shopping centers are built.

Another seasonal impact on the department is the presence of Tenney Mountain Ski Area. Currently, the mountain is closed but that is always subject to change. The trails are actually in Groton and Rumney, but Plymouth provides coverage.

Like most towns in New Hampshire, Plymouth Fire-Rescue is finding it more and more difficult to access some of the new homes being built in places houses never used to be built! As someone said, "All the 'good' places are taken!" Homeowners are finding themselves in the awkward position of not being able to insure their homes because fire apparatus can't get up their driveways. The department is debating refurbishing an older engine or replacing it with a new four-wheel-drive tanker that can navigate the goat paths people now call driveways.

ACCIDENTS AND FIRES

Like any department, Plymouth has its share of stories. When the Chief was asked what his worst moments were, both incidents that came to mind happened out of town, when Plymouth was responding with mutual aid. He first mentioned a woods fire in Campton in 2001. It turned out the fire was started by a chainsaw accident involving his father, who perished. In 2008, there was a motor vehicle accident in Rumney where four teens died. One of the teens was the child of a good friend of the Chief's.

Not too long ago, Plymouth Fire Department members were notified of calls with a fire horn that blew different sequences to denote the location of the emergency.

When a call came in, a small wheel corresponding to the location was removed from the cabinet at right and placed in the unit at the top. The cogs on the wheels determined the sequence blown by the horn, letting people know where the emergency was.



Through the years, the department has seen tremendous increases in the number of calls handled out of the same station built in 1968. That first year in its new quarters, the department handled 95 calls. Now the department fields more than 1,500 calls a year (1,565 in 2010). The department boasts state-of-the-art apparatus but it's shoehorned into a 43-year-old building that has seen better days.

The taxpayers of Plymouth are supportive of the department at town meeting. Sometimes it's been difficult to get budget items past the budget committee and selectmen but, on several occasions, the taxpayers have stepped up to the plate and voted for items needed by the department, even when not approved by the governing boards.

Currently, the department is trying to replace the station on Highland Street. This will be its third year on the ballot. The first plan proposed involved a new building to be built near the police station and turning the current station into a substation. That failed by 11 votes.

The second plan proposed building a second story onto the existing building — that, too, lost by 11 votes!

In the meantime, maintenance continues to be done on the building, including a new roof. A small addition will be put on soon to alleviate storage and dormitory issues.

THE FUTURE

The department is working toward having a paramedic on each shift and needs only one more to reach that goal. Two paramedics are on staff now and one has just finished training. In addition, Chief Clogston is working toward having more certified trainers on staff. Capt. Keller is currently certified and another person has been through the training but still needs certification by the state. Capt. Keller is also the department IT "guru" and has created a helpful web site where people can download most of the forms needing to be filled out *before* coming to the station.

The Chief also hopes to have time to work on the "regular stuff," including pre-plans and reducing the ISO rating in order to save residents money on their insurance premiums. The department is looking at a new computer program to

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PLYMOUTH — CONT. FROM PAGE 6

track training and other personnel information, which will keep training up-to-date as well as assist with reducing the ISO rating.

He has noticed that firefighting sometimes seems to be more of a “job” now than a “career.” Gone are the days of firefighters hanging out at the station after their regular hours. Life has gotten busier, with both husband and wife working to make ends meet and transporting children to ever-increasing activities. It is harder to find personnel

with the time to hold musters and be in parades — all things that put the department more in the forefront of people’s minds. Taxpayers are financially supportive at town meeting but sometimes not as morally supportive on actual accident or fire scenes. The department finds itself — like all departments — being second-guessed by armchair chiefs. The Chief remarked, “I need to be a politician *and* a salesman!”

But the Chief is enthusiastic about the future of the department

and describes his staff as “well trained and compassionate.”

UPCOMING EVENTS

Deputy Chief Morrison is working with other officers and residents to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the Sept. 11 tragedy, which will be held this year. The comedian Bucky Lewis will be presenting a benefit show at The Flying Monkey on July 16 at 6 p.m. Tickets may be purchased at the Fire Station. 🚒

SEND YOUR DEPARTMENT NEWS TO **debbiek@lrmfa.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.



Training Programs Available from LRMFA Training Division

LRMFA has two new programs available for delivery to individual departments or as joint training for neighboring departments.

THE FIRST PROGRAM IS CALLING THE MAYDAY – HANDS-ON TRAINING FOR THE FIREFIGHTER.

This program is designed to increase the awareness of all firefighters or emergency service personnel who may be required to call a Mayday or respond to a Mayday incident. The program has both a classroom instruction module and a practical skills module.

This is a very important program to enhance firefighter safety. The cost of the class is \$300.00 for a LRMFA member department. Departments outside of the LRMFA system will be charged an hourly rate to cover instructor costs.

THE SECOND PROGRAM AVAILABLE IS RADIO COMMUNICATIONS >>> LRMFA PROCEDURES & BEST PRACTICES FOR FIELD PERSONNEL.

This program is designed to increase the awareness of all fire and EMS personnel about general radio communications. It provides an overview of the communications procedures in place in the Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid system and provides recommended best practices on how to improve the quality of radio transmissions made from field units. It also reviews the State Radio Interoperability Plan and the operation of the interoperability portable radios each department possesses. This class is available to LRMFA member departments at no cost.





Fire/EMS Training School

Sept. 17–18 2011

The LRMFA Training Division is sponsoring a weekend Fire/EMS Training School September 17–18, 2011. A mixture of fire, rescue and EMS topics will be offered in a combination of classroom and hands-on training.

Classes will run from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. both days. Each day will start with a keynote address with one being fire based and one EMS based. There will be a mixture of partial day and full day classes, allowing attendees flexibility in selecting the training they wish to participate in. **Student check-in will occur from 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. each day.**

The following classes are being offered:

Keynote Address (Fire): Hooksett Fire Department Mayday Incident @ Mowtown Fire

Keynote Address (EMS): Dr. Sam Aldridge — Traumatic Brain Injuries

Morning Sessions:

- 911 Call Taking/EMD (EMS) — Saturday
- Fireground Decision Making (Fire) — Saturday & Sunday
- Multisystem Trauma Review (EMS) — Sunday

Afternoon Sessions:

- Swiftwater Rescue Awareness (EMS) — Saturday & Sunday
- Courage to Be Safe (Fire) — Saturday & Sunday
- Cardiac Care/Megacode (EMS) — Saturday & Sunday

One Day Sessions:

- Calling the Mayday (Fire) — Saturday & Sunday
- First Line in Operation (Fire) — Saturday & Sunday
- Vehicle Stabilization/Extrication (EMS) — Saturday & Sunday
- GPS Land Navigation — Saturday & Sunday
- L.P. Gas Emergencies — Saturday & Sunday

Two Day Session:

- Engine Company Operations

The one-day and two-day sessions are practical skill programs and will require appropriate PPE for the class. CEUs available for EMS-based classes.

Additional information will be made available soon with class descriptions and registration information. Classes are subject to change based on instructor availability and student enrollment. Additional classes may be offered.

EMS Update

Recognizing Appreciation

Shawn Riley, EMS Deputy Chief, Laconia Fire Dept./LRGHealthcare



I would like to start by thanking everyone who attended the EMS awards banquet and by congratulating the recipients. I truly appreciate all the effort that went into making this year's event a great success.

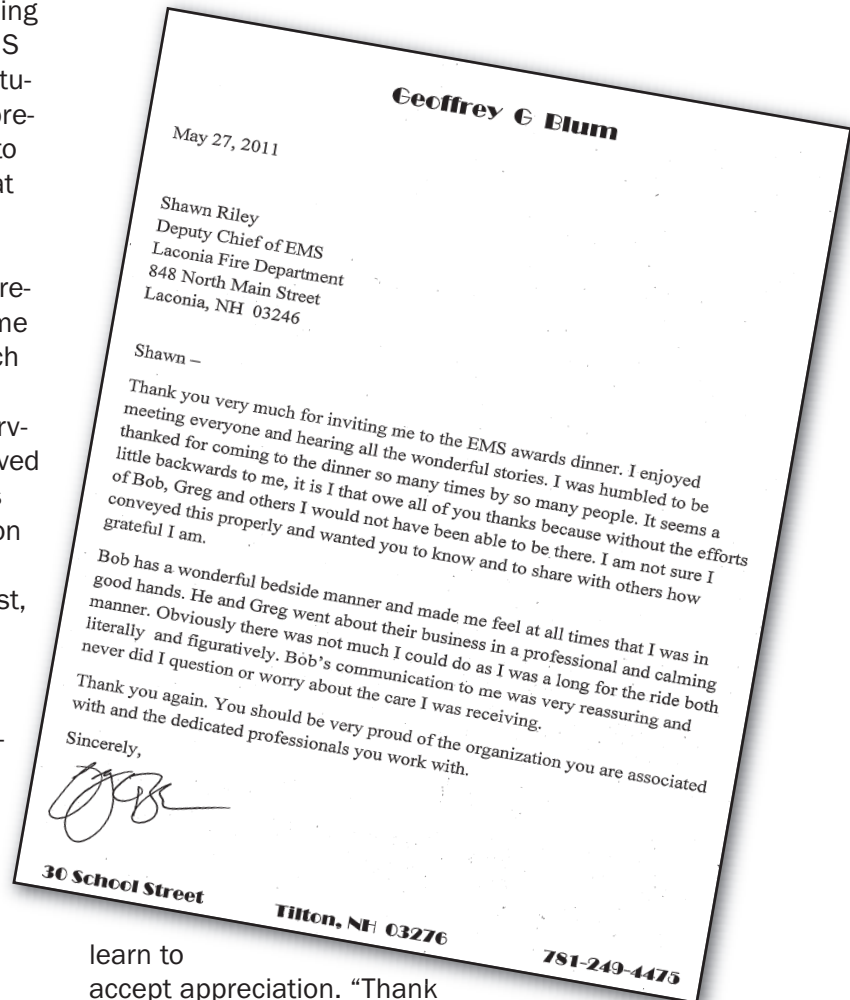
On that note, this quarter's article will be dedicated to appreciation. I would like to offer some thoughts as to what events such

as the awards banquet actually mean and what they can achieve in the greater scheme of helping and serving the public. To the right is a copy of a letter I received after the banquet from one of the special guests. His story is one that seems to be more and more common in the Lakes Region.

If you look at patient outcomes over the recent past, I think you will find that area providers have an overwhelming effect on positive and improved outcomes. EMS interventions are unquestionably having an impact on our patients, and the results can be measured by an increased cardiac arrest save rate.

When it comes to awards and recognition, I don't believe any of us got into this business to collect trophies. We all may know a person with the "wall of fame," but, in general, that's not the case. There's always the sense of self pride when you enter the Fire/EMS field and start building up a list of accomplishments as you strive to become better. Over time and with age, it seems to become routine, something we just do. Attending classes, RTPs, Transitions, EKG classes — they all seem to come with certificates that we cache until we need them for licensing. We tend to deemphasize what we've accomplished. The same can be said about our actions on calls and incidents. If we do a good job and have positive results, it's nothing special — it's just *what we do*. Occasionally there are those stand-out calls that get noticed, but that tends to be short-lived. By the next shift that call is history and we move on.

If a patient or family member says "thank you," have you ever replied, "...it's my job." That may be true, but think about this: How many people just doing their job put the effort, dedication and sacrifice into what we do? Perhaps a better response to that "thank you" would be, "You're welcome, we're here to help as best as we can." That may sound a little corny, but we need to



learn to accept appreciation. "Thank you" seems to be used less and less in society. When you hear those two words, accept and welcome them. When someone says "thank you," it means they truly appreciate your efforts on their behalf. When EMS interacts with most people, it is not on their best day. We are there to help them at a difficult and often traumatic time.

What is so important about recognizing appreciation? It helps how we are perceived. When someone offers you their thanks, what we say and how we respond could be the last impression we leave them with. People who interact with any emergency service often relate the story to family and friends. We want those stories to say nothing but the best about us and that "best" can be lost due to our behavior or attitude. The simple courtesy of saying "you're welcome" when someone thanks you makes a much better impression. We should use all opportunities to show the public who

EMS — CONT. ON PAGE 11

Gilford Fire-Rescue
Training to Keep You Safe!

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Gilford Fire-Rescue
39 Cherry Valley Road
Gilford, NH 03249
Phone: 603-527-4758
Fax: 603-527-4763
E-mail: scarrier@gilfordnh.org




Statistic: On June 9, 2011, the dispatchers at LRMFA handled 170 calls! Not a record, but certainly a busy day!

EMS — CONT. FROM PAGE 10

we are and what we do. Bring our professionalism to the forefront and show we are trained emergency service and health care providers.

Accepting appreciation is also motivating. Have you ever wondered “Why am I doing this? Am I making a difference? Was all this training worth it?” Being given the slightest bit of gratitude should answer those questions. Yes, you did make a difference, you helped somebody. When you are thanked or recog-

nized, you have made a difference. Recognition and award ceremonies are an opportunity to let the public see what we do and who we are. They give us a chance to meet again that “special call” we had a positive impact on and a chance at mutual appreciation from patient and provider. These ceremonies give our families a chance to see the results of the sacrifices they have made. 🚒

Firefighter II Class Finishes

The following students participated in the Firefighter II class held in Ashland this spring. The class finished May 4, 2011.

- Steven Dalton, Belmont
- Samuel Adams, Gilford
- Dennis Comeau, Gilmanton
- David Silbernagel, Middleton
- Matthew Paquette, Middleton
- Joseph Vosgershian, Moultonborough
- Betty Davis, New Hampton
- Jacob Dufresne, New Hampton
- Steven Harris, New Hampton
- Ryan Salmon, New Hampton
- Abe Abear, New Hampton
- Stephanie Read, Sanbornton
- Michael Skeats, Sanbornton
- Raymond Smith, Sanbornton
- Joseph Keeler, Tilton-Northfield
- Derik Ogg, Tilton-Northfield
- Keith Duperron, Unaffiliated



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People on the Move...



Joe Hempel
Gilmanton Fire Dept.
New Chief



Jennifer Hart
Barnstead Fire Dept.
New EMT



Douglas M. Aiken
Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid
Retired



James R. Hayes
Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid
Promoted to Chief



Paul Dexter
Sanbornton Fire Dept.
New Chief



John DaSilva
Sanbornton Fire Dept.
Retired



Mike Davenport
New Durham Fire Department
Retired



K.G. Lockwood
New Durham Fire Department
New Deputy Chief

NH "FireHouse®" User Group

By Chief David Parenti, Belmont Fire Department

How do I create a report? How do queries work? I want to change my tool bar but don't know how. These are just a few of the questions I have been asked regarding FireHouse® Software. In the Lakes Region alone there are more than 15 departments who use FireHouse Software (FH) for incident reporting and other data collection needs. With this in mind, we have created the New Hampshire FireHouse User Group (NHFHUG). The purpose of this group is for users of FH to exchange ideas, shortcuts and FH secrets. We are all dealing with the same problems and if one of us has discovered a solution, the NHFHUG will allow us to share that solution with others.

We meet once a month at the Belmont Fire Station to bounce ideas off each other and to share solutions. All departments in New Hampshire using FH are invited to attend or, if you are considering switching to FH and are looking for information, you can come to the meeting to find out what current users have to say about the product. If you would like to become a member of

NHFHUG or just receive information about upcoming meetings you can send an e-mail to me, Chief David Parenti at dparenti@belmontnh.org or if you are a member of Facebook, you can view our page and request to join that way. 🚒

Free Online Training Opportunities

Listed below are free online training sites. Take advantage of these free classes to increase your knowledge!

- 🚒 www.cfitrainer.net
- 🚒 www.fema.gov (training section)
- 🚒 www.teexwmdcampus.com
- 🚒 www.pipelineawareness.org
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On April 3, 2011, the antenna tower at LRMFA had 20' added to the top to make room for the state to add microwave antennas. LRMFA's antennas and camera were moved up to limit interference.