

Implementing the Fire Training Advisory Council Training Plan – Add One Trainer

State Need:

- Reduction in loss of life, injury, economic and social cost arising from fires and other hazards.
- Education of roughly 10,000 firefighters to protect the public from harm caused by fire, accidents and major incidents of terrorism and other chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear threats.

Market Reality:

- Taxpayers have grown to expect rapid intervention to emergency incidents without increasing costs.
- Project fires (wildland and forest fires of some duration) cost taxpayers an average of 3.5 million dollars annually.
 - Wedge Canyon
 - Roberts Complex
- Montana's rural nature and unpredictable climate create challenging emergency response circumstances for paid and volunteer firefighters. With barely one million people, Montana covers an area of 147,138 square miles - larger than the 12 most northeastern states.

Current Problem:

- Public demands have resulted in an increased need to provide faster, reliable response to incidents to mitigate loss of life, injury, economic and social cost.
- Only 51% of Montana's 370 companies are currently reached with quality training.
- Firefighters no longer respond to just fires; they are called to the rescue of people in road traffic accidents, chemical spillages, and to major incidents of terrorism and other chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear threats.

Proposed Solution:

- Add one trainer, strategically located within the state, to meet the growing demand for skilled responders to a variety of emergency incidents at a cost-effective level.
- Meet the minimal contact level for training of 63% of Montana's fire services.

Required Investment:

- FY 06 \$112,630 (Trainer, support staff, operations and vehicle)
- FY 07 \$ 78,664 (Trainer, support staff and operations)

Return on Investment:

- Economic Return on Investment
 - Reduction of loss to property and insurance cost
The quality of local fire services has a direct relationship on the cost of fire insurance; savings to rate payers many times outweighs the initial cost of training. An investment in training community fire services realizes a reduction of loss to property by:
 - Increased response time
 - Continued development of ability and skills
 - Knowledge of new procedures and equipment
 - Workforce Development Return

Volunteers make up 96% of community fire services. Their competence is directly related to life safety and the survivability of communities and their residents. Good training is the most significant element in developing the competence of community emergency services. FSTS is the primary source for training at the state level.

- The number of businesses saved as a result of more competent local fire services being able to prevent property losses due to fire could be significant over a decade.
 - The majority of trainees served by FSTS are volunteers and not compensated for their contribution to life and property safety in rural communities.
- Reduction in State Fire Cost
 - State taxpayers have faced multi-million dollar payment for “project” fires. Providing more local firefighters with more training will result in a more effective initial attack and a reduction in the number of fires that escape and become “project” fires.
 - Economies of Scale
 - The current staff of four trainers reaches 51% of organizations at a cost of \$101 per firefighter.
 - Five trainers could reach 63% of emergency responders at a cost of \$96 per firefighter.
 - Number of firefighters receiving training per trainer would drop from 2,500 to 2,000 with an additional trainer.
 - Non-Economic Return on Investment
 - The community and responders would see a reduction of loss to life and injury due to the additional training services provided.
 - Improved community and firefighter competency levels due to the training received.

Selected Examples of Return:

These are a few examples of how FSTS training has impacted community fire services.

- The Plentywood Fire District was able to save its citizens approximately \$200,000 in annual insurance premiums by facilitating a change in their Insurance Services Office rating.
- On October 29, 2003, the life of a Billings woman was saved after being involved in a head-on automobile collision. “I’ve no doubt that our training and extrication equipment saved that woman’s life,” said Fire Chief Bruce Evans.
- Of the first two fire companies to respond to a chlorine incident in the Alberton Canyon, only one had received training from FSTS on responding to, and managing, hazardous materials incidents. Members of the other company ended up hospitalized.