

INTERNATIONALLY ACCREDITED AGENCY

“Office of the Fire Chief”

Introduction

I would like to begin by commending our members on their continued effort to provide world class fire and rescue services provided to the City of Pueblo and our community throughout 2011. I would also like to thank City Manager Jerry Pacheco and City Council Members for their commitment to public safety and supporting the efforts of our fire department.

Despite major economical and service demand challenges we face, we were able to accomplish many objectives and long range goals. This includes the construction process of the new fire station 4, delivery of 2 beautiful State of the Art Sutphen Fire Engines, and successfully completing our Accreditation Annual Compliance Report (ACR).

The New Year 2012 is bright with many opportunities that lie ahead. However, challenges will come as we continue to deal with the worst financial recession our nation has faced since the Great Depression. As we move forward into the New Year, we will continue to operate our department in the safest and most fiscally prudent manner. The department’s 5-Year Strategic Plan and annual Goals and Objectives document will continue to serve as our Road Map throughout 2012.

In 2012, our Safety and Training focus will be “Situational Awareness and Crew Integrity”.

Accomplishments in 2011, current activities, and our goals for 2012



In terms of positive financial news, we are utilizing our FEMA Fire Station 4 Stimulus Grant Award of \$2.75 million to complete the construction of the new Fire Station 4. This was the single largest grant award in our department’s history. In addition, we are utilizing a DOLA Grant awards in the amount of \$200,000 for fire stations 4. Our Grant Award monies for fire station 4 totaled nearly \$3 million dollars! As a side note, over 5,000 fire departments in the United States applied for the Fire Station Stimulus Grant. Only 96 departments were awarded and the Pueblo Fire Department received the 19th largest grant dollar amount in the United States.

From 2006 through 2011, the Pueblo Fire Department has been awarded Grant monies totaling approximately \$4 million. This included \$485,000 in grant funds that allowed us to purchase 800 MHZ radios, fire station generators, and structural fire gear (PPE). Many of our members did an outstanding job contributing to research, grant writing, and hard work in making these much needed grant funds a reality for the fire department. In 2011, we were awarded \$135,000 in grant monies for wellness and fitness.



Last year, we saw newly acquired Allegiant Airlines fly over 10,000 passengers in and out of Pueblo. Per the FAA, our municipal airport now has been upgraded from an Index A to an Index B. This change required us to add additional firefighter to Engine 10, which now operates with 4 fire department members per shift.

In 2011, our 14 newest firefighter recruits successfully completed their one year probation with “Flying Colors”. I would like to thank our Training Division and the many members of our department who assisted our new firefighters through this rigorous process.

In 2011, the Pueblo Fire Department responded to over 15,500 incidents. Thankfully, none of these incidents resulted in a major injury to any of our members. This no doubt was the result of your commitment to safety, training, fire prevention, and work excellence. Our department made contact with over 15,000 community members through various fire department public education programs. In addition, we conducted over 3,000 fire inspections, approved over 1 million square feet of building plans, and conducted over 30,000 hours of training for our members.

- ✓ **CFAI Accreditation:** In August 2008, the City of Pueblo Fire Department officially received international accreditation status. Completing this intense self-assessment process was a landmark and monumental time for our City and the fire department’s 122-year history. I am pleased to announce that in 2011, we passed our 3rd Annual Compliance Report (ACR). Although not nearly as time consuming as original accreditation, completing the ACR is by no means an easy task. This truly validates our maintaining of national standards and best practices. In addition, the Pueblo Fire Department is now a lead agency in the newly formed Colorado consortium of accredited fire departments. Only 4 fire departments in the State of Colorado (out of approximately 400 departments) have been accredited. In the United States, only 145 fire departments out of approximately 30,000 are accredited. Most importantly, maintaining our accreditation status will ensure we continue our outstanding level of service to the City of Pueblo and community.



- ✓ **Training:** Our Safety and Training focus for 2012 will be “Situational Awareness and Crew Integrity” as we continue to deliver best practices training to our members. Simply put, our training is second to none. This includes our hosting nationally recognized speakers/instructors on topics that included firefighter safety, survival, leadership, management, emergency ops, incident command, and tactics/strategy. Recent accomplishments have been completing the State Fire Officer and Firefighter 1 and 2 certification programs. Our partnership with Pueblo Community College on workshops as well as the Fire Science program brings the Pueblo Fire Department regional, state, and national recognition. Our 2012 training calendar is committed to delivering high quality training to our members as we continue to look for better and safer ways to do our job and “Train as if your life depends on it, because it does”!



- ✓ **Fire Prevention, Education, and Investigations-**Based on National Fire Data, our annual fire loss and injuries continue to be approximately 1/3rd of the national average. This is astounding considering the size, fire potential, and actual working fires that occur in our City. I believe this is largely due to your dedication and hard work to make the City of Pueblo one the safest places in the nation to live in terms of Fire and Rescue Services. Our department completed over 3,000 business inspections in 2011. Quarterly classes on various aspects of conducting company inspections will continue. In terms of Property/Loss Conservation, last year we responded to fire calls with a total property and content value of \$18.7 million dollars. During fire combat operations, we were able to save \$17.3 million in property/content which represents a savings of nearly 93% in total value. In terms of education through local media, we will be developing new Public Safety Announcements for 2012. Our fire investigators continue to investigate over 200 working fire incidents every year. Our department now has shift fire investigators that assist our Fire Prevention Bureau.



- ✓ Emergency Medical Services-Medical incidents continue to make up approximately 70% of our response incidents. We continue to work closely with Pueblo County Medical Director Dr. Kevin Weber on various EMS items. Due to financial challenges, our goal of becoming a paramedic level fire department has been placed on hold. One of our daily goals is to maintain an adequate number of ALS trained personnel. In 2009, Engine 10 was converted to an ALS unit. This was a major accomplishment to ensure our ten fire station districts are staffed with Advanced Life Support personnel. AMR Ambulance continues to provide excellent service to our City and community.



- ✓ Assessment of our needs- Besides establishing bench marks and tracking goals, the accreditation process identified various needs we have in areas such as staffing and large capital items. In recent years, we reduced our fire department staffing in fire prevention and fire suppression while at the same time our call volume and prevention demands have increased and nearly doubled. In terms of large capital needs, some of our apparatus and fire stations are aging and are in need of replacement. City revenue funds and the current economic condition have become problematic in terms of meeting these needs. However, we will continue to explore all necessary avenues to meet current and future staffing and capital items needs.

- ✓ Hazardous Materials and Specialized Rescue Ops- We are extremely fortunate to have a full service department that is capable of handling the extra-ordinary and unique incidents such as a haz mat spill, river rescue, and confined space incident. Many specialized incidents were handled in 2011 that resulted in positive and safe outcomes thanks to this specialized and highly trained group of individuals.



- ✓ Homeland Security and terrorism preparedness-We continue to work very close with City of Pueblo Police Department and Pueblo County Sheriff in training and preparedness. This will be an on-going focus as we best prepare ourselves for this 21st century challenge.

- ✓ Department Communications-Good communications at all levels has been and will continue to be a major focus. The weekly conference between all fire stations and staff assists us in this area. In addition, members have done an outstanding job keeping City Management, Council and other departments updated on various items throughout the year. We continue to use the chain of command and appropriate communications channels to make formal requests and resolve departmental issues.

- ✓ Fire Management and Local 3 work relations-We continue to problem solve items using the Labor/Management Initiative (LMI) forum. In addition to our monthly Staff meetings that involves management and labor, LMI creates a positive and collaborative problem solving forum for us. This includes working on current department needs and planning for the future. The active participation between our Command Staff and IAFF Local 3 E-Board continues to be an invaluable asset in moving our department forward. In 2011, members from Fire Command Staff and Local 3 Executives attended the National LMI Conference.



- ✓ Explorer Post 343-This group continues to do an outstanding job and make a significant impact in the lives of our youth throughout the community. In addition, we are looking at starting an Advanced Fire Explorer Program that would cover college costs for a select number of our top explorers.



- ✓ CISD, ACOVA and Fire Chaplain Program-Fire Chaplain Doug Cox, ACOVA, and Critical Incident Stress Debriefing personnel were called upon several times this past year. These individuals did an outstanding job comforting those during critical and tragic times.

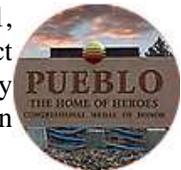
- ✓ New Fire Station 4: Thanks to our Fire Station Design Committee for the outstanding work they have done designing our stations. Thanks and recognition also goes to St. Mary Corwin Hospital for donating the land for fire stations 4 and the Urban Renewal Authority for their contribution of \$250,000 towards this project.. As previously stated, we were awarded nearly, \$3 million dollars in grants funds for fire station 4. Our goal is to complete the construction of fire station 4 by March 2012.



- ✓ Apparatus, Equipment, and Capital Improvement-We are very thankful and fortunate that in 2011 we received the 2 new Sutphen Fire Engines, located at stations 1 and 8. Also, various station and apparatus items have been upgraded. Budget permitting, we are looking to continue upgrading each fire station with an emergency generator, thermal imaging camera, and physical abilities equipment. However, there are still needs in terms of aging apparatus and fire stations. Last year, we upgraded to a new CAD System and automated dispatch system that has greatly improved overall response times.



- ✓ Home of Heroes-Red, White, and Blue, fund raising campaign-Truck 1, Squad 1, and Engines 1, 3, 6, 8, and 9 are painted red, white, and blue. This exciting project for our department carries a positive and symbolic message to the community about Pueblo being the “Home of Heroes”. We are hoping to raise more funds in 2012 to complete the painting of our rigs.



- ✓ Mutual Aid, Regionalization, NIMS- We are updating current mutual aid contracts. Staying involved in regional exercises and training will remain constant. An example of this is our participation in MMRS and CSSEP Exercises. The Pueblo Fire Department has established itself as a leader in the South Region of Colorado.



- ✓ Recruitment and diversity-We continue to work closely with the Human Resource Department on upcoming outreach venues to enhance our abilities to reach future firefighter candidates that encompass a diverse and broad background. One of our strategic goals is to improve diversity while at the same time hiring and maintaining a highly trained and professional workforce.
- ✓ Community Relations-Through previously mentioned programs; strive to become further integrated and connected with the community.
- ✓ Pueblo Community College-Continue our collaborative approach with PCC. This includes the use of our facilities. PCC has done an outstanding job hosting nationally recognized fire service speakers and maintaining a top notch fire science program.



Closing comments

Maintaining our accreditation status continues to have a very positive impact on our safety, level of service, and daily operations. We will continue to provide safe and effective leadership, training, equipment, and facilities for our members to ensure the highest level of Fire and Rescue services to the City of Pueblo and our community.

As mentioned, the skills, professionalism, and dedication of our members are remarkable and make Pueblo one of the safest places to live and do business in terms of fire and rescue services.

It's an honor and privilege for me to serve our great City and community with such an outstanding group of fire/rescue professionals. We are part of a world-class fire department and I look forward to accomplishing many things with in 2012.

Semper Vigilans

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher P. Riley
Fire Chief

