

INTERNATIONALLY ACCREDITED AGENCY

“Office of the Fire Chief”

DATE: 7 January 2013

RE: STATE OF THE PUEBLO FIRE DEPARTMENT, 2013

Introduction

To begin, I want to commend our members for the world class fire and rescue services they provide to our City and community. I would also like to thank City Management and City Council for their support and commitment to public safety.

We continue to navigate through major economical and demand for service challenges yet still accomplished many of our long range goals and objectives. This includes completing the new fire station 4 project and our Accreditation Annual Compliance Report (ACR).

The 2013 New Year presents both opportunities and challenges. We will continue to operate our department in the safest and most fiscally prudent manner following the department’s Strategic Plan as our Road Map. Our 2013 Safety and Training focus will be “Risk Assessment and Rehab”.

Accomplishments in 2012, current activities, and goals for 2013

In terms of positive financial news, we utilized 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 were awarded DOLA Grant funds in the amount of \$200,000 for fire station 4. Our Grant Award monies for fire station 4 were nearly \$3 million dollars.



From 2006 through 2012, 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, air compressor, 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. Our most recent awards include \$135,000 for wellness and fitness and \$40,000 for the new air compressor.

In 2012, the Pueblo Fire Department responded to nearly 17,000 incidents. Thankfully, none of these incidents resulted in a major injury to any of our members. This no doubt was the result of our 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 accomplishment for our City and fire department. I am pleased to announce that in 2012, we passed our 4th Annual Compliance Report (ACR) as we prepare for re-accreditation in 2013. This continues to validate maintaining national standards and best practices. The Pueblo Fire Department is a lead agency in the Colorado consortium of accredited fire departments. Only 8 fire departments in the State of Colorado (out of approximately 400 departments) have been accredited. In the United States, only 160 fire departments out of approximately 30,000 are accredited. 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 2013 will be “Risk Assessment and Rehab” as we continue to deliver best practices training to our members. 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 maintaining 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 2013 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. On final note, in 2012 we were officially accepted as members of USAR (Urban Search and Rescue) Task Force 1. Being a part of this elite national rescue team will no doubt bring us many benefits including training and resource availability.



- ✓ 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. This is mainly due to our 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 2012. 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 \$20 million dollars. During fire combat operations, we were able to save \$18 million in property/content which represents a savings of approximately 90% in total value. In terms of education through local media, we will be developing new Public Safety Announcements for 2013. Our fire investigators continue to investigate over 200 working fire incidents every year. The department now has shift fire investigators that assist our Fire Prevention Bureau. Lastly, our newly created fire prevention fee program is generating over \$50,000 for the City on an annual basis.



- ✓ Emergency Medical Services-Medical incidents continue to make up over 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 all ten fire station districts are staffed with Advanced Life Support personnel. AMR Ambulance continues to provide excellent service to our City and community. On a positive fiscal note, our EMS contract with AMR ambulance continues to generate nearly \$100,000 for the City on an annual basis.



- ✓ 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 2012 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. Please 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 January 2013, members from Fire Command Staff and Local 3 Executives will attend the National LMI Conference. Our positive work relation has gained national recognition amongst our fire service peers.



- ✓ 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. Congratulations to members of EP 343 who were bestowed with honors at a national competition.

- ✓ 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: Congratulations and thanks to everyone who assisted in this project. Recognition also goes to St. Mary Corwin Hospital for donating the land for fire station 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 construction of fire station 4.



- ✓ Apparatus, Equipment, and Capital Improvement-We are thankful that in 2011 we received 2 new Sutphen Fire Engines, located at stations 1 and 8. Budget permitting, we are looking to continue upgrading our apparatus, fire station emergency generators, thermal imaging cameras, and physical abilities equipment. 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 “Home of the Heroes”. We are hoping to raise more funds in 2013 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 positive impact on our safety, level of service, and daily operations. We will continue to provide safe and effective leadership, training, equipment, and facilities to ensure the highest level of Fire and Rescue services to the City of Pueblo and our community.

The professionalism and dedication of our members are remarkable and I am honored to serve our City and community with such an outstanding group of fire/rescue professionals. We look forward to accomplishing many things with in 2013.

Semper Vigilans

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher P. Riley
Fire Chief

cc: City Manager Sam Azad
City Council Members