



THE REVIEW

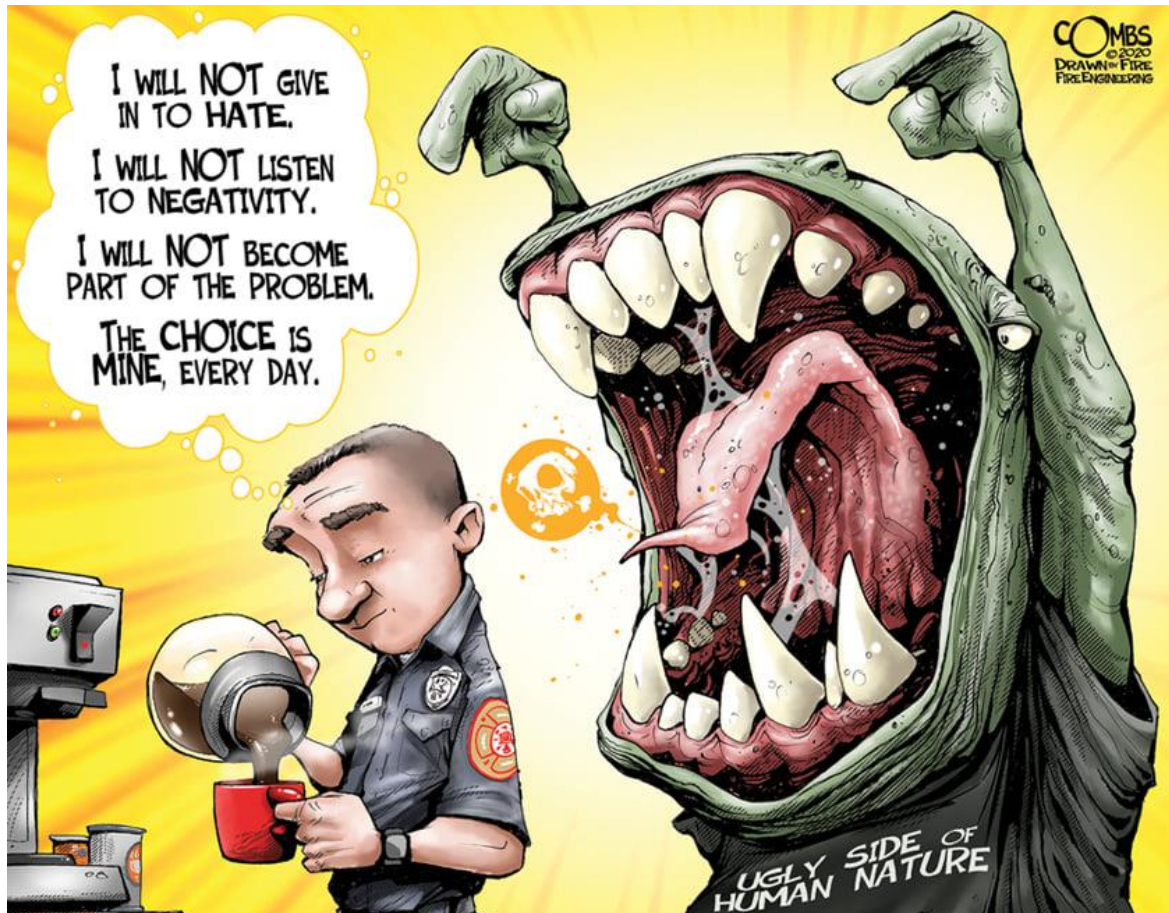
Central Arizona Fire and Medical - 8603 E. Eastridge Dr., Prescott Valley, AZ 86314 – June 19, 2020

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“Once people stop making excuses, stop blaming others, and take ownership of everything in their lives, they are compelled to take action to solve their problems.”

Jokco Willink



The Chief's Desk

Be ever vigilant. This is a lesson firefighters must learn on day one in the recruit academy and remember throughout their career. Things will always evolve especially as it relates to design and construction. This includes the dynamics of engineering, materials used, and how structures are powered to name just a few rapidly changing dynamic. What was once build with dimensional lumber is now pieced together with lightweight trussed construction designed and engineered for day to day use under normal conditions. It is not however designed to withstand fires, severe weather events like tornadoes (I know, not an Arizona issue), earthquakes, etc.

It's not that the new construction methods are dangerous to the general public under normal conditions, however in a fire event they can be very dangerous for firefighters given their tendency to allow for rapid fire spread and sudden collapse. Fortunately, we have very few basements in our area. That said, the lightweight I-beam floor joists topped with hard wood or tile floors can be extremely dangerous for firefighters entering a structure during a basement fire. With dimensional lumber, we were taught to sound the floor. With the I-beams, the floor typically does not become spongy thereby providing some level of warning – they just collapse.

As engineering has improved related to light weight truss and beam designs, we've been able to span greater areas without the need to add walls. These open concept designs all a fire to spread more quickly than before. Consider the compartmentation of the dollhouse used for modern fire attack training. We use this model to show how we can control flow path by controlling the openings whether windows, roofs, or doors. Now go look at a model home. Not that you cannot control some of the flow path, but in an open floor plan the fire will progress rapidly. This includes two story homes with open stairwells and balcony's.

Jen and I were walking through a new neighborhood admiring the design features of some of the more modern homes. One had a stairwell in a glass-enclosed section of the home leading to the second floor. The design feature took in all the views and looked magnificent. From the fire department side I see a beautiful architectural design that under fire conditions is a chimney that could make second floor access from the inside a significant challenge. Think ladder truck and ground ladders for access.

Design elements in lightweight constructed homes, business, restaurants, etc. all create unique challenges for us as firefighters. A fire official who was on the recent massive warehouse fire in Redlands, CA mentioned that they are no more familiar with the dangers of concrete tilt up construction. I remember being a company officer when the popularity of tilt up construction was starting to take off. My crew and I would walk through the buildings looking at how the lightweight metal roof trusses tied to the wall thinking, "we are screwed when this ceiling fails." The prevailing wisdom was that the buildings were built using fire resistant materials, had alarm systems, as well as fire suppression systems – what could happen? What could happen is the Amazon Distribution center fire in Redlands. Continued on Page 5

Upcoming Events:

June 22 – Board meetings
June 23 – New work comp pool
kick off meeting - Zoom
June 24 – Visit Stations
June 25 – AFCA Board Meeting
Zoom

Board Meetings:

June 22 Admin
CVFD – 1600-1630
CYFD – 1630-1700

The Fallacy of the Mask

By: Chief Freitag

As you have seen or heard, Governor Ducey has given authority to each local government to enact mask ordinances. None of this is actually based on science, and it clearly will not stop the spread, but many Valley area Towns and Cities have or are in the process of enacting mandatory mask ordinances. Thankfully, at least for now, our Towns, City, and County have not made masks a requirement. As for me, I just will not be in the Valley for a while.

You've heard my stance on masks previously, however I feel based on what others are saying publicly that I should take this time to make my positions abundantly clear. I'm also going to share a link to a very long, but very informative article. In my opinion, the information is compiled from credible sources using data that is readily available.

1. You've probably heard that Arizona has surpassed the State of New York for COVID cases per capita. Chief Bliss has run the numbers and determined that statement to be incorrect. Based on the data from both states, the only way Arizona could surpass the State of New York is if the City of New York is not included in the numbers.
2. The dashboard from Maricopa County Health as of June 15th states that hospitalizations related to COVID have leveled off. Hospitals are operating at approximately 80% capacity, which seems pretty typical. And, it's not 80% as a result of COVID. YRMC is currently operating at 85% capacity. As of Wednesday, they only had 3 COVID patients admitted. According to the hospital, 25% of patients requiring admission are sicker because of the shutdown and not having access to care. Well done with the lockdowns: /
3. It sounds heartwarming to say that wearing a mask is not for you, it's for the safety of others. Tugs at the old strings..... However, that is an absolutely misleading and incorrect statement. I'll use the latest information being disseminated to contradict their argument. "Cloth masks do not make it difficult for you to breathe because they are loose fitting and the fabric is not woven tight enough to restrict breathing." That is exactly the problem with cloth masks – they do not stop the virus from escaping the mask nor do they stop the virus from entering through the mask. Viruses are measured in nanometers they are not the size of a droplet. So, the mask will stop you from spitting on someone but will not stop the virus from being spread from one person to another. If you want to wear a cloth mask, wear one, but understand that it's ***not*** doing anything to protect anyone. If they want to stop any spread via masks, then they better get cranking on the N95's. Honestly, I could make a mask out of window screen and be allowed in anywhere that masks are required. It would only be slightly less effective than cloth. That's how ridiculous this entire thing has become.

For clarity, because people are very emotional and seem to lash out at anyone who disagrees with the idea of wearing masks – we are “uncaring, unintelligent, and uninformed.” To the contrary, I have based my position from actual scientific studies. I have not watched the news, nor have I formulated my opinion from talk radio or memes. Nope, I researched the topic reading actual studies, looked at and evaluated the numbers, and came to a conclusion. It's not emotion, it's research.

Below is the link I mentioned earlier. As always, read it, fact check it, and make your own decision. I strongly encourage you not to fall victim to the groupthink that is so prevalent in our society today.

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An ordinary day with extraordinary results: Detailing the St. Louis child rescues

By: Chief Marc Bashoor

"It was an ordinary day at an ordinary fire, in an ordinary building, with extraordinary results."

That's how St. Louis Fire Department Battalion Chief Duane Greer described Aug. 15, 2019 – a day that started like any other but ended with crews pulling child after child from an apartment fire in the city.

I had the great pleasure to sit down with members of the St. Louis crews who made those heroic rescues, along with their battalion chiefs, to talk about the Ohio Avenue incident: Firefighter Patrick Ferguson, Firefighter Joshua Roth, Battalion Chief Greer, Battalion Chief Steve Rick, Firefighter Jim Fuchs and Captain Chris Erb Jr.

As we would suspect, each of the firefighters protests the "hero" label, saying it was "just another day doing our job."

INITIAL COMPLICATIONS AT A 'COOKIE-CUTTER' BUILDING

Chief Greer sets the stage: "It was a beautiful day, and this was a normal-looking building – cookie-cutter, everything about it, we've done this a thousand times."

A dog-walking citizen called 911 to report the fire, and first-arriving companies reported smoke showing from the second floor. There was no one jumping up and down out front, no indication of anything particularly amiss other than the smoke showing.

"[Initial-arriving crews Truck Company 7 and 14] went in front door, and it became clear pretty quickly something was wrong," Greer explained. "While there was clearly a fire above, there was no way to get to it from here."

firerescue1.com

PG&E pleads guilty to killing 84 people in 2018 Calif. Wildfire

By: MICHAEL LIEDTKE AP Business Writer

BUTTE COUNTY, Calif. — Pacific Gas & Electric confessed Tuesday to killing 84 people in one of the most devastating wildfires in recent U.S. history during a dramatic court hearing punctuated by a promise

from the company's outgoing CEO that the nation's largest utility will never again put profits ahead of safety.

PG&E CEO Bill Johnson made the roughly 170-mile (275-kilometer) journey from the company's San Francisco headquarters to a Butte County courthouse to plead guilty to 84 felony counts of involuntary manslaughter stemming from a November 2018 wildfire ignited by the utility's crumbling electrical grid. The blaze nearly wiped out the entire town of Paradise and drove PG&E into bankruptcy early last year.

Besides the mass deaths it caused, PG&E also pleaded guilty to one felony count of unlawfully starting a fire as part of an agreement with District Attorney Mike Ramsey.

As Butte County Superior Court Judge Michael Deems read the names of each victim, Johnson acknowledged the horrific toll of PG&E's history of neglect while solemnly staring at photos of each dead person shown on a screen set up in the courtroom.

"No words from me could ever reduce the magnitude of that devastation or do anything to repair the damage," Johnson said in a statement afterward. "I hope the actions taken today bring some measure of peace."

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Chief's Desk Continued

How many firefighters have we lost through the years in fast food restaurant fires? More than we should. If you have walked through a fast food restaurant under construction, you've seen just how the buildings are engineered as well as the fire load within something that is typically designed to last 10 years. We were fortunate that Burger King in PV was a small fire was mostly contained in the vent system. As an aside, if you pull up on a fast food restaurant late at night and have heavy smoke conditions, it is a defensive fire. No lives at risk, and the building was not designed to with stand a significant fire. As an aside, from personal experience a building like an Applebees, is a light weight truss constructed building surrounded with a brick façade, containing a heavy fire load, a large dead load on the roof, and typically no alarm or fire sprinkler systems.

Newer apartment buildings and complexes are being designed in a way that promotes a more community like setting. Some are kind of a modern twist of an older style. This is great, and we do have codes as far as road widths and suppression systems, but that does not mean there are not challenges inherent with the design. When was the last time you took your crew through a complex old or new and table topped from the cab what you would do in a given scenario? When was the last time Truck 50 was out, set, and laddered something just to see how it fit in the area? I'm not talking about at CARTA, I mean at an apartment complex or hotel.

In addition to construction types and design, we have figured out how to manufacturer all types of synthetic products to look like real natural products e.g. wood, leather, cotton, etc. All of these manmade products have added to the fire load, rapid spread of fire, as well as the toxicity of the smoke.

I read an article earlier this week out of *FireRescue 1* magazine that I will share in this edition. A couple things stood out to me in the article. First, they kept calling it a “bread and butter” fire. We’ve said it for years, and I’ll say it again here – there is no such thing as a bread and butter, run of the mill, or typical structure fire. Every fire we respond to is its own unique event. When we do not respect each incident as being unique in some way, we get complacent. Second, some of the firefighters said that it was newer construction so they were confused when they couldn’t access the second floor from the entry on side A of the building. Another said the buildings were built about 10 years ago. These buildings do represent a change in design for the area, but they had existed in the community for 10 years. It is vitally important that we are aware of new construction and design changes so we are not caught off guard.

While I won’t go into great detail as I think you should read the accounts of the crews on scene, I will say the unannounced rescue situation highlights why we must consider structures occupied unless we have confirmation that they are not. That is not to say we should run head long into every building that is on fire. There are times when it is simply a loss and we have to make the tough call. I’ve made that call in my neighborhood, down the street from my own house, with my neighbors watching. On one hand, it was easy to make, on the other, it was a difficult, but necessary call to make.

The story also highlights, whether they wanted to or not, the benefits of a transitional attack. Don’t get me wrong, I do believe there are times where an aggressive interior attack is appropriate, and others where a transitional attack is the best option. It’s a balance, and a call that needs to be made by the first in officer. I’m not going to provide any additional commentary, and I’m not sharing the article as a best practice type of thing. Rather, read it and discuss it with your crew. Chief Parra, Chief Feddema, and I are of the same opinion regarding the events as described. Now it’s your turn to see what you think.

It is imperative that we use all of our senses and intellectual ability in advance of, during, and after an incident. We should always strive to learn and maintain our awareness of new construction and new construction methods. Our fire prevention division can be a significant asset in this area. Go out on a weekend and tour some new homes. Not because you’re in the market, but because you want to see what’s new in design and layout. New solar battery storage systems, new solar roof top systems, even lighter weight construction and design are all things you should be looking for as you tour a new home or building. Think, if this was on fire, what do I need to know, and how would I handle it?

When you’re at a home store, pay attention to the materials used to make the latest and greatest piece of furniture you have to have. How will it act in a fire? How will it contribute to the fires spread, and what do I need to think about? While you’re at it, look around the home store itself with an eye for what would happen if that building were to catch on fire. Fire suppression systems are fantastic and can certainly decrease fire spread. But, what happened in Redlands, California? We do not know at this point other than the alarm never sounded and the sprinklers didn’t go off – at least based on initial reports. Could that happen here?

There is a difference between being educated, reading the incident, and being aggressive based on the information the building and smoke are providing for you, and being reckless. We are not an agency that is running fires once a shift. This means we have to rely on high quality training through CARTA as well as training opportunities outside our agency. Additionally, we have to rely on our vigilance as it relates to our ever changing environment. Take time to walk some model homes, or next time your shopping or out to dinner look around the occupancy and think what would I do – and am I trained to do it. If not, what training do you lack? Make sure you take time to seek the training whether it is available internally or through another provider. The training division is certainly here to support you in finding what you need. It's a long career so stay focused, stay sharp, and stay safe. You will never know it all, but you can always learn, and you can always teach others.
