



THE REVIEW

Central Arizona Fire and Medical - 8603 E. Eastridge Dr., Prescott Valley, AZ 86314 – **May 13, 2022**

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"When you replace "why is this happening to me" with "what is this trying to teach me?" everything shifts."

Unk



Photo Credit: Bill Brookins



Drone Photo Credit: Captain Karl Postula



The Chief's Desk

Speaking of fire incidents, outside of wildland, what's the longest you've ever been on scene? For me, it was a commercial fire that went to three alarms. Between fire suppression and investigation, I was on scene for around 14 hours.

Most long-duration incidents (wildfires, tornadoes, hurricanes) build an amazing incident resource network with everything you need.

Consider the Crooks Fire; along with the Type 1 Incident Management Team (IMT) came a complete logistics section. Logistics includes feeding hundreds of firefighters and support personnel, as well as making shower facilities, bathroom facilities, housing, etc. available.

As you're well aware, that doesn't necessarily happen on a typical fire incident. Last week Thursday, just before 1700hrs, a large plume of dark black smoke appeared just east of CARTA. Little did anyone know that the fire they were responding to would last three days.

Engine 540 was winding down for the day, pulling their gear from the engine, when they looked out the bay and noticed the fire. Apparently, it would've been very hard to miss. They immediately knew what was on fire – U-Pick-It. How would they know that so quickly? Because of the origin of the smoke and the fact that it's not the first time we've had a fire at the yard. According to crew members, they figured Natalie was on fire again. For those who have not met Natalie, she's the multi-million-dollar car shredder crusher thing U-Pick-It uses to convert cars and trucks into scrap metal.

This time, though, it was not Natalie's fault; rather, it was a 30-40-foot-high pile of scrap. The cause of the fire is still under investigation at this time. What we do know from witness statements and security video is that there was a loud boom followed by billowing black smoke. The fire seems to have started somewhere deep in the pile, which created additional challenges.

According to Chief Doug Niemynski, he estimates we flowed a million plus gallons of water in the initial hours of the fire, and used almost our entire supply of foam. Doug served as the Incident Commander for the entire incident. After hours of fighting a losing battle against a deep-seated fire, and recognizing our water supply limitations, Doug made the call to let the fire burn and use water only to contain it to the pile of origin. He also took into consideration the size of the containment pond downstream and wanted to ensure we didn't overflow the system which would lead to another complete set of headaches.

Ultimately, we had crews on scene for three days in total. The first day of initial attack created a lot of logistical issues that we had not run into before. On the second day, Doug dropped to a one-company-at-a-time rotation to staff the ladder and ensure the fire didn't escape containment. By the third day, the pile had cooled enough to bring in the U-Pick-It heavy equipment operators to pull apart the stack so we could extinguish the final hot spots.

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Upcoming Events:

May 16-19: Chief on vacation before I lose more of it

Board Meetings:

May 23: Administration

CVFD – 1600-1615

CYFD – 1615-1630

Joint Board Meeting – 1630-1730

CAFMA – 1730-1830

Important Read: Something for All of Us to Consider

By: Unknown Author

By the time you are finished with your career in the fire service, everything about you will have changed. You will be old. You will be experienced. You will be confident, patient, and wise. Or, you will be old, disillusioned, angry, and bitter.

The people with whom you started your career won't be the same, either. The friends you made along the way will be retired, on a different group, or in a different position. The ones who knew the idealistic kid who was just starting his life will be replaced by idealistic kids just starting theirs. They will know only what you project. They do not share your experiences or your passions that may or may not still be there. They did not know who you were; they only know who you are.

What you are is a culmination of the experiences that shaped you. The things you did, the things you saw, and the lives saved and lost all had an impact. Yours is not a normal life with a predictable trajectory. The ups and downs of a life in the fire service has ruined many good people and created its fair share of monsters. Fortunately, the firefighting life instills a sense of camaraderie, purpose, competence, and resilience in most of us.

So, who will they remember when your time is through?

The fearless firefighter with his entire career ahead of him, or the tired, old officer who is putting in his time so he can collect his pension? The kid in the academy, fascinated with every new bit of knowledge obtained, eager to put it to use, or the guy who knows it all, done it all, and isn't impressed? The first one on the truck, or the old man who makes those eager kids fresh out of the academy wait? The one who starts housework, or the guy who waits for someone else to pick up a mop? The one who trained hard, or the one who goes through the motions? The one who responded to every emergency with the desire to mitigate whatever waited, or the one who looked at the call as more of a problem than an opportunity to create a solution? The one who wore the uniform, indicative of the person wearing it? The one who looks back on his career with fondness or contempt?

The answer to these questions is completely up to you. In an unpredictable line of work, one thing is always under your control: how you handle it.

There are no perfect firefighters. Each and every one of us has survived moments we regret. During a long career, there will be times that you question your commitment. Excitement fades, routine sets in, and friends come and go. Politics wear you down, and time away from home becomes unbearable.

To successfully navigate it all, it is imperative to hold on to the person you were before you became a firefighter. Keep that person locked away in a place inside you. Talk to him when things get difficult. You weren't always burdened with the knowledge that life is cruel; good people die for no reason; and, sometimes, the best you have to offer isn't good enough. The "old" you is actually the real you, just without the baggage. If you can stay connected to him, you will be remembered as the firefighter who showed up, did the job, did it well, and left the job far better than it was before you came along.

One of the most important leadership traits has taken a hit. Here's how to get it back

By: Anne Marie Squeo

Trust and leadership are critical to navigating today's uncertain times when misinformation is on the rise and virtual interactions limit our ability to truly connect with each other. Often trust seems binary—it either exists or it doesn't. Not so, says Stephen M.R. Covey, author of *The Speed of Trust* and his latest book, *Trust & Inspire: How Truly Great Leaders Unleash Greatness in Others*.

Discussing the release of *Trust & Inspire*, the best-selling author shared the two biggest insights from his research and decades of client work through consulting firm Covey Worldwide and the Franklin Covey Global Trust Practice: Trust is a learnable skill, and two trustworthy people can have no trust between them.

"In the same way you can either diminish or lose trust through your behavior, you can also consciously create it, grow it, extend it, and, in some cases, restore it through your behavior," Covey says. "People often focus more on being personally trustworthy versus seeing the same in others. The bigger gap in most organizations today is actually on the trusting side. It's not enough to be trustworthy; you also need to be trusting."

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Chief's Desk Continued

So, what were some of the logistical issues we faced and what have we learned? This is not meant to be an After-Action Review (AAR) as I was not there, and it is up to Chief Niemynski and Chief Feddema to work through the AAR with the crews involved. That said, there are some things I can discuss that created interesting logistical challenges, and opportunity.

Let's start with the fact that we now know that the low fuel lights do work as intended on our engines and ladder. Because of your efforts, our apparatus never become low on fuel – okay, let's be honest, it's because C-Shift fills them in between the heroes of A and B-Shift being on duty 😊 However, as a result of pumping operations and extended run times, we did get to see the bright glow of the warning lights that first night. A big shout-out to Engineer Gordon Dibble for staffing our fuel truck and shuttling fuel from the gas station to the scene over and over again. We're fortunate that we have the fuel truck at CARTA; however, the tank on the fuel trunk is relatively small for shuttling that much fuel. Since that evening, I've learned that the county and the City of Prescott both have 100-gallon diesel fuel trailers that we can request in the future. We just need to reach out directly to the Sheriff's office, through Emergency Management, or for Prescott you can just call PRCC.

One more minor piece of insight regarding fuel shuttling – don't use one single fuel card for all purchases on an incident like this. Switch it up and pull fuel cards from different apparatus. Unfortunately, when you use the same card for that much fuel and that many trips, it triggers a fraud alert and locks the card. Things we learn...

New diesels that require DEF are stupid – in my opinion. What we know is that if one of our apparatus runs out of DEF, it will send the unit into limp mode. Once in limp mode, and after filling the system with DEF, it will take some time for the computer in the apparatus to reset. Fortunately, we didn't run out, but we did have to request a 55-gallon drum of DEF from the warehouse. Thank you to Jake Anglin for coming in and getting the DEF to the scene!

We didn't have any food-related issues reported – go figure ☺ Coffee, water, Gatorade, etc. are usually in pretty good supply on our incidents.

Use of technology is another area that was pretty cool on this incident. Engineer Russ Smith was leaving the Engineer's Academy as the fire started. He launched his personal drone and caught some great footage. His battery was going dead so he interfaced with Chief Niemynski who ultimately called Captain Karl Postula and requested he bring out one of our CAFMA drones.

They were able to use the technology on the drone to identify fuel tanks situated behind the pile and then determine what, if anything, needed to be done to protect the tanks. Ultimately, he was able to show location and proximity to the pile, which relieved a number of concerns. He then used the drone to help direct water streams onto the active fire in the pile. As a result of the volume of smoke, the fire itself was not visible at times making it difficult to place an effective fire stream.

I have asked Karl to prepare a short presentation for the May Board meeting regarding our drone program, e.g. how the drones have been used and what opportunities exist for the drone program in the future. This includes potential investment in two new drones with better technology. I'd tell you what it is, but that would indicate that I understand what Karl was telling me – and that's just not the case. That said, it all sounds necessary.

In the end, this was an interesting incident with a lot of learning opportunities. We addressed logistical issues we've never had to deal with in the past and we used technology to our advantage. With the little I know, I think Chief Niemynski made some good tactical decisions. Specifically, I think pulling back in an effort to contain the fire was a good move. Not wasting any additional resources, while at the same time being mindful of the potential environmental impact had we overflowed the containment pond, were critical decision points.

There were some interesting challenges with smoke that will be reviewed by the Safety Committee and discussed as part of the AAR. Ultimately, I asked Chief Feddema and Chief Niemynski to ensure everyone who was on the incident fills out an Exposure Report. Shifting winds moved smoke around erratically exposing everyone in the area. To that end, we want to ensure we have a paper trail just in case.

All in all, it was an interesting incident with a lot of takeaways. I do want to say thank you to Firefighters Chris Pena, and Adrian Kumpula, as well as Captain Brett Poliakon, for letting me play with the ladder - I mean go up in the bucket and assist with fire suppression operations - on Friday. I had a great time hanging out. Adrian, please thank your wife for the ice cream.
