



THE EMSCOOP

NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2017

Round the Region

NOVEMBER is:

- 11th Veteran's Day
- 23rd Thanksgiving
- Diabetes Awareness Month
- Adoption Awareness Month



DECEMBER is:

- 7th Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day
- 21st Winter Solstice
- Impaired Driving Prevention Month
- Egg Nog Month
- Fruit Cake Month



Area legislators were invited to the September 29th Joint Powers Board Meeting. Only a few attended, but there was robust discussion regarding stable, future funding for Emergency Medical Services.

Early next year, before the start of the 2018 Regular Legislative Session, February 20th, the Region will, once again, contact area legislators informing them of the need for more EMS funding. We encourage you and your agency to also contact your legislators and share your personal need for additional support. It is very impactful for legislators to put a story and a face with a need. It makes it more real than just numbers on paper. It helps them see that low funding for EMS impacts all people in our communities. One never knows when the need for EMS will effect them, but when the need arises, our hope is that the EMS agency responding will be well trained and equipped to respond.

Due to the lack of funding, we have had to drastically reduce our programs. There will be no Certification Reimbursement Program and no Equipment Grant Program this year. To stay informed on program happenings, go to our website, centralmnems.com and sign-up for program updates.

After almost 4 years as the Administrative Assistant with the Central MN EMS Region, I will be leaving and taking a position with the Stearns County Administration Office. I have truly enjoyed working with all of you and am hopeful for great things in the future for Emergency Medical Services. For questions, concerns or comments, contact [Marion Larson](#), Regional EMS Coordinator, 320-656-6122.

Doing great work? Trying something new? Accomplish a major milestone? Hosting a training? Let us know and we can share your news!

Best Wishes,
Sue Feldewerd

Fighting the Flames

STAPLES, MN. -- You can rest a little easier tonight. In the state of Minnesota, there are approximately 20,500 firefighters. Each of these firefighters is held to the highest of standards in training and professional development to ensure they are ready when called. In fact, Minnesota is the only state to require firefighter licensing.



The Minnesota Board of Firefighter Training and Education (MBFTE) is a big reason each of these firefighters is properly prepared – both mentally and physically. MBFTE came to fruition in 2003 following a legislative study regarding fire service professionals in the state of Minnesota. It was during this study that fire departments and their communities voiced a need for additional help to ensure quality, accessible, and cost-effective fire training opportunities were provided. MBFTE was created to review fire service training needs, as well as establish standards and assist with funding so all depart-

ments – regardless of size – had equal opportunity to receive the training they needed.

The Board is comprised of representatives from a variety of offices and organizations, including the Minnesota Fire Chief's Association, Minnesota Fire Department Association, Minnesota Professional Firefighter's Association, the League of Minnesota Cities, Minnesota Association of Townships, as well as a representative from the Department of Public Safety and one community member – all four-year terms appointed by the governor, and all without compensation.

Steve Flaherty was named executive director of MBFTE in 2014 and is responsible for carrying out all Board decisions, as well as administer the laws, rules, and regulations of the state statute that created MBFTE. Flaherty also serves as the direct link between the Minnesota Department of Public Safety and MBFTE.

Minnesota homeowners pay a small fee on their insurance premiums to help offset the cost of fire service training. However, in the last three years, NJPA has given the Minnesota Fire Safety Account a boost with a \$150,000 award in 2015 and a \$335,000 award in 2016 and 2017 for Region 5 firefighters.

This latest round of money was

increased to allow law enforcement, public health professionals, and other emergency medical service personnel to also receive subsidies for ongoing education.

MTFBE's allocation of \$200 per firefighter statewide combined with NJPA's contribution in Region 5 means every firefighter in Cass, Crow Wing, Morrison, Todd, and Wadena counties can claim up to \$355 in education and training subsidies.

Flaherty said expenses incurred to a department or organization inclusive of training, conferences, and other necessary schooling are reimbursable. However, lodging, food, and travel costs or out-of-state training are not covered.

"It's grown to a point where if it meets a national fire standard or EMS standard, our Board is open to accepting and reimbursing it," Flaherty explained, adding MBFTE has carefully created a list of qualified trainers and programs with consistent curriculum and instructors. If training is provided by entities on the list, it is eligible for reimbursement.

Each year, the legislature appropriates what's been collected from insurance premiums. Through MBFTE, departments receive notification of how much money they are entitled to based on the registered number of firefighters on their respective rosters. With that in mind, each department is encouraged to

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utilize the dollars for continuing education, then submit a request form and copies of invoices for review. If the request meets MBFTE set criteria, a check is sent back to the department.

In the past three years, Flaherty said over 3,600 firefighters have been trained and certified to national standards at no cost to their departments, thanks to funding stemming from MBFTE. Out of 780 fire departments throughout the state of Minnesota, 96 percent have used the subsidy program at least once since 2009. In 2015 alone, 644 of those 780 fire departments submitted for reimbursement of some kind – setting a record for MBFTE. Flaherty attributes that increase to a more simplistic and streamlined application process for reimbursement, as well as word getting out to more departments that monies are available.

“There are a lot of departments, especially smaller, rural departments, that have a limited budget for training,” Flaherty explained. “Just for basic training for a new firefighter to come in, you’re looking at \$1,500 for certification. If a department wants to bring in three new people and

put them through basic training, that’s \$4,500. And that’s a significant hit on their budget. We have enough funding this year that we will not only provide up to \$200 per firefighter, but MBFTE will also pay 100 percent for basic training. That’s a huge impact on any-sized department.”

In addition to individual certification and educational opportunities, dollars can also be used for department-wide training.

“If the Brainerd Fire Department, for example, wants to bring in some type of specialized training, their normal training budget may not allow for that type of expense,” Flaherty said. “However, having \$355 per firefighter on the roster will allow them to do both regularly scheduled training, as well as some of the extraordinary training they’ve wanted to do but haven’t had the budget to do so in the past.”

Brainerd Fire Chief Tim Holmes said thanks to MBFTE subsidies, his department has been able to do just that. In 2016, the Brainerd Fire Department has participated in trench rescue training, as well as confined space rescue, providing his 36

firefighters with technical and specialized training not otherwise affordable.

“Without the MBFTE money, there’s quite a bit of enhanced training that departments don’t



or can’t do because their budgets are taken up by mandatory training,” Holmes said. “These subsidies now allow departments to expand their knowledge by bringing in additional opportunities that broaden our expertise and provide a higher level of service that our communities can be proud of.”



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Events & Training

November 20th

Ambulance Manager's Meeting, 1pm - 2pm, Gold Cross, St. Cloud

December 5

State Trauma Advisory Council (STAC), 12:30 pm, Shoreview Community Center

December 7

CENTRAC Meeting, 9 am, CentraCare Plaza, St. Cloud. A regularly scheduled meeting in the Hughes Mathews Room

December 8

MAA Board Meeting, 10am - 2pm, St. Cloud Hospital. Regularly scheduled meeting of the Minnesota Ambulance Association, held at the St. Cloud Hospital Conference Center, Spruce Room.

December 20

Sherburne County Fire Chief's Meeting, 7pm, Big Lake

January 17 - 21

Arrowhead EMS Conference, Duluth Entertainment Convention Center. Save the Date. More details at <http://www.arrowheadems.com/>

January 26

CM EMS Region Joint Powers Board Meeting, 10am - 12 pm Stearns County Service Center, Waite Park



Contact Information

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This communication is intended to provide you with current information about happenings in the Region and across Minnesota as it relates to EMS. It can also be used to share information with others in the region from your agency. If you would like information included in future communications, please forward that information to Marion Larson, marion.larson@co.stearns.mn.us Feel free to give feedback on the usefulness of this and future updates.