

**GAP ANALYSIS FOR THE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF VOLUNTEER  
FIREFIGHTERS**

by

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PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF  
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA

April 2014

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this research project was to determine the gaps, if any, between existing recruitment and retention practices of volunteer fire departments in the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George and best practices as assessed through a review of the relevant research literature. I was particularly interested in determining the motivations of people to join and stay in volunteer fire fighting, and in whether there were age differences in these motivations. I first conducted a review of the relevant research literature to locate previous studies conducted on this topic. The results of these studies helped to inform the interview methodology used in this research. I then interviewed fire chiefs from volunteer departments in the Fraser-Fort George Regional District, British Columbia, to determine what practices they are presently using to recruit and retain their firefighters, and whether they are using different procedures to recruit from younger and older age groups. Based on the background review of research literature and interviews conducted in this project, I make recommendations for the improvement of recruitment and retention strategies for volunteer fire departments in the RDFFG.

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**GLOSSARY** - For the purpose of this report

**Leadership** is the ability to get something done, by someone else, because they want to do it (Favraeau, 1973)

**Fire Chief** is the highest ranking uniformed officer in a fire department (Paulsgrove, 2003)

**Recruiting Firefighters** is the process of enlisting new members to the volunteer fire departments

**Regional District of Fraser-Fort George (RDFFG)** is a federation of four municipalities and seven electoral areas covering an area of 52,000 km<sup>2</sup> in northern British Columbia

**Retention** is the ability of the fire department to keep their volunteer fire fighters

**Volunteer Fire Department (VFD)** is an organization created for the purpose of providing a variety of service designed to keep citizens safe from fire and other emergencies (Paulsgrove, 2003)

**Volunteerism** is a voluntary, ongoing, planned, helping behavior that increases the well-being of strangers, offers no monetary compensation, and typically occurs within an organizational context (Clary et al.1998, Penner, 2002)

**Volunteer Fire Fighter (VFF)** is a person who voluntarily undertakes the task of fighting fires (Mish, 2003)

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT / DEDICATION**

I would like to thank Dr. Steven Cronshaw, my supervisor, who enthusiastically joined me in this fascinating project when I first approached him with the idea. His ability to make complex academic concepts clear and logical has made this scholarly venture a great experience.

I am also very grateful to all Fire Chiefs and Deputy Fire Chiefs who welcomed me into their fire halls and participated in the interviews with open minds and great patience. I sincerely hope that this work will be one of many tools that will assist them in making their departments places where volunteers will continue to find a sense of purpose and belonging.

This project is dedicated to almost 300 men and women who are members of 13 Volunteer Fire Departments in the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George, who proudly wear their uniforms and are driven by a noble calling. You are the heart and glue of your communities and I humbly bow to you....

## **CHAPTER ONE Introduction**

The role of volunteer fire departments is to protect life, property and environment. There are about 350 independent community based fire departments in British Columbia collectively employing about 4,000 career firefighters and 10,000 volunteer firefighters (Fire Services Liaison Group, 2009). About 180 of those departments are based in municipalities and regional districts, while the remaining 170 operate in small, unincorporated communities under direction of improvement districts or societies. Most fire departments are challenged with increased demands for service and growing financial and resource constraints, especially in small communities (Fire Services Liaison Group, 2009). Recruitment and retention have been ongoing challenges for these departments and are partially attributable to callout and training time demands, growing requirements for volunteers to work out of town, declining employment in resource dependent communities and significant risks and responsibilities expected of fire fighters. Facing many of these challenges, the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George (RDFFG) has been struggling to recruit and retain volunteer fire fighters.

The purpose of this study was to collect and evaluate available literature on what motivates people to become volunteer firefighters, identify industry's best practices for the recruitment and retention and to determine what additional strategies could be developed by the RDFFG volunteer fire departments to attract and retain more members. The following are key research questions my study aimed to answer:

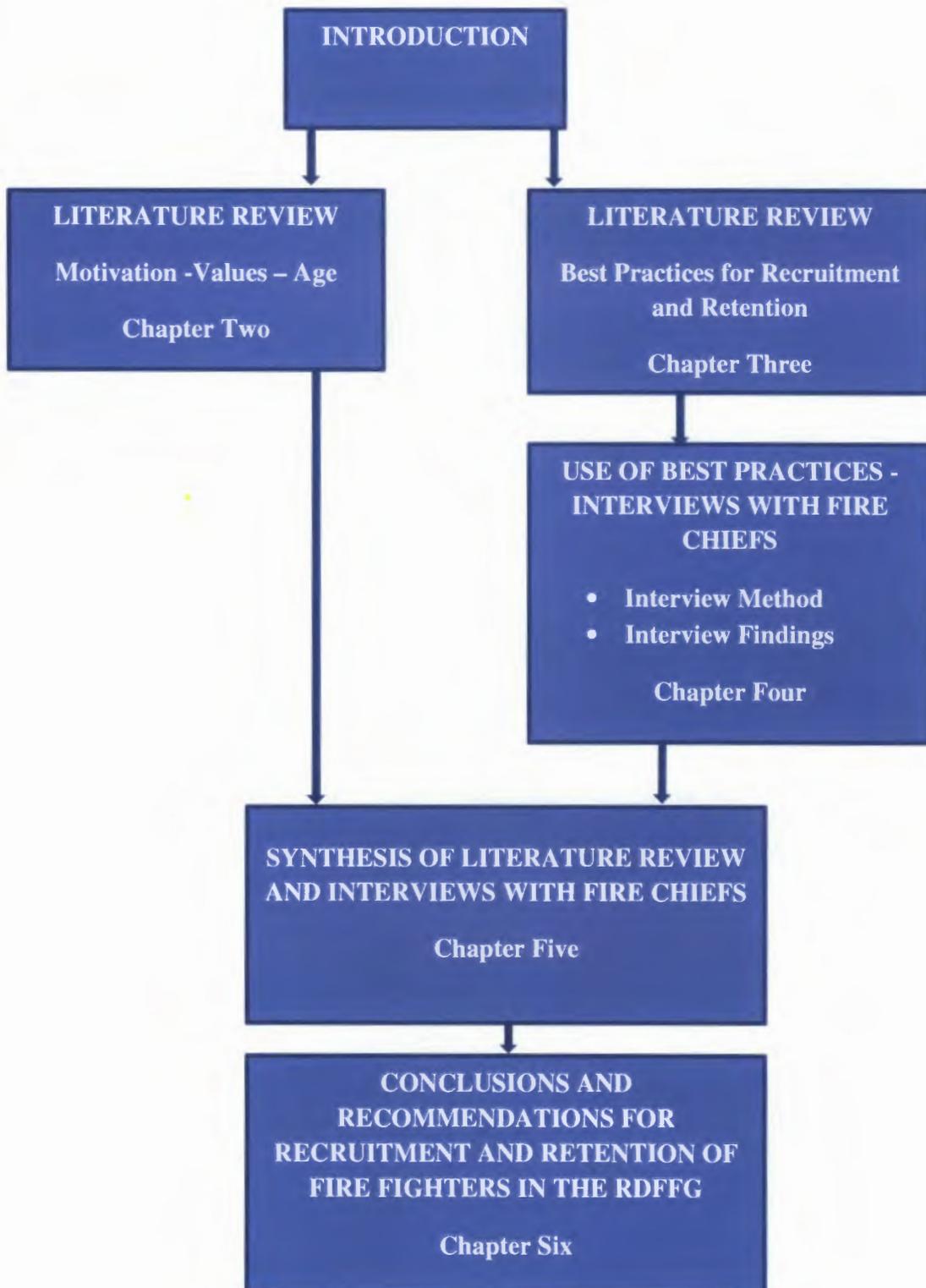
1. What motivates individuals from different age groups to join and contribute in the volunteer firefighting service? Targeted age groups are (18-30) and (45-60) years.

2. Based on the findings on the first question what are the best recruitment practices to attract highly motivated firefighters from both groups?
3. What are the gaps in findings under research question #1 and #2 between Best Practices supported by literature review in and existing practices in the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George?

This project consists of two interrelated streams of data collection that are synthesized to answer the above three research questions. To assist the reader, the overall organization of this project is diagrammatically summarized in Figure 1.

The first question of firefighter recruitment has been studied and reported extensively in the research literature. The results from the literature review answered the question of what motivates volunteers to perform the same job as paid firefighters without being financially compensated. The second question was aimed to find out what would be most effective recruitment strategies for two different age groups of volunteers. Through the literature review I have examined the best practices of recruitment that have been developed and implemented in other jurisdictions to attract highly motivated firefighters from each group. In order to answer the third question I have conducted semi-structured interviews with Fire Chiefs and/or Deputy Fire Chiefs. The interview questions were designed to evaluate each fire department's use of systems and procedures to recruit new firefighters from two targeted age groups under study. This interview data was compared to the Best Practices identified under question #2 in order to identify any gaps and provide appropriate recommendations for systems and procedures to improve VFDs recruitment strategies.

Figure 1: Organization of this research project:



## **Background to Volunteer Fire Services in Northern British Columbia**

In British Columbia, the Ministry of Public Safety, in particular, the Office of the Fire Commissioner, oversees the administration and enforcement of fire safety legislation, coordination of the Local Assistants to the Fire Commissioner and fire inspections. It also provides advice on delivery of fire protection services, public fire safety education and firefighter training standards. There is no mandatory provincial legislation requiring any community to have a fire department, therefore all decisions related to the fire/rescue services are made at the community level. Costs of fire/rescue services are borne by local residents either through tax funding or donations (Fire Services Liaison Group, 2009).

Additional regulatory requirements are increasing and potential liabilities have made the operation of a volunteer department more difficult, demanding and expensive than in the past. In the spring of 2011 Dave Mitchell and Associates was contracted to conduct an audit and inspection of the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George's (RDFFG) volunteer fire departments. The challenges faced by the thirteen volunteer fire/rescue services reviewed in the RDFFG are version in a microcosm of the challenges identified by the Fire Services Liaison Group.

The Regional District of Fraser-Fort George is responsible for managing the operation of 13 Volunteer Fire Departments (VFD) and three rescue services (Area D Rescue, Chilako Nechako Rescue and Valemount and District Rescue). McBride Rescue Society and Fort George Highway Rescue Society provide rescue services but are not affiliated with the RDFFG. The annual budgets for the 13 VFDs are just over \$2.8 million and the departments deploy close to 300 firefighters and more than 50 pieces of major apparatus (Mitchell and Associates, 2012). The departments respond to about 800 emergencies each year and provide a wide variety of fire

suppression, first medical responder and rescue services to residents within the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George. Each VFD is the subject of a service establishment bylaw under the RDFFG, another bylaw which establishes the department itself and additional bylaw that empowers the department to undertake the provision of emergency services (Mitchell and Associates, 2012).

While there are various mutual aid agreements between departments depending on geographic location, each of these departments currently has an independent command structure. The Regional District Fire Services Coordinator provides support in areas such as budgeting, purchase of apparatus, provision of operational policy and guidelines, coordinating outside training and acting as a general liaison between the VFDs and the Regional District. The majority of the Fire Chiefs are participants in the Central Interior Fire Chiefs Association (CIFCA) which enhances the cooperation and networking among different VFDs. Issues such as standardization of apparatus and equipment purchases, peer coaching for new Fire Chiefs and inter-department training opportunities are some of the benefits a cohesive group such as the CIFCA is able to foster (Mitchell and Associates, 2012).

Funding for individual VFDs is provided through a tax requisition from property owners within the specific fire protection area of each department. The level of maximum taxation that can be provided to any one specific department is set through bylaw by the RDFFG. Funding levels between the VFDs vary greatly and are impacted by the size and composition of the tax base of the fire protection area (Mitchell and Associates, 2012). Managing capital expenditures, self-contained breathing apparatus, members' personal protective equipment and upgrades to the fire halls can be challenging for volunteer fire departments.

In addition, training presents a significant financial cost for the fire department and an enormous commitment of time, energy and effort for the volunteers. The Province considers NFPA standards basic training fire service and achieving NFPA 1001 qualifications is necessary for firefighters while NFPA 1021 is mandatory for fire chiefs. Training is essential for the fire departments to be effective. It reduces the likelihood of an injury or death, and is important in managing the liability risks faced by officers, VFD and the Regional District (Mitchell and Associates, 2012). Topics included in the basic training include: Fire Ground Safety and Orientation, Personal Protective Equipment and Breathing Apparatus, Ground Ladder Basics, Ropes and Knots, Fire Behavior and Ventilation, Fire Hoses and Water Supplies.

Mitchell's report outlined 24 specific recommendations relating to training and standards, records keeping, bylaw review, administration and governance, occupational health and safety, apparatus and equipment, finance and budgeting as well as mutual aid agreements, standard operating guidelines and a regional training center. The report does not provide specific recommendations regarding recruitment and retention, the topic toward which this project is directed.

Another key document in place is the RDFFG Operational Guidelines Manual with a purpose to ensure that all fire/rescue departments are aware of, and adhere to, the legislative and regulatory requirements governing the fire services in the province and to standardize operations to ensure the safety of firefighters. The following is an electronic link to this document.

[http://www.rdffg.bc.ca/Services/Public\\_safety/Fire\\_Services\\_Operational\\_Guidelines\\_Nov%2030\\_2011.pdf](http://www.rdffg.bc.ca/Services/Public_safety/Fire_Services_Operational_Guidelines_Nov%2030_2011.pdf)

## **CHAPTER TWO Literature Review - Motivation, Values, Age and Volunteerism**

Volunteerism is described as voluntary, ongoing, planned, helping behavior that increases well-being of strangers, offers no monetary compensation and typically occurs within an organizational context (Clary, et al., 1998). Understanding why volunteers join an emergency service and why they stay is critical to developing more effective recruitment and retention strategies (Francis & Jones, 2012). Most research on motivation has focused on work-related motivation and is considered more important because it has a greater impact on the economy (Widjaja, 2010). While some work-related motivation is applicable to volunteers, there is a critical difference; volunteers are unpaid workers often motivated by factors other than monetary compensations. The reasons for people to volunteer include functional motives, role identity, dispositional factors, situational circumstances and organizational components (Finkelstein, 2009; Penner, 2002; Widjaja, 2010). According to the role identity theory, a person has multiple identities that are formed through interactions and expectations (Finkelstein, 2009). When an individual identifies and internalizes the role of being a volunteer, he incorporates this role into his self-concept and the higher the degree of identification and internalization, the more the likelihood that the individual will continue to volunteer (Finkelstein, 2009). An organization's reputation and employee culture and dispositional factors, such as personality traits, beliefs, and values, also influence an individual's decision to volunteer (Penner, 2002).

The literature on what motivates individuals from different age groups to join and contribute in the volunteer service covered three continents: North America (Clary, et al., 1998) (Shrader, 2012), Australia (Francis & Jones, 2012), (McLennan & Birch, 2009) and Europe (Davila & Diaz-Morales, 2009) (Ferreira, Proenca, & Proenca, 2012). A broader question of why people choose to volunteer to undertake unpaid work of any kind was studied by Benson et al.

(1980) who noted that volunteers generally actively sought a means of helping others for no material reward, often made a long-term commitment and incurred considerable personal costs in terms of lost time, expended energies and foregone opportunities (McLennan & Birch, 2009). Yet each year large numbers of people choose freely to engage in activities aimed at helping others without material reward. In 2006, the proportion of the US population who volunteered in the previous 12 months was 26.7% (Department of Labor, 2007) and in Australia the corresponding figure in 2006 was 34.1% (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2007) (McLennan & Birch, 2009).

American Red Cross volunteers were surveyed by Gillespie and King in 1995 with the most frequently reported reasons for volunteering being: to help others; to contribute to community; and to obtain training and skills (McLennan & Birch, 2009). Fitch investigated factors which motivated college students to volunteer for community service in 1987 and identified three motives: *altruism* (a desire to increase the welfare of others); *egoism* (a desire to increase one's own welfare) and *social obligation* (a desire to repay a debt to society) (McLennan & Birch, 2009).

The model most commonly used in recent research appears to be Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) by Clary et al. (1992) shown in Appendix 1. Clary and Snyder proposed a set of six motivational functions or Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) described below that drive volunteerism:

- *Values*: altruistic and humanitarian concern for others
- *Protective*: deflect from one's own personal problems such as boredom or guilt
- *Enhancement*: personal growth and development and involves self-esteem

- *Understanding*: learn new skills, knowledge and abilities
- *Career*: prepare for a new career or gain career relevant skills
- *Social*: to be with friends or engage in activity viewed favorably by important others

Motivations for volunteering may differ with age. In their survey of American Red Cross volunteers noted previously, Gillespie and King (1985) found that participants that were older than 38 were more likely to report *Helping Others* as their main reason for volunteering, while younger volunteers were more interested in *Obtaining Training and Skills*.

In 2000, Omoto, Snyder and Martino surveyed adults interested in becoming hospice care volunteers. They found that younger potential volunteers (19-39 years) reported greater *Relationship Motivation* (to meet new people and make new friends) compared with an older group (55-76 years) who reported greater *Service Motivation* (sense of obligation to the community) (McLennan & Birch, 2009).

In 2003 Okun and Schultz undertook a detailed study of age and motivation to volunteer (McLennan & Birch, 2009). First they conducted an analysis of findings in 13 reports concerning age differences on one or more of the six motives to volunteer proposed by the Clary et al. (1992) study described earlier and added an additional motive of *Making Friends*. The researchers concluded that age was significantly negatively related to *Career Benefit* motives and that the relationship between age and *Social* motives to volunteer approached significance. No significant age-related effects for the remaining five motives to volunteer (*Enhancement, Protective, Understanding, Values* and *Making Friends*) were found.

Okun and Schultz then surveyed 523 volunteers with Habitat for Humanity International, whose members help building houses for low income families. Age was found to be negatively

related to *Career Benefit* and to *Understanding* motives, positively related to *Making Friends* and to *Social* motives and not related to *Enhancement*, *Protective*, nor *Values* motivations to volunteer (McLennan & Birch, 2009). Okun's pattern of findings suggests that younger volunteers are more likely to report personal benefits in the form of career enhancement and older participants report personal benefits from strengthened social networks.

It has been claimed by several observers that members of Generation Y (generally regarded as those born between 1976 and 1991, Salt 2006) have different value systems which impact on many aspects of social behavior, including volunteering and are relatively more self-oriented than previous generations (McLennan & Birch, 2009). A possible implication is that they could be less altruistic and community-oriented and are more concerned with their personal benefits when considering undertaking voluntary work.

### **Motivations of the Volunteer Firefighters**

Studies focusing on the motivations and experiences of volunteer firefighters included an earlier research by Lozier in 1976 which concluded that perceived benefits included: *gaining of useful knowledge, community participation and social interactions*, and *regard and respect in the community*, while the cost of being a volunteer fire fighter included lost leisure time, physical exertion, risk and financial costs (McLennan & Birch, 2009).

Thompson and Bono surveyed 15 volunteer fire departments in New York State in 1993. The following were reported to be various motivations for being a volunteer: *helping one's community, making a contribution to an important activity, friendships with fellow volunteers and a sense of being in control* (McLennan & Birch, 2009).

Three earlier studies; Aitken (2000), Clancy (2005) and Palmer (2000) investigated Australian fire service volunteers' reasons for volunteering (McLennan & Birch, 2009). All three indicated the importance of a mixture of *community-oriented and self-oriented motive*, with community-oriented motives dominating, but none examined possible age-related differences in motivations for volunteering.

A study by Birch and McLennan in 2005 indicated that over the period between 1995 and 2005 overall volunteer numbers appear to have declined dramatically, at a rate between 2% and 4% annually (McLennan and Birch, 2005). McLennan and Birch study in 2007 indicated that individuals aged 35-44 were much less interested in volunteering because of work and family related time demands and another study by same researchers that took place in 2009 was to inform Australian volunteer-based fire agencies about the motives which lead people to become volunteer fire fighters.

Australian communities rely heavily on the services of about 220,000 volunteer firefighters. The decline in the membership appears to be contributed to economic and demographic factors (McLennan and Birch, 2005). The economic factors largely involve changes in the nature of work such as declines in the agricultural and manufacturing sectors due to globalization, increasing number of self-employed workforce and reluctance by employers to allow flexibility of their workers to attend fires. Demographic factors are associated mainly with Australia's ageing population (Social Policy Division, The Treasury, 2004) (McLennan & Birch, 2009), including a drift of younger people away from small rural communities to larger population centers. In 2001 the median age of the Victorian County Fire Authority's 58,000 volunteers was 40 years; in 2006 the corresponding figure was 46 years (McLennan, Birch, King and O'Loughlin, 2007). McLennan and Birch could not find much research focusing on recruiting

younger volunteers. Their 2008 study of 988 volunteer firefighters suggests that those who volunteer do so because of a *mix of self-oriented, fire safety-oriented, and community-oriented motivations*. It appears that younger volunteers are more likely to be motivated by perceived self-oriented benefits from volunteering compared with older volunteers. However, they are no less motivated, on average, by safety concerns and community contribution motivations than are older volunteers (McLennan & Birch, 2009).

Similarly, the online survey of 252 Australian State Emergency Services by Francis and Jones (2012), examines the roles of age, motivations and values among younger volunteers likened with older generation volunteers. The results indicate that both generations share the primary reason for joining and staying with the service is *servicing the community*. Younger volunteers have additional reasons for joining and staying, but the researchers concluded that those were more of an indicator of stage-in-life considerations rather than generational differences. (Francis & Jones, 2012).

Motivation models of volunteer behavior say that volunteering is the outcome of an individual's drive to satisfy functional or reasoned motives (Francis & Jones, 2012). Research conducted by Baxter-Tomkins and Wallace 2009 and McLennan, Birch, Cowlshaw and Hayes 2009 closely examines the factors that contribute to satisfaction and dissatisfaction among emergency service volunteers. Potentially manageable factors such as *leadership styles, group cohesion, personal conflicts, organizational structures and connectedness to the service* appear to be the major reasons effecting volunteer satisfaction (Francis & Jones, 2012). These are factors that are determined by the fire chiefs and officers at the individual fire halls.

Another, related, but distinct attribute of personal values refers to person's underlying beliefs about what is acceptable and desirable (Hitlin and Piliavin 2004, Schwartz and Bilsky 1987) (Francis & Jones, 2012). The Portrait Values Questionnaire (PVQ) developed by Schwartz and colleagues (2001) is widely used in social research (Bilsky, Janik and Schwartz 2011) and has been recently used to help understand volunteerism (Briggs, Peterson and Gregory 2010). Relevant to this context, the PVQ includes the Self-Transcendence values of *Universalism* and *Benevolence* and the contrasting Self-Enhancement values of *Power* and *Achievement*, as summarized below (Francis & Jones, 2012). These findings are consistent with Zero-sum Model, which states that people's personalities are terminated by one or a few values – to be higher in one value they have to be lower in others.

*Universalism*: appreciate and protect the welfare of all people in the world.

*Benevolence*: preserve and enhance the welfare of people close by.

*Power*: attain social status, prestige, and control over resources or people.

*Achievement*: attain personal success and recognition for achievements

Like the VFI, the PVQ could help understand why volunteers join and stay with the organization, but the research conducted by Francis and Jones is the first study in the context of emergency service volunteers (Francis & Jones, 2012).

Francis and Jones's study further assessed and compared the motivations, values and satisfaction for each generational group. (Table 1. Comparison of Motivations, Values and Satisfaction) The study examined the roles of age, motives and values in emergency service volunteer satisfaction and identified a mix of similarities and differences between the two age

group volunteers. The two highest functional motivations for both age groups were *Values* and *Understanding*. Fulfilling the *Values* function was the primary driver of satisfaction for both groups. Furthermore, both age groups were equally and most highly oriented to the values of *Universalism* and *Benevolence*. The primary reasons for joining and staying with the emergency service are the same for both age groups and they revolve around serving the community.

The research discovered certain differences between the age groups. The younger volunteers were highly oriented towards the *Career* function and self enhancement values of *Power* and *Achievement*. Younger volunteers' satisfaction also included the functional motives of *Career* and *Enhancement*. These differences point to different stages in life whereby young adults are focused on establishing their livelihoods, independence and place in society and have more reasons for joining and staying with the organization (Francis & Jones, 2012).

Francis and Jones's study concluded that younger and older volunteers are likewise and most highly concerned with serving the community and the perception that younger generation is more self-oriented than the older generations does not apply in this context. Recruitment and retention strategies should be focused on maximizing opportunities for all volunteers to fulfill their community oriented needs with the understanding that this strategy will not detract from any other motivators from either younger or older volunteers.

The second key implication from the study relates to young adult volunteers where recruitment and retention strategies may require, in order to maximize total motivation, some modifications, such as providing greater flexibility, empowerment and opportunities for younger members to satisfy career, status and success factors, in order to increase the likelihood of volunteer satisfaction and retention among this group (Francis & Jones, 2012). This study was a

single-stage survey that captured responses from current volunteers at a single point in time. As such the project did not examine changes in volunteer motives, values and satisfaction over time or stages in service. Valuable insights could be gained by conducting multi-stage longitudinal studies that monitor new volunteers as they progress through their training and deployment or, alternatively, decide to leave the organization (Francis & Jones, 2012).

European research by Davila and Diaz-Morales explored the socio-emotional selectivity theory (Carstensen, 1995) with the purpose of evaluating how people selectively optimize their activities involving social investments as they increase in age investing more in self-relevant and emotionally meaningful goals (Davila & Diaz-Morales, 2009). The purpose of the study was to test hypotheses derived from the socio-emotional selectivity theory regarding the effects of age on motives for volunteering. The Volunteer Functional Inventory (Clary et al., 1998) was completed by 214 volunteers affiliated with different organizations (Davila & Diaz-Morales, 2009). Results indicated that, as age increases, *Career*, *Understanding* and *Making Friends* volunteer motivations decrease, while *Social* and *Values* volunteer motivations increase (Davila & Diaz-Morales, 2009). According to the socio-emotional theory, the hypotheses tested were:

1. *Career* and *Understanding* motives will be lower among older volunteers than among younger volunteers,
2. *Enhancement* and *Protective* motives will be higher among older volunteers than among younger volunteers,
3. Older volunteers will have lower *Making Friends* motivation and higher *Social* motivation (desire to sustain existing friendships) than younger volunteers and
4. Older volunteers will have higher *Values* motivation than younger volunteers

The aim of Davila and Diaz-Morales' study, which was similar to that of Okun and Schultz's 2003 research, was to find new evidence by studying Spanish volunteer sample and adding the effect of length of service. According to Clary and Snyder's 1991 study, the strength of the motives of volunteers change over the years spent in an organization.

This study concluded that the most important motivations across all age groups were *Understanding* (<35 years) and *Values* (>35 years). All age groups considered *Protective* and *Career* motivations as less important. From 26 years old onward, the *Career* motivation is the least important. Up to 45 years of age, *Making New Friends* is more important than *Social* and *Enhancement* motivations, but after the age of 45, *Making Friends* became least important of these three motivations (Davila & Diaz-Morales, 2009). In general the findings from the study were consistent with the predictions, with some exceptions.

1. *Career* and *Understanding* motives will be lower among older volunteers than among younger volunteers:

- *Understanding* motive is very important throughout the life course, but it progressively loses importance with age, especially after the age of 35
- All age groups considered *Career* to be the least important, especially after the age of 35 years
- The correlations analyses show that age has a significant and negative relationship with *Understanding* and *Career* motives

When the researchers statistically controlled for other motives for volunteering in multiple regression analyses, they found that these relationships remained and that age has an important role predicting the *Career* and *Understanding* motives. These findings were consistent

with the results of Okun, Barr and Herzog (1998). As people age, they invest less time and energy in acquiring new learning or career-related experiences (Davila & Diaz-Morales, 2009).

2. *Enhancement* and *Protective* motives will be higher among older volunteers than among younger volunteers:

- The results from the study were not conclusive on this hypothesis.
- *Protective* motive was not very important for any age group
- *Enhancement* motive had only an intermediate importance for all age groups

When the researchers statistically controlled for other motives for volunteering, they found that age was a significant predictor only of the protective motive. Older people could use volunteering as a strategy to meet their needs for emotional gratification because volunteering represents an external emotion regulation strategy (Okun & Schultz, 2003).

3. Older volunteers will have lower *Making Friends* motivation and higher *Social* motivation (desire to sustain existing friendships) than younger volunteers:

- *Making Friends* motive had an intermediate importance for all age groups and for volunteers 45 years old onward, this motivation lost importance
- The age had a significant and inverse relationship with the importance of *Making Friends*
- The *Social* motive was of relatively intermediate importance in all age groups, but the importance increases starting from 46 years of age.
- The pattern of change is inverse to the motive to *Make Friends*

When the researchers statistically controlled for other motives for volunteering, the results did not support the relationship between age and *Social* motives. According to socio-emotional selectivity theory during adulthood and old age people become more selective about their investment in social activities and relationships.

4. Older volunteers will have higher *Values* motivation than younger volunteers:

- *Values* motive is one of the most important motivations for volunteering across all age groups, but the importance increases after the age of 35
- Supporting previous results, there is a positive and significant correlation between age and the *Values* motive

Davila and Diaz-Morales (2009) results were consistent with Okun and Schultz (2003) studies except for *Making Friends* and *Values*. In researcher's previous study, age was positively related to the *Making Friends* motive, but the results from the 2009 study show the negative relationship. Furthermore, *Values* motive was unrelated to age in the previous study, whereas in 2009 study this motive shows positive relation (Davila & Diaz-Morales, 2009). The difference could be attributed to several factors, such as type of organization where people volunteered or cultural differences; Okun and Schultz's study used Anglo-Saxon volunteers, while Davila and Diaz-Morales studied volunteers from Spain (Davila & Diaz-Morales, 2009).

Literature review summary of the above studies on motivation, values and age includes volunteer fire fighters and is attached in Appendix 2 and in table 1 below.

**Table 1 Summary: Motivations/Values/ Age Chart based on literature review**

		<i>Values</i>	<i>Protective</i>	<i>Enhancement</i>	<i>Understanding</i>	<i>Career</i>	<i>Social</i>	<i>Making Friends</i>
Clary et al.	Y	X		X		X		
	O	X		x	X			
McLennan & Birch	Y	X	X		X	X		X
	O	X	X		x	x	x	
Francis & Jones	Y	X	x		X	x		
	O	X			x			
Davila & Diaz-Morales	Y	x		x	X		x	X
	O	X		x	x		X	x
Okun & Schultz	Y				X	X		x
	O						X	X

Footnote: X-highly important motive, x – moderately important motive, no entry – motive is of low importance

The research findings support the idea that people can hold multiple, different and even competing values at the same time and there is generally no difference between the two age groups for the volunteer fire fighters. Understanding the motivations and values of these volunteers, we can now turn to question of best practices in the recruitment and retention.

### **CHAPTER THREE Literature Review - Best Practices for Recruitment and Retention**

The 1998 National Volunteer Fire Council and U.S. Fire Administration report, *Retention and Recruitment: Problems and Solutions*, lists eleven main factors that have contributed to reduction in number of volunteers joining and remaining in the volunteer fire service (D'Intino, 2006). These factors included time demands, training requirements, increasing call volume, changes in the “nature of business” of firefighting, changes in sociological conditions, such as two-income families and time demands, leadership problems, federal legislation and regulations, increasing use of combination departments, higher cost of housing and aging communities (D'Intino, 2006). The same report found that volunteer fire service was a tradition in many generations of firefighting families that is weakening. Fire departments can no longer count on the children of current members to follow their parents’ footsteps, nor can they count on a continuous stream of local people eager to donate their time and energy (D'Intino, 2006). The Council noted that recruitment solutions must begin with an assessment of Volunteer Fire Departments’ (VFD) staffing needs and the volunteer skills and abilities most needed to maintain VFD’s performance. The report found that person-to-person recruiting by active volunteer firefighters was the most successful recruiting method (D'Intino, 2006). Participants also recognized that poor leadership was the most significant problem for retention. This sentiment was echoed in numerous other studies that pointed to poor leadership and management practices as one of the main reasons volunteers left the fire-service (D'Intino, 2006).

An unpublished State University of New York Ph.D. dissertation (Seargant,1992) on satisfaction and retention of volunteer firefighters found that altruism ranked first as the most satisfying reason for volunteering (D'Intino, 2006). Seargant also lists altruism, skills, thrills, work environment, management, social relations, material issues and recognition as other

reasons for active firefighters to stay on the job (D'Intino, 2006). Retention policies that were most important to the active volunteers were quality of management and work environment, skill development and altruism. These findings confirm findings from the previous studies regarding motivation and values, especially the ones directly related to volunteer firefighters.

Using qualitative and quantitative methodologies, the research by Robert S. D'Intino, included interviews with 41 senior-level fire service officials in 32 States to discuss recruitment and retention policies. In addition he conducted field interviews with Pennsylvania rural fire chiefs and rural Pennsylvania active firefighters. After analyzing the research results, the researcher concluded that recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters is a national problem and not unique to rural Pennsylvania (D'Intino, 2006). The results were consistent with previous literature research which concluded that rural volunteer firefighters are more likely to join their local fire department because of their commitment to community and because of their family tradition. The results also showed that financial benefits may play only a small role in motivating people to volunteer and remain active (D'Intino, 2006). This finding is again consistent with those in the earlier review section.

The key issues for the officials were funding, new apparatus and equipment, personal safety equipment, training, leadership and management, recruiting and retention and state as well as municipal incentives for volunteer firefighters (D'Intino, 2006). Rural fire chiefs agreed that VFD must be managed as a business. Most fire chiefs wanted more opportunities for leadership and management training and their main concerns were fundraising, keeping current members and recruiting new members and providing mandatory training for all members (D'Intino, 2006).

Interviews with rural volunteer firefighters found that individuals were proud to serve their community, they were knowledgeable about the operations and administration of their own departments and many had positive comments about their firefighter training and wanted additional training (D'Intino, 2006). Comments about leadership ranged from very positive to very negative and suggested that additional fire officer leadership and management would be beneficial (D'Intino, 2006). While some firefighters interviewed did not expect financial benefits, others would appreciate financial support for college tuition, improved protective clothing, state income tax credits, and new firefighting apparatus and equipment. They were in agreement that financial incentives would be a nice recognition for their time and efforts, but the financial incentives were not primary motivators for serving their community (D'Intino, 2006). For retention incentives, the volunteer firefighters selected better protective clothing, better firefighting equipment, better radio equipment as well as income tax credits, college education tuition and fire service health insurance (D'Intino, 2006).

Recommendations from the research review for this section and the project paper included the following policy considerations:

- Establish and support a statewide fire service information management system administered by the Office of the State Fire Commissioner and initiate an ongoing program to streamline the state's VFD structure. This effort should focus on systematic promotion of regional partnerships among the individual VFD and the state.
- Additional firefighter and fire officer training at their local fire stations (Kentucky operates a modern mobile fire academy that provides local training and saves volunteers' time and travel expenses) Very popular with chiefs and firefighters.

- Professional quality, volunteer firefighting state-wide recruitment campaign that would include a variety of media marketing tools, administered by the Office of the State Fire Commissioner.
- Recruitment and retention motivation incentives should focus on the specific incentives that rural volunteer firefighters reported were most important to them:
  - Recruitment success was generally based on personal contacts – family members and friends
  - Incentives such as college education tuition, state income tax credits, health insurance and provision of better personal protective clothing, firefighting apparatus and equipment and more effective radio communication equipment

The Australian research regarding best practices for recruitment and retention included studies by Tony Baxter-Tomkins and Michelle Wallace which focused on recruitment and retention of emergency services volunteers but also included volunteer fire fighters. Their research found that interpersonal relationships and group dynamics were two key issues affecting recruitment and retention of volunteers (Baxter-Tomkins & Wallace, 2009). Recruitment into the emergency services is generally conducted through an informal process which often involves being invited to join. This approach tends to recruit like-minded people that would be able to fit into the fire department (Baxter-Tomkins & Wallace, 2009). Once the recruit is committed to their emergency service organization, it would take a considerable amount of unrest for the volunteer to resign. Three main reasons for resignation include perceived lack of operational and personal equipment, perceived lack of effective leadership, and disharmony and friction within the primary group (Baxter-Tomkins & Wallace, 2009).

It is estimated that about 5% of volunteers are recruited in response to advertising or a media report (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2007) (Baxter-Tomkins & Wallace, 2009). Another opportunity to recruit volunteers presents itself in times of disaster when a spontaneous gesture of help can result in ongoing membership (Baxter-Tomkins & Wallace, 2009).

Media portrayal of emergency services volunteers as “local heroes” reinforces and affirms the ideals that people recognize as part of Australian spirit of self-reliance, courage and care for others. The volunteers interviewed had mixed feeling about this portrayal. The State Emergency Services rejected a notion of being referred to as someone special and regarded the labeling as media publicity and unsolicited (Baxter-Tomkins & Wallace, 2009). Some Rural Fire Service volunteers, on the other hand, accepted the compliments as being earned. These volunteers viewed their service as more noble, as it was not based on an employee/employer or a servant/master relationship (Baxter-Tomkins & Wallace, 2009).

The integrity and stability of the brigade or unit is of utmost importance. The avoidance of internal conflict was very important to volunteers who were interviewed. When speaking of the attributes required of a potential volunteer there were consensus that they were looking for somebody who is outgoing, willing to share and listen, have some degree of discipline and can follow the instructions, a team player (Baxter-Tomkins & Wallace, 2009). Another issue that Australian emergency volunteers mentioned was in regard to paid emergency response professional leadership styles and the perceived lack of respect for volunteers. There is a fundamental need for good leadership (Baxter-Tomkins & Wallace, 2009). Thirty-six percent of volunteer firefighters reported that rural areas were not receiving adequate equipment or equipment suitable for the duties required of them. Other complaints from rural firefighters about equipment related to their personal protective equipment (Baxter-Tomkins & Wallace, 2009).

Recommendations from the study included the following areas:

- **Equipment**

- Initiate an audit of training certifications and establish the minimal equipment requirements to perform firefighting duties
- Initiate a vehicle audit to set a minimum age for replacement of emergency vehicles and standard for vehicle maintenance operation
- Have a skills/competency standards for all firefighters
- Safety of volunteers needs to be paramount

- **Leadership**

- Paid emergency response professionals need to understand different leadership styles in order to be effective with different age groups
- Consultation with local volunteers may reduce cost of operations and provide a very valuable source of personal acknowledgement

- **Internal conflict**

- Flexible and reliable management systems will assist in resolving disputes
- Train emergency supervisors and selected volunteers in mediation and conflict resolution
- Team-building workshops for volunteers, diversity training

- **Recruitment**

- Train and encourage volunteers of various age to speak at public venues (schools, universities, trade shows, service clubs) about their experience and the value of volunteering

- Encourage volunteers to invite a friend or acquaintance to attend training session or participate in an activity that they would be interested in (e.g.chainsaw training)
  - Develop an interesting and attractive information package explaining emergency service and the value of volunteering, the expertise developed by volunteers, a philosophical vision statement, its attractions and benefits, potential skills-based training opportunities and stimulating activities
  - Encourage longer term volunteering when spontaneous volunteers respond to emergency situations
- **Retention**
    - Leadership training for all paid emergency professional and select volunteers
    - HR management trained volunteer mediator to assist with mediation and disputes for many departments and emergency units
    - Have exit interviews particularly in areas of high turnover

The purpose of the research project by Martin Aldridge was to identify problems with recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters within Australia and to study alternative methods used in the United States to determine if an adoption of those strategies and programs could be applicable within an Australian context (Aldridge Jr., 2003). United States strategies which were researched included: the impact of leadership on volunteer recruitment and retention, Brigade image, training, time demands, recognition of volunteers, incentives for volunteers and “Fun” factor. The research resulted in 15 recommendations on selection process, recruitment and

retention networks, funding, incentive schemes, recognition strategies, training, junior programs, recruitment campaigns and social activities.

The United States Fire Service has similar demographic profile to Australia and 74% of US firefighters are volunteers, providing fire protection to 41% of the population and covering 95% of the area (Aldridge Jr., 2003). In most cases VFD have no affiliation with a state or federal regulatory authority. The departments are incorporated fire protection companies and as a consequence there is very little coordination at large scale incidents that are attended by more than one department and there is a variation of best practices regarding operations as well as recruitment and retention (Aldridge Jr., 2003).

In most cases it was a standard practice for departmental officers to deliver training at a local level which tends to lead to duplication of resources and an absence of top quality training establishments, due to lack of larger funding pools that would have made such facilities possible (Aldridge Jr., 2003). Training facilities at the Ohio State Fire Marshal Office, Nassau and Suffolk County were exceptions and they represent great examples of the benefits of regional coordination (Aldridge Jr., 2003). Training requirements appeared to be higher in the US because volunteer firefighters are trained to the same levels as career fire fighters. This allows them to gain greater respect among different groups of firefighters and it gives volunteer firefighters a chance to join career firefighters in emergency incidents.

In Australia, volunteer brigades have little or no guidance on carrying out their own recruitment. If recruitment is to be successful, it needs to be planned, well-coordinated, funded appropriately and carried out by people who are experienced in the field (Aldridge Jr., 2003). Effective volunteer recruiting often depends on a personal approach by brigade members to

people in their communities who they think would fit into the existing teams or groups. Australia is experiencing rural population decline especially of younger people who would be suitable for active operational roles (Aldridge Jr., 2003). Recruitment campaigns should diversify to meet wider volunteer role and recognition for support roles. A survey of volunteer firefighters indicated that the best recruitment marketing strategies are local word of mouth, displays at trade shows and mock emergencies and community based activities (Aldridge Jr., 2003). Mass media advertising and letter drops were among the least successful recruitment strategies. The average age of volunteers from agencies surveyed was 41 and Brigade Captains from 44-48 (Aldridge Jr., 2003).

Recommendations from the Aldridge 2003 study included the following areas:

- **Leadership** is greatly affected by internal communications. A regular newsletter or up-to date website can inform members of training courses available, social events, procedure updates and other information such as member profile
  - The VFDs that have strong leadership and active retention policies usually do not experience recruitment problems
- **Brigade Image** – Prospective volunteers want to join an organization with a positive reputation and good image. Volunteers should be encouraged to take pride in wearing their uniforms as it conveys positive image of professionalism to the public
  - Training in public is one way of demonstrating to the public that the brigade is working for them. It also gives some recognition to existing members
  - Local media should be invited to all important events and can also provide community safety information. A good relationship with local media will allow brigades to publish regular columns and also the brigade's needs for new members

- **Training** – many US volunteer fire departments have lots of flexibility in training to suit the needs of variety of members, especially for shift workers
- **Time demands** – the family and work commitments are the greatest factors in volunteer loss. It is very important that the time demands on volunteers are managed properly in order to aid retention and avoid volunteer burnout.
  - By involving the families in the brigade the volunteers are able to spend more time with their family while carrying out volunteer duties. Family members can take on operational duties, fundraising or administrative tasks.
- **Recognition** – Being a volunteer firefighter is one of the most challenging volunteer occupations. Recognition of volunteer service is very important because it confirms the importance of their service to the brigade and the community.
  - Newsletter, local media or a volunteer calendar are good broadcasting and marketing tools.
  - The simple pat on the back by a senior officer or colleague has an astounding effect on self-esteem and should not be overlooked
- **Incentives** – Benefits should not be the primary reason for a volunteer joining a brigade, but incentive programs can greatly assist in retaining members.
- **“Fun” factor** – Volunteer fire brigades must compete with many other clubs and organizations for their membership. A key factor in retaining volunteers is to ensure they enjoy their work. Fun events for the members and their families will strengthen the organization.

In addition to the above the author recommended that **Junior Programs** be added to the recruitment strategy. Recruitment campaigns should also attract communications operators, cleaners, caterers, baby sitters, accountants and administrative support personnel. Training should be offered to media liaison in order for brigades to reap full benefits of positive publicity (Aldridge Jr., 2003).

These above best practices are used or recommended for use for volunteer firefighting organizations in the United States as well as in Australia. Differing funding structures seem to have the greatest impact on best practices between US and Australia.

### **Best Practices for Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters in North America**

This section will examine what best practices for recruitment and retention are recommended by the volunteer fire departments across Canada, in British Columbia and finally what practices for recruitment and retention of volunteers are used within the 13 VFDs in the RDIFFG.

Throughout North America, including Canada, there has been a dramatic decrease in membership in many VFDs (Office of the Fire Marshall, Nova Scotia, 2009). Two major issues, a declining and aging population in rural areas and a movement of younger residents to major centers, as well as changing society where both partners are working and dealing with parenting demands have put a strain on volunteering. The province of Nova Scotia has recognized these issues and tried to address them by improving province wide radio system to be able to call multiple departments to ensure adequate response especially during the work day (Office of the Fire Marshall, Nova Scotia, 2009). In addition, volunteer fire fighters receive free vehicle

registration, a tax credit and grants for equipment to help relieve the stress of fundraising. A study revealed that these items were the most critical for recruitment along with college tuition. A survey of fire chiefs stated that while financial incentives of some kind are most helpful, they alone are not the reason volunteers come to or stay with a fire company. The sense of giving back to a community, the camaraderie, and the feeling that their work is appreciated, are all factors contributing to successful recruitment and retention of volunteer fire fighters (Office of the Fire Marshall, Nova Scotia, 2009).

The 2009 report from the Office of the Fire Marshal offers some tangible best practices regarding recruitment and retention. The report also highlights the benefits of volunteering for employees that work in a community, youth, older adults, families, individuals with disabilities and various ethnic groups (Office of the Fire Marshall, Nova Scotia, 2009). The targeted individuals are provided with opportunities to develop skills, gain knowledge and contribute to their community in a meaningful way. At the same time the departments would likely have to adjust some processes in order to reap the benefits of having a diverse and vibrant group that reflects the community (Office of the Fire Marshall, Nova Scotia, 2009).

Matching the role and the volunteer will increase chances of success:

- Review your needs assessment and identify the role that needs to be filled
- Identify the skills, attributes and knowledge that the role requires
- Look at the profiles of community members and employers
- Target those individuals most likely to have those skills
- Develop marketing and communication strategies that would best attract the type of individual you are looking for

- Begin your recruitment
- If it doesn't draw the individuals you need, reassess, redevelop and try again.

The community should be aware of the contributions by the volunteer fire department. The communication strategies should be both informative as well as attention-getting to demonstrate that the positions are interesting, challenging and beneficial to both the individual and the community (Office of the Fire Marshall, Nova Scotia, 2009). Current volunteers are great source for recruitment because they will be able to explain the requirements and benefits of joining VFD to the potential volunteer. There are also other promotional strategies for recruitment, such as trade show displays, open houses, public venues, media (TV, websites, printed materials), billboards, youth and school volunteers and employee sponsored volunteerism (Office of the Fire Marshall, Nova Scotia, 2009). As shown by the research in the previous section of this literature review the majority of people joining the VFDs want to contribute back to their community in terms of increased safety and quality of life. Being a volunteer fire fighter is a respected position and includes other intrinsic benefits, such as a sense of belonging, achievement, responsibility, self-respect, personal growth, creation of friendships, having fun and contribution to their department and community at large. There also extrinsic benefits such as learning new skills, knowledge and abilities to help advance their careers, tax credits, license plates and leadership opportunities (Office of the Fire Marshall, Nova Scotia, 2009).

Volunteer Alberta was retained by Alberta Fire Chiefs' Association in 2008 to develop a strategy to assist volunteer fire departments in recruiting and retaining volunteer firefighters which would include ideas and perspectives gathered through an environmental scan of best practices used by local fire departments (Volunteer Alberta for Alberta Fire Chiefs' Association, 2010). The research was to identify and explore major issues and barriers to recruitment and

retention faced by fire departments in Alberta as well as in other provinces including the following major areas: employer-related, family-related, availability of people, time commitment, perceptions and public image, structural challenges and cross-generational recruitment.

*The three targeted audiences to whom the initiatives under the strategy would be targeted included:*

- Community at large (business owners and employers, community groups, residents including women, immigrants and first nations)
- Members of the fire department
- Political stakeholders – audiences that are concerned with the “big picture”

The final report included a list of local and centralized initiatives/best practices that confirm many best practices recommended in previous reports.

### **Local Initiatives/Best practices for Recruitment and Retention:**

The strategy proposed by Volunteer Alberta provides a number of tactics and tools that can be adapted and used by fire-departments at a local level depending on their local conditions and priorities (Volunteer Alberta for Alberta Fire Chiefs' Association, 2010).

- Involve current volunteer firefighters in planning formal recruitment drives
- Raise local awareness through traditional and new media activities
- Engage in local public relations
- Use of promotional material
- Attendance in trade shows

- Engage in regular and ongoing outreach with local employers
- Engage community groups on a regular and ongoing basis
- Reach out to recruitment audiences with targeted messages
- Regularly engage with political stakeholders
- Bolster firefighter psychological support services
- Develop a spousal support network
- Establish child care services
- Establish diversity policies for the department
- Create firefighter service recognition awards
- Establish proper volunteer screening process

### **Centralized Initiatives /Best Practices for Recruitment and Retention**

To reinforce and support VFD in their local activities, a number of centralized activities are recommended that can be best addressed at the provincial level because they involve resources or management that goes beyond single fire department (Volunteer Alberta for Alberta Fire Chiefs' Association, 2010).

- Develop a brand for volunteer firefighting that can be used in a provincial campaign
- Undertake a province-wide awareness and recruitment campaign
- Centrally coordinate public relations
- Create a central website
- Establish centralized resources that can support recruitment and retention initiatives
- Leverage National Fire Prevention Week
- Celebrate National Firefighter Health Week

## **CHAPTER FOUR Use of Best practices in Recruitment and Retention - Interviews with Fire Chiefs**

### **Interview Method**

There were two distinct purposes of the literature review. The first one was to examine age related differences in propensity to volunteering and the second aim was to examine best practices in recruitment and retention for volunteer fire departments. The project proposal including the purpose and methodology has been submitted and approved by the UNBC Research Ethics Board in June 2013. Below is a brief summary on the REB's approved methods that were used in this research:

Collection of data from research participants was required only from Fire Chiefs or Deputy Fire Chiefs whose names and contact information were found on the external Regional District's website.

[http://www.rdffg.bc.ca/Services/Public\\_safety/VFD\\_Contacts\\_External\\_Jan26\\_2012.pdf](http://www.rdffg.bc.ca/Services/Public_safety/VFD_Contacts_External_Jan26_2012.pdf)

The researcher conducted 30-60 minute interviews with each of the above individuals that have volunteered for an interview. In total, ten semi-structured interviews were conducted. Seven interviews were completed at the Fire Chief's respective Fire Halls and three took place in the researcher's private office at 155 George Street to ensure confidentiality of their responses.

The interview questions asked about various procedures and systems in place at VFDs for recruitment of new firefighters. The questions were derived from the literature review of best practices that included face to face contact, skilled leadership, community events and family support as well as formal recruitment and retention programs, partnering with youth

organizations and evaluation of financial incentives being an important motivator. The responses from individual interviews were compiled and summarized in such a way that individual respondents could not be identified in the final project write up.

An electronic copy of the completed project paper will be sent to all Fire Chiefs and Deputy Fire Chiefs that voluntarily participated in the project. The results of the project may be presented to the Regional Board for their information.

The risks to participants involved in this project were minimal; however, the benefits to the rural communities within the Regional District are considerable in terms of enhanced protection of life and property. The written interview notes will be destroyed via paper shredding upon final presentation and defense of this MBA project.

### **Interview Findings**

The purpose of this project was to determine whether gaps exist between current recruitment and retention practices in the RDFFG compared to the best practices recognized through the literature review. The results for retention and recruitment practices are summarized in Table 2. Research findings from the semi structured interviews with ten fire chiefs clearly show that there is a variety of proven methods for recruitment and retention that are widely used by all VFD. Face to face contact, community events, mandated training programs, skilled leadership, and corporate financial benefits and incentives are an integral part of regular fire departments' operations. The profiles of VFDs are attached in Appendix 3.

**Table 2 Best Practices Used by VFD in the RDFFG**

Best Practices	FD #1	FD #2	FD #3	FD #4	FD #5	FD #6	FD #7	FD #8	FD #9	FD #10
Face to face contact	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Community Events	Y	Y	Y	y	Y	Y	Y	Y	y	y
Skilled Leadership	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	y	y
VFD Training Program	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	y
Formal Recruitment and Retention Program										
Financial Benefits or Incentives	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Simple application process	Y	Y			Y	Y	Y	y	y	y
Partner with local schools		Y	Y							
Other incentives or practices	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	y

Footnote: **Y** – best practice is widely used, **y** – best practice is used, but less than in other VFD

The gaps between various VFD started to grow when we compared existing practices in regards to simple application process, partnering with local schools or other community

associations and using other incentives and practices for recruitment and retention. The success was directly linked to the auxiliary support and additional skills or competencies that the Fire Chief or select officers at that particular fire department excelled in. The differences could be attributed to leadership talents, technologically advanced skills or extraordinary commitment and long term involvement between VFD and the community organizations/schools.

The largest and common to all VFDs gap is the lack of auxiliary support in regards to regional and provincial formal recruitment and retention strategies with specific overarching goals. The literature review points out that there is very little support from the Ministry of Public Safety, in particular, the Office of the Fire Commissioner regarding provincial recruitment and retention policies (Fire Services Liaison Group, 2009). This gap is common throughout the province and this research project confirmed the problem in the RDFFG as well.

Presently all VFDs have strong command structure but do not have a parallel staff structure to complement the areas where that additional support is needed. It is probably not reasonable to expect individual fire departments to fill that gap.

All VFDs recruit using face to face contact, participate in community events, believe in skilled leadership, but have some other, specific ways of attracting volunteers which is often specific to their geographical area. There is an obvious lack of formal recruitment and retention program and only two departments have strong partnership with local schools.

The Fire Chiefs agreed that family involvement was a very strong motivator and best practice. This is evident from evaluating the membership at individual fire halls. All VFDs have multiple family members and the most notable motivators included community-oriented motives (*Values*) as well as *Protective* and *Career values*. Only *Career Value* appears to be distinguished

between the two age groups indicating that younger firefighters sometimes regard this volunteer experience and provided training as an opportunity for future career opportunity. A survey by Clary et al (1998) found in Appendix 1, could be taken by all volunteer firefighters. This would confirm observation by Fire Chiefs. Financial Benefits and Incentives are uniform for all departments and could be a higher motivational factor for members who are less financially secure. Training appears to be a higher motivational factor for younger members because it provides an opportunity for career advancement with a paid Fire Department. Many local volunteer members get recruited by the City of Prince George. The downfall of this situation is that they are not allowed to volunteer at their local VFD anymore.

## **CHAPTER FIVE Synthesis of Literature Review and Interviews with Fire Chiefs**

The literature review and findings from the interviews with fire chiefs point out to an imbalance between the mission and maintenance goals that exist on three levels; the individual volunteer fire departments, the centralized administrative structure at the Regional District and broader provincial organization of the Fire/Rescue Service.

In their book, Fine and Cronshaw refer to the organizational goals as a paradox between the short-term mission activities that are viewed by most people as the core undertakings needed to get a job done, and long-term maintenance activities which an entity requires to put the “show on the road” (Fine & Cronshaw, 1999). Mission goals include firefighting equipment, tools and actual firefighting/rescue training whereas maintenance goals cover recruitment and retention efforts. Maintenance goals are viewed as supportive activities and of less importance, and thus generally receive fewer resources. There is a fundamental mutual dependency between the two goals and this dependency can be actualized in teamwork starting at the very top of the organization (Fine & Cronshaw, 1999). The recruitment and retention tasks would fall under administrative function of the auxiliary support which would serve as a vehicle that facilitates the execution of specific missions (Fine & Cronshaw, 1999).

The gap in recruitment and retention processes found by this research mirrors those found by other researchers in Chapter Three. That is to say that the recruitment and retention practices for volunteer firefighters are generally subsumed under existing mission activities. For example, the recruitment sometimes occurs as a result of an emergency call when the house owners realize their vulnerability and better appreciate the value of the volunteer fire fighting service in terms of their own well-being. It is important to note that no additional effort or resources are needed to

be allocated to make this a mission-centered recruitment. In fact, it appears to be the expected mechanism by which the recruitment and retention will happen. These expectations presently exist both at the level of the individual fire departments and the centralized administrative structure.

Given the mission-maintenance paradox, the major changes to be made in the first instance are the changes in values and priorities surveys on effective shift of attaining toward a better balance between achieving mission and maintenance goals.

The increased maintenance activities in recruitment and retention should engage the volunteer as a whole person motivated by a range of values, but in particular their dedication to the community that is not based on the age differences.

The root cause of the gap is not seen as primary cause because people habitually discount maintenance activities such as recruitment and retention of volunteers over mission activities such as training, firefighting and rescue operations, activities in call-outs, equipment.

## **CHAPTER SIX      Conclusions and Recommendations for Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Fire Fighters in the RDFFG**

The purpose of this research project was to gather and assess available literature on factors that motivate volunteer firefighters from different age groups to join and contribute to the volunteer firefighting service, examine industry's best practices for recruitment and retention of volunteers and to conduct personal interviews with Fire Chiefs in the RDFFG to determine what best practices are being used and what strategies could improve their recruitment and retention efforts.

The original study objectives have been met. Key findings from the literature review have been discussed with ten local fire chiefs. The motivation and values of volunteers found in the literature research appears to be consistent across three continents, namely North America, Australia and Europe. The interviews with fire chiefs confirmed key findings found in the literature review regarding motivation and values of volunteer firefighters. *Community oriented* motives were the priority for both age groups while the *Career* and *Protective* factors were more common for younger generation. To confirm those findings it is recommended that further research be done by administering Volunteer Functions Inventory Questionnaire (Appendix 1) to all volunteer fire fighters in the Regional District or expanding the study province wide. These research findings could then be compared with the other similar models of motivation that have been used in the past.

The main recommendation from this research project is a need to develop auxiliary support combining regional and provincial formal recruitment and retention goals and strategies. Presently all VFDs have strong command structure but do not have a parallel staff structure to

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## **List of Appendices**

The following appendices are provided to add additional details in addressing the study questions as follows:

**Appendices #1 and #2** relate to the first question in regards to the motivation of individuals from different age groups to join and contribute in the volunteer fire service?

**Appendix #3** relates to the second and third question regarding best practices for recruitment and retention in the industry and what practices are being used in ten fire halls in the RDFFG.

**Appendix #4** shows maps of Volunteer Service Areas and 2013 Apparatus inventory for each of the fire halls.

**Appendix #5** outlines some recommendations for systems and procedures to improve recruitment and retention strategies in the RDFFG.

## Appendix 1

## Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) (Clary et al.1998)

### Reference:

Clary, E. G., Snyder, M., Ridge, R. D., Copeland, J., Stukas, A. A., Haugen, J., & Meine, P. (1998). Understanding and assessing the motivations of volunteers: A functional approach. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 74, 1516-1530.

### Description of Measure:

A 30-item measure of motivations to volunteer. The authors use a functionalist approach to volunteering, examining the functional motives individuals have for choosing to volunteer. The scale is divided into 6 separate functional motives (i.e., factors):

- 1.) ***Protective Motives*** – a way of protecting the ego from the difficulties of life.
- 2.) ***Values*** – a way to express ones altruistic and humanitarian values.
- 3.) ***Career*** –a way to improve career prospects.
- 4.) ***Social*** –a way to develop and strengthen social ties.
- 5.) ***Understanding*** –a way to gain knowledge, skills, and abilities.
- 6.) ***Enhancement*** –a way to help the ego grow and develop.

For each item, respondents are to indicate “How important or accurate each of the 30 possible reasons for volunteering were for you in doing volunteer work.”

Respondents answer each item on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (not at all important/accurate) to 7 (extremely important/accurate).

## Scale

Please indicate how important or accurate each of the 30 possible reasons for volunteering were for you in doing volunteer work.

(1 = not at all important/accurate; 7 = extremely important/accurate.)

### **Self-Report Measures for Love and Compassion Research: *Helping Others***

1. Volunteering can help me to get my foot in the door at a place where I would like to work.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

2. My friends volunteer. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

3. I am concerned about those less fortunate than myself. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

4. People I'm close to want me to volunteer. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

5. Volunteering makes me feel important. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

6. People I know share an interest in community service. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

7. No matter how bad I've been feeling, volunteering helps me to forget about it. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

8. I am genuinely concerned about the particular group I am serving. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

9. By volunteering I feel less lonely. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

10. I can make new contacts that might help my business or career. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

11. Doing volunteer work relieves me of some of the guilt over being more fortunate than others.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

12. I can learn more about the cause for which I am working. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

13. Volunteering increases my self-esteem. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

14. Volunteering allows me to gain a new perspective on things. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

15. Volunteering allows me to explore different career options. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

16. I feel compassion toward people in need. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
17. Others with whom I am close place a high value on community service. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
18. Volunteering lets me learn things through direct, hands on experience. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
19. I feel it is important to help others. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
20. Volunteering helps me work through by own personal problems. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
21. Volunteering will help me to succeed in my chosen profession. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
22. I can do something for a cause that is important to me. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
23. Volunteering is an important activity to the people I know best. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
24. Volunteering is a good escape from my own troubles. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
25. I can learn how to deal with a variety of people. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
26. Volunteering makes me feel needed. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 27: Volunteering makes me feel better about myself. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
28. Volunteering experience will look good on my resume 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
29. Volunteering is a way to make new friends. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
30. I can explore my own strengths. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

**Scoring:**

Items 7, 9, 11, 20, 24 make up the *Protective factor*.

Items 3, 8, 16, 19, 22 make up the *Values factor*.

Items 1, 10, 15, 21, 28 make up the *Career factor*.

Items 2, 4, 6, 17, 23 make up the *Social factor*.

Items 12, 14, 18, 25, 30 make up the *Understanding factor*

Items 5, 13, 26, 27, 29 make up the *Enhancement factor*.

Scoring is kept at the factor level and kept continuous.

**Findings: Clary et al. (1998) (various groups of volunteers – US) Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI)**

- Numerous studies have yielded results that indicated a general trend in volunteer motivation, where *Values*, *Understanding* and *Enhancement* appear to be the most significant motivators.
- Older volunteers ranked *Values* as their most important motive, followed by *Understanding* and *Enhancement* functions
- Younger volunteers ranked *Values* and *Understanding* as the top two motives, their third most important motive was *Career*.
- Generally, the *Protection* rarely ranked as an important motivator (except for volunteer fire fighters and emergency volunteers – see McLennan and Francis studies)

**Findings: McLennan & Birch (volunteer firefighters in Australia- Reasons for joining)**

- *Self-oriented Motives (Career/Enhancement/Making Friends/Social/Understanding)*  
Younger volunteers were somewhat more likely to be attracted to personal benefits, but not at the expense of contributing to community safety and community development
- *Fire Safety Awareness – oriented motives (Protective)*
- *Community –oriented motives (Values)*
- The results from this study were consistent with Okun & Schultz's findings that potential benefits associated with career-enhancement were relatively more important for younger volunteers. However, there was no evidence that older volunteers had stronger motivation to serve their community

**Luong & Tuckey (2006) (volunteer firefighter retention in Australia - Reasons for staying)**

- An Australian study of 466 volunteer firefighters that McLennan & Birch refer to in their paper

- The research focused on the retention factors and based on the Volunteer Functional Inventory (VFI) the highest two motives for staying were *Values* and *Firefighting Fun and Enjoyment (Social/Making Friends)*.

Birch & McLennan (2007) (volunteer firefighters in Australia – Reasons for not joining)

- Another Australian study by Birch and McLennan listing main reasons why people do not join volunteer fire fighter brigades:
  - Competing time commitments to work, business, farming or family
  - More information and better publicized date intakes to stimulate them to volunteer
  - More support from employers and family as well as monetary assistance
  - Not confident that they would not get hurt on the job (training)

**Findings: Francis & Jones (volunteer firefighters in Australia)**

- *Values* and *Understanding* were two highest motivations for both age groups, but *Understanding* is statistically higher in the younger group
- Younger group also reported significantly higher *Career* and *Protective* motives for volunteering
- These results indicate that the primary motivations for both generations is concern for and desire to help people

**Findings: Davila & Diaz-Morales (various groups of volunteers in Europe-Spain)**

- *Understanding* motive is very important but it progressively loses importance with age.
- All age groups considered *Career* motivation to be the least important motivator, with its importance dropping even more after the age of 35. These findings are consistent with the Okun et al.(1998) study
- *Protective* motive had little importance across all age groups and *Enhancement motive* had a relatively intermediate importance for all age groups

- *Making Friends* and *Social* motives had an intermediate importance for all age groups but after the age of 46 years *Making Friends* decreased, whereas *Social* motive increased.
- *Values* motive had high importance across all age groups and it further increased after the age of 36 years.
- The study concluded that there is a positive and significant correlation between age and the *Values* motive
- The most important difference between Devila and Okun studies can be found in regard to *Making Friends* and *Values* motives. Results from Okun's study concluded that age was positively related to *Making Friends* motive, while the results from Devila's study show negative relationship between age and *Making Friends* motive
- In Okun's study *Values* motive was unrelated to age while Devila's results show a positive relation

#### **Findings: Okun & Schultz (Habitat for Humanity volunteers – US)**

- Age was negatively related to *Career* and *Understanding* motives
- Age was positively related to *Social Motives* and *Making Friends*
- Age was not related to *Enhancement*, *Protective* or *Values* motives to volunteer
- Findings by Okun and Schultz suggest that while younger volunteers report personal benefits in the form of career enhancement, older volunteers report personal benefits in the form of strengthened social networks.

### Appendix 3

### Profiles of the VFDs in the RDFFG

#### VFD #1 – Profile:

16 members + 2 auxiliary; 4 (18-30) and 10 (45-60) – recruiting done same for both age groups,  
 7/16 women + 2 auxiliary; Fire Chief a member since 1999 – Fire Chief 2 years

#### Best Practices for Recruitment and Retention

Face to face contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ No brochure/ Invitation letter from a Fire Chief</li> <li>○ Buddy system /mentoring support senior-junior</li> <li>○ Mixed support from employers</li> <li>○ Great support from Families</li> </ul>
Family and Community Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Mother’s Day Breakfast</li> <li>○ Christmas Dinner</li> <li>○ Winner Roast a few days before Halloween</li> </ul>
Skilled Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Very united and close knit organization</li> </ul>
VFD Training Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ All training done in house</li> <li>○ Same as the training required for paid firefighters</li> </ul>
Formal Recruitment and Retention Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ No formal program</li> </ul>
Financial Benefits or Incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Life Insurance, disability and sickness insurance</li> <li>○ \$3,000 income tax credit</li> <li>○ Full fire fighter training (First Aid, CPR,AED, emergency vehicle driver training including air brake endorsement</li> <li>○ Uniforms and Personal Protective Equipment</li> </ul>
Simple application process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Yes, online as well</li> </ul>
Partner with local schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Fire Chief for a day – elementary schools</li> </ul>
Other incentives or practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Members have joined the VFD as a result of witnessing an incident in their community (4)</li> </ul>

#### Notes:

- More support from employers, including RDFFG
- ICBC discount for car insurance
- Any assistance to raise the VFDs profile (media, website)
- Fire hall is the community center – no school/no employers in their service area

## VFD #2 – Profile:

- members 22 ; 6 (18-30) and 7 (45-60); 5 women ; Fire Chief in his position 34 years
- Recruiting **not same** for both age groups: parent consent and for younger recruits <18, parents co-sign the forms and provide release, those recruits are always under supervision of older experienced members and mentored

## Best Practices for Recruitment and Retention

Face to face contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ No brochure, just RD's orientation guide</li> <li>○ Verbal invite to potential recruits</li> <li>○ Buddy system /mentoring support senior-junior</li> <li>○ Excellent support from employers</li> <li>○ Great support from Families</li> </ul>
Family and Community Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Family picnics summer/fall</li> <li>○ Christmas Dinner catered – appreciation supper</li> <li>○ Christmas Potluck dinner/party for families</li> <li>○ Halloween party/gathering</li> <li>○ Village of McBride Community Association/ VFD has a booth</li> <li>○ PGX – Firefighter Games</li> <li>○ Chamber of Commerce – Volunteer appreciation</li> </ul>
Skilled Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Fire Chief there for 34 years – close knot – started youth program</li> </ul>
VFD Training Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Same as the training required for paid firefighters</li> <li>○ Most training done in house by 6 Trainers</li> <li>○ DVD instructions as well</li> <li>○ Remoteness plays a challenge –distance and costs</li> <li>○ Forestry Training and portable sprinklers for the bush fires training</li> </ul>
Formal Recruitment and Retention Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ No formal program</li> </ul>
Financial Benefits or Incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Life Insurance, disability and sickness insurance</li> <li>○ \$3,000 income tax credit</li> <li>○ Full fire fighter training (First Aid, CPR,AED, emergency vehicle driver training including air brake endorsement</li> <li>○ Uniforms and Personal Protective Equipment</li> <li>○ \$12/hr when responding to incident (everybody)</li> </ul>
Simple application process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Yes, online as well</li> </ul>
Partner with local schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Yes, for 20+ year</li> </ul>
Other incentives or practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Members 'have joint the VFD as a result of witnessing an incident in their community</li> </ul>

### VFD #3 – Profile:

- members 27 ; 12 (18-30) and 11(45-60); 6 women ; Fire Chief in his position 10 years
- Recruiting **not same** for both age groups: parent consent and for younger recruits <18, parents co-sign the forms and provide release, those recruits are always under supervision of older experienced members and mentored
- School must provide support as well for a cadet to join VFD and they must maintain their grades to stay in a program

### Best Practices for Recruitment and Retention

Face to face contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ No brochure, 1 page hand-out</li> <li>○ Verbal invite to potential recruits</li> <li>○ Buddy system /mentoring support senior-junior</li> <li>○ Mixed support from employers (shift workers)</li> <li>○ Good support from Families</li> </ul>
Community Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Fall BBQ – family event</li> <li>○ Christmas Banquet – awards (spouses and former fire chiefs invited)</li> <li>○ PGX – Firefighter games</li> <li>○ Pineview Snowfrolics (first aid, team in fire gear)</li> </ul>
Skilled Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The fire chief is able to use his leadership training from work in addition to attending as many courses as possible</li> <li>○ 10 members (10+ years) 4 members (15+years)</li> </ul>
VFD Training Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Same as the training required for paid firefighters</li> </ul>
Formal Recruitment and Retention Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ No formal program</li> </ul>
Financial Benefits or Incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Life Insurance, disability and sickness insurance</li> <li>○ \$3,000 income tax credit</li> <li>○ Full fire fighter training (First Aid, CPR,AED, emergency vehicle driver training including air brake endorsement)</li> <li>○ Uniforms and Personal Protective Equipment</li> <li>○ \$7.50/when responding to an incident or training</li> <li>○ Over 200 hours \$1,000 tax free bonus</li> </ul>
Simple application process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Yes, online as well</li> </ul>
Partner with local schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Yes, cadet program</li> </ul>
Other incentives or practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Members have joined the VFD as a result of witnessing an incident in their community</li> <li>○ In house post-traumatic stress counselling</li> </ul>

#### Notes:

- Would like to see more support from RD such as Property Tax reduction and extended health benefits for members that do not have them through their work (PTS counseling)

**VFD #4 – Profile:**

- members 23 ; 6 (18-30) and 8 (45-60); 5 women ; Fire Chief in his position 12 years
- Recruiting **not same** for both age groups: parent consent and for younger recruits <18, parents co-sign the forms and provide release, those recruits are always under supervision

**Best Practices for Recruitment and Retention**

Face to face contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Rookie package (training, benefits)</li> <li>○ Verbal invite to potential recruits</li> <li>○ Mixed support from employers (shift workers)</li> <li>○ Good support from Families</li> </ul>
Community Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Fall BBQ – family event</li> <li>○ Christmas part</li> <li>○ PGX – Firefighter games</li> <li>○ No school/no community hall/small area (300houses)</li> </ul>
Skilled Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ All leadership training is done on own time, expense</li> </ul>
VFD Training Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Same as the training required for paid firefighters</li> </ul>
Formal Recruitment and Retention Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ No formal program</li> </ul>
Financial Benefits or Incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Life Insurance, disability and sickness insurance</li> <li>○ \$3,000 income tax credit</li> <li>○ Full fire fighter training (First Aid, CPR,AED, emergency vehicle driver training including air brake endorsement</li> <li>○ Uniforms and Personal Protective Equipment</li> <li>○ \$5/when responding to an incident or training</li> <li>○ Over 200 hours \$1,000 tax free bonus- very few people qualify – only 23-25 calls/year</li> </ul>
Simple application process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Yes, online as well</li> </ul>
Partner with local schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ No local school</li> </ul>
Other incentives or practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Members have joint the VFD as a result of witnessing an incident in their community</li> <li>○ Mailouts, door-to-door, training in the community</li> </ul>

Notes:

- Small community, Rescue section part of the Volunteer Fire Department

**VFD # 5 – Profile:**

27 members + 1 auxiliary; 15 (18-30) and 10 (45-60) – recruiting done same for both age groups, 6/28 women; Young leadership (4 years)

**Best Practices for Recruitment and Retention**

Face to face contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Excellent New Member Handbook/ Invitation letter from a Fire Chief</li> <li>○ Mixed support from employers</li> <li>○ Great support from Families (50% members are related – husband/wife/ children)</li> <li>○ New recruits get one-on-one mentoring 1-2 days</li> </ul>
Family and Community Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Working closely with the Community Association</li> <li>○ Christmas Party and appreciation</li> <li>○ Summer BBQ, Halloween Party</li> <li>○ Garage Sale – Recruitment Drive</li> <li>○ PGX</li> <li>○ Movie/games evenings for families or BBQ/picnics at member’s homes/lake</li> </ul>
Skilled Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Very young but united and close knit organization</li> </ul>
VFD Training Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ All training done in house</li> <li>○ Same as the training required for paid firefighters</li> </ul>
Formal Recruitment and Retention Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ No formal program</li> </ul>
Financial Benefits or Incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Life Insurance, disability and sickness insurance</li> <li>○ \$3,000 income tax credit</li> <li>○ Full fire fighter training (First Aid, CPR,AED, emergency vehicle driver training including air brake endorsement</li> <li>○ Personal Protective Equipment</li> <li>○ Jackets</li> </ul>
Simple application process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Yes, online as well</li> </ul>
Partner with local schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Fire Chief for a day – elementary schools</li> </ul>
Other incentives or practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Members have joined the VFD as a result of witnessing an incident in their community (4)</li> </ul>

**Notes:**

- No uniforms yet /Link to the RDFFG website
- Would like to see more leadership from the Regional District to unite all VFDs

**VFD #6 – Profile:**

27 members + 2 auxiliary; 4 (18-30) and 19 (45-60) – recruiting done same for both age groups,  
 7/27 women + 2 auxiliary (paperwork, traffic control, 1<sup>st</sup> response instructor’s ticket)

**Best Practices for Recruitment and Retention**

Face to face contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ No brochure/ Information handout</li> <li>○ Buddy system not practical /mentoring support preferred</li> <li>○ Mixed support from employers</li> <li>○ Good support from Families</li> </ul>
Family and Community Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Mother’s Day Breakfast</li> <li>○ Christmas Dinner - couples</li> <li>○ Fall winner Roast</li> <li>○ PGX</li> <li>○ Social nights – Tabor Park family BBQ</li> <li>○ Awards dinner</li> </ul>
Skilled Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 1 week/year leadership training in addition to other training available through RD</li> </ul>
VFD Training Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ All training done in house</li> <li>○ Same as the training required for paid firefighters</li> <li>○ JIBC courses</li> <li>○ First responder level 3</li> </ul>
Formal Recruitment and Retention Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ No formal program</li> </ul>
Financial Benefits or Incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Life Insurance, disability and sickness insurance</li> <li>○ \$3,000 income tax credit</li> <li>○ Full fire fighter training (First Aid, CPR,AED, emergency vehicle driver training including air brake endorsement</li> <li>○ Uniforms and Personal Protective Equipment</li> </ul>
Simple application process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Paper application – do not want people applying online – prefer to meet them in person</li> </ul>
Partner with local schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ No local high school</li> <li>○ Cadets are young family members and their friends</li> </ul>
Other incentives or practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Members have joined the VFD as a result of wildfires in 2003</li> </ul>

Notes:

- Would like to have property tax break from RD/Mutual aid agreement with City of PG
- Any assistance to raise the VFDs profile (media, website)

### VFD #7 – Profile:

Members 24; 5 (18-30) and 16 (45-60); 9 women; Fire Chief in his position 25 years

Recruiting same for both age group

### Best Practices for Recruitment and Retention

Face to face contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ No brochure, Rookie orientation guide</li><li>○ Verbal invite to potential recruits</li><li>○ Buddy system /mentoring support-not dedicated</li><li>○ Mixed support from employers</li><li>○ Good support from Families</li></ul>
Family and Community Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Family picnics summer/fall</li><li>○ Christmas Dinner/party for families/appreciation</li><li>○ Halloween party/gathering</li><li>○ PGX – Firefighter Games</li><li>○ Mother’s day breakfast</li><li>○ Elementary school lunch 2 times per year</li><li>○ Fire safety house/fire prevention education school, community hall</li><li>○ Fire Chief for a Day program</li></ul>
Skilled Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Fire Chief there for 25 years</li></ul>
VFD Training Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Same as the training required for paid firefighters</li><li>○ Most training done in house</li><li>○ DVD instructions as well</li></ul>
Formal Recruitment and Retention Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ No formal program</li><li>○ The newspaper profile done by the RD is step in the right direction</li></ul>
Financial Benefits or Incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Life Insurance, disability and sickness insurance</li><li>○ \$3,000 income tax credit</li><li>○ Full fire fighter training (First Aid, CPR,AED, emergency vehicle driver training including air brake endorsement</li><li>○ Uniforms and Personal Protective Equipment</li><li>○ No personal monetary benefit</li></ul>
Simple application process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Yes, online as well</li></ul>
Partner with local schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Very involved with local elementary school in fire prevention and safety education</li></ul>
Other incentives or practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Members have joined the VFD as a result of witnessing an incident</li></ul>

**VFD #8 – Profile:**

Members 30; 11 (18-30) and 7 (45-60); 7 women; Fire Chief in his position 17 years

Recruiting same for both age group

**Best Practices for Recruitment and Retention**

Face to face contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Rookie orientation guide</li> <li>○ Verbal invite to potential recruits</li> <li>○ Buddy system /mentoring support-not dedicated</li> <li>○ Poor from employers &lt;10% allowed to leave work for a fire call</li> <li>○ Good support from Families</li> </ul>
Family and Community Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Christmas Dinner/party for families/appreciation</li> <li>○ PGX – Firefighter Games</li> <li>○ Father’s day breakfast</li> <li>○ Fire hall is used for many community events /community association</li> <li>○ Run – public awareness</li> <li>○ Fire safety house/fire prevention education school, community hall</li> <li>○ Fire Chief for a Day program</li> <li>○ Area Director invited to all community events</li> <li>○ Fire hall news/tips published in community association newspaper and elementary school newsletter</li> </ul>
Skilled Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Fire Chief there for 17 years</li> </ul>
VFD Training Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Same as the training required for paid firefighters</li> <li>○ Most training done in house</li> </ul>
Formal Recruitment and Retention Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ No formal program</li> <li>○ The newspaper profile done by the RD is step in the right direction</li> </ul>
Financial Benefits or Incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Life Insurance, disability and sickness insurance</li> <li>○ \$3,000 income tax credit</li> <li>○ Full fire fighter training (First Aid, CPR,AED, emergency vehicle driver training including air brake endorsement</li> <li>○ Uniforms and Personal Protective Equipment</li> <li>○ \$6000/yr to FF Association – used for training/social events</li> </ul>
Simple application process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Yes, online as well</li> </ul>
Partner with local schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ No school in VFD area/visit City PG school</li> </ul>
Other incentives or practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Members have joint the VFD as a result of witnessing an incident in their community/baby delivery by VFF/ critical incident counseling</li> </ul>

**VFD #9 – Profile:**

Members 14; 6 (18-30) and 8 (45-60); 3 women; Intern Fire Chief/temporary training officer from other fire halls

Recruiting same for both age group

**Best Practices for Recruitment and Retention**

Face to face contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ No brochure, Rookie orientation guide</li> <li>○ Verbal invite to potential recruits</li> <li>○ Buddy system /mentoring support-not dedicated</li> <li>○ Limited support from employers</li> </ul>
Family and Community Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Meeting with community members to explain the role and value of VFD in regards to house insurance</li> <li>○ Fire safety house/fire prevention education school, community hall</li> <li>○ Hixon Days</li> </ul>
Skilled Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Temporary Fire Chief from another VFD</li> </ul>
VFD Training Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Same as the training required for paid firefighters</li> <li>○ Most training done in house/temporary training officer</li> </ul>
Formal Recruitment and Retention Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ No formal program</li> <li>○ The newspaper profile done by the RD is step in the right direction</li> </ul>
Financial Benefits or Incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Life Insurance, disability and sickness insurance</li> <li>○ \$3,000 income tax credit</li> <li>○ Full fire fighter training (First Aid, CPR,AED, emergency vehicle driver training including air brake endorsement</li> <li>○ Uniforms and Personal Protective Equipment</li> <li>○ \$ to FF association</li> </ul>
Simple application process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Yes, online as well</li> </ul>
Partner with local schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Involved with local elementary school in fire prevention and safety education</li> </ul>
Other incentives or practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Critical incident counseling available</li> </ul>

**VFD #10 – Profile:**

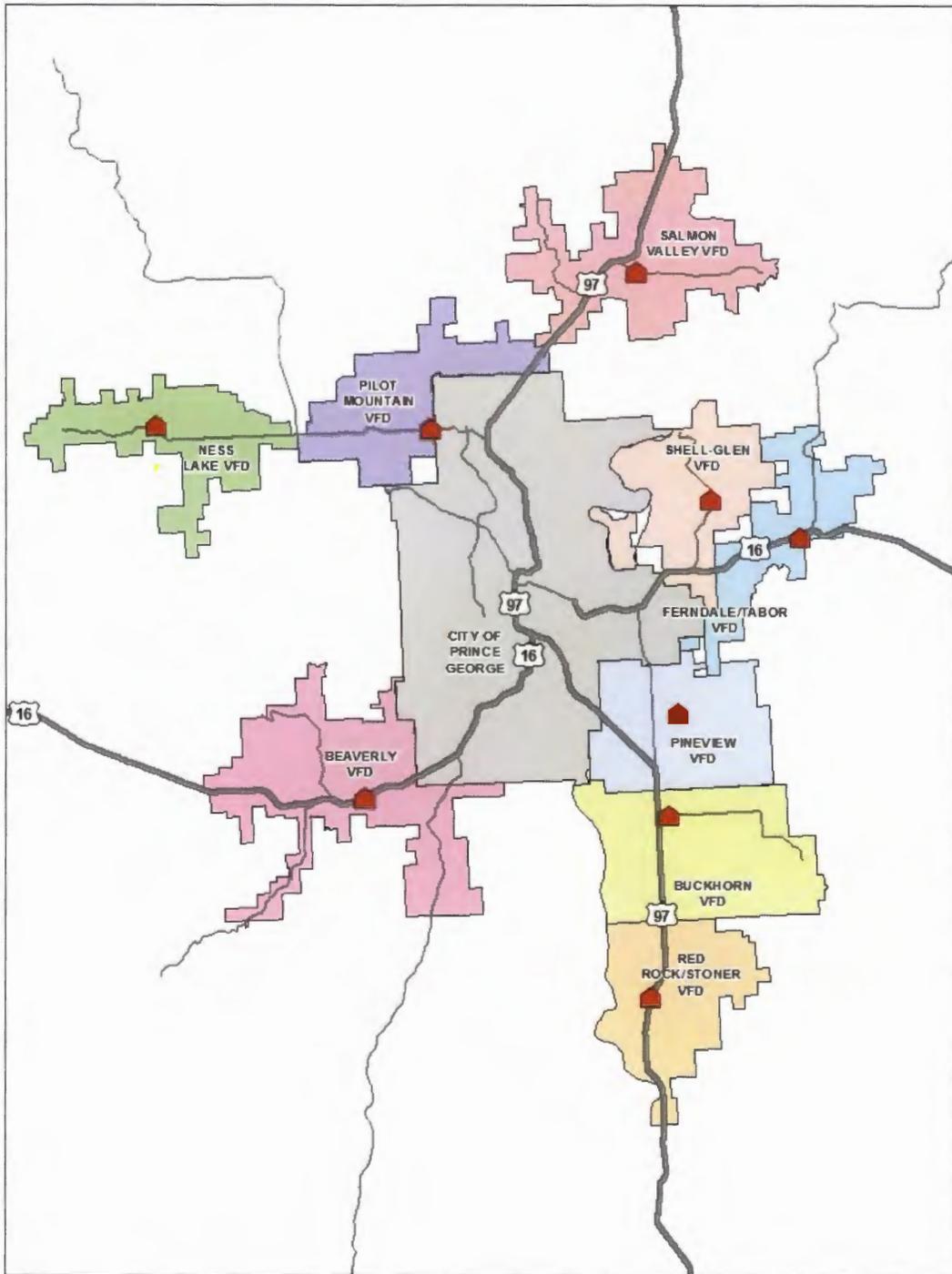
Members 18; 6 (18-30) and 10 (45-60); 3 women; Fire Chief in his position for 6 years

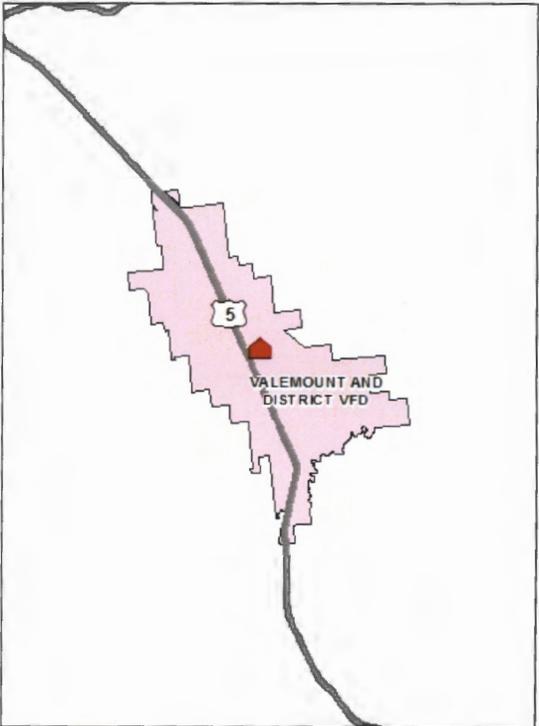
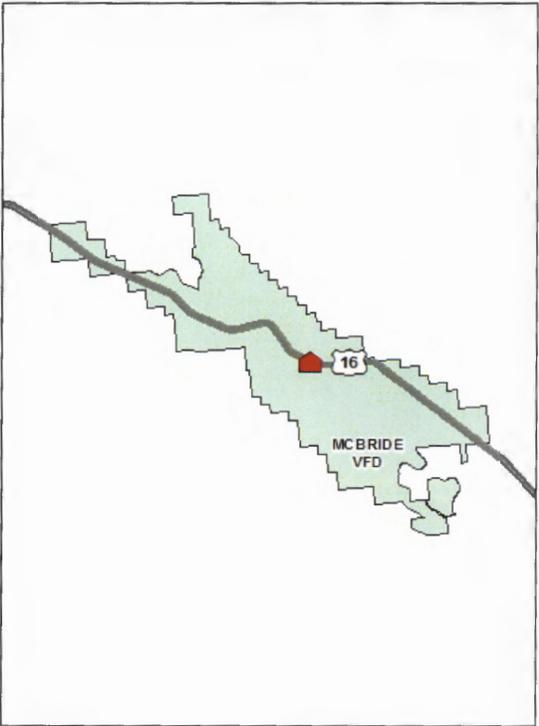
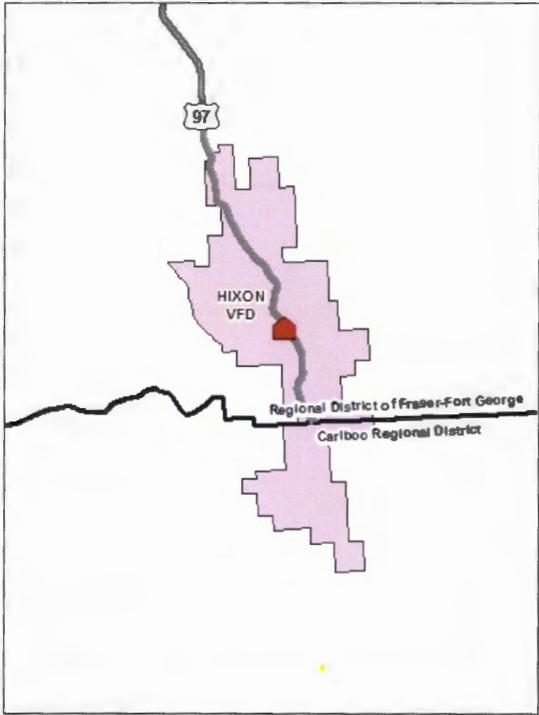
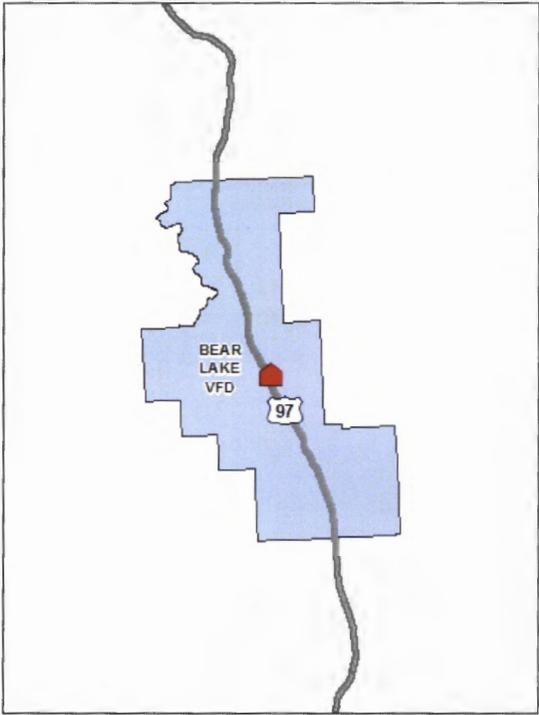
Recruiting same for both age group

**Best Practices for Recruitment and Retention**

Face to face contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ No brochure</li> <li>○ Verbal invite to potential recruits</li> <li>○ Buddy system /mentoring support-not dedicated</li> <li>○ Limited support from employers</li> </ul>
Family and Community Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Meeting with community members to explain the role and value of VFD in regards to house insurance</li> <li>○ Good support from families, 3 couples/father-son</li> <li>○ Annual volunteer appreciation with community association</li> <li>○ Family Christmas dinner/awards/recognition</li> <li>○ Boot Hockey event- firefighters play in their gear/raise donations for a charity</li> <li>○ Private parties at VFF homes</li> </ul>
Skilled Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Fairly young leadership, would welcome more training and support</li> </ul>
VFD Training Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Same as the training required for paid firefighters</li> <li>○ Most training done in house/would like to see more assistance with outside training</li> </ul>
Formal Recruitment and Retention Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ No formal program</li> <li>○ The newspaper profile done by the RD is step in the right direction</li> </ul>
Financial Benefits or Incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Life Insurance, disability and sickness insurance</li> <li>○ \$3,000 income tax credit</li> <li>○ Full fire fighter training (First Aid, CPR,AED, emergency vehicle driver training including air brake endorsement</li> <li>○ Uniforms and Personal Protective Equipment</li> <li>○ \$ 5/training, calls go to FF association</li> <li>○ \$500 at the end of the year for maintaining certification</li> </ul>
Simple application process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Yes</li> </ul>
Partner with local schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ no</li> </ul>
Other incentives or practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Facebook page started to attract younger recruits</li> <li>○ Newsletter distributed 2-3 times/year to the fire protection area households</li> </ul>

RDFFG Map of VFD Service Areas





1. Beverly VFD (30 volunteer firefighters)

Type	Manufacturer	Date	Pump capacity gpm	Tank Capacity (gals)	NFPA compliant	ULC Compliant
Pumper	Hub	1994	1050	1000		Yes
Pumper	Lafrance	2003	1050	1000		Yes
Pumper	Thibault	1966	840	900		Expired
Tender	Hub	1985	420	1300		Expired
Tender	Mack	1991	500	1800	yes	n/a
Rescue Truck	Ford	1994	0	0	n/a	n/a
Rescue Truck	International	1984	0	0	n/a	n/a
Flat deck-Bush Truck	Ford 350	1990	Portable 100 gal	Portable 250 gal		
SPU - trailer	Structural Protection unit					

2. Pineview VFD (26 volunteer firefighters)

	Manufacturer	Date	Pump capacity gpm	Tank Capacity(gals)	NFPA compliant	ULC Compliant
Pumper	GMC	1998	1250	900	Yes	57
Pumper	International	1982	840	1000	Expired	Expired
Mini pumper	GMC	1985	400	250	n/a	n/a
Tender	Ford F 800	1997	500	1500	n/a	n/a
Tender	Freightliner	2011	500	1800	Yes	n/a
Rescue truck	GMC Suburban	1998	0	0	n/a	n/a
Rat trailer	Wildfire	1980	60	200	n/a	n/a
Heavy Rescue	Spartan	2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 9000 watt light tower</li> <li>○ Ice/shore rescue/high angle rope rescue</li> </ul>			

3. Valemount and District VFD (27 volunteer firefighters)

Type	Manufacturer	Date	Pump capacity gpm	Tank Capacity(gals)	NFPA compliant	ULC Compliant
Pumper	Kenworth	2007	1050	800	Yes	59011
Pumper	Freightliner	1998	1050	1000	Yes	131C
Tender	Freightliner	1996	300	1500	n/a	n/a
Rescue tank	Ford F 250	2000	n/a	n/a	Yes	n/a
Trailer SPU	Able Steel	1986	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Pumper	Dodge	1973	Not in service			
Pumper	Ford	1984	Not in service			

4. Ferndale/Tabor VFD (29 volunteer firefighters)

Type	Manufacturer	Date	Pump capacity- gpm	Tank Capacity (gals)	NFPA compliant	ULC Compliant
Pumper	GMC	1985	840	1000	Expired	Expired
Tender	Freightliner	1997	500	2000	Yes	No
Pumper	Freightliner	2001	1050	900	Yes	Yes
Command/rehab unit	Ford F350	2000	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Interface trailer	Tailwind	2010	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Fire Chief's Pick-up Truck	Chevy Quad Cab	2005	Command Vehicle			

5. Buckhorn VFD (26 volunteer firefighters)

Type	Manufacturer	Date	Pump capacity- gpm	Tank Capacity(gals)	NFPA compliant	ULC Compliant
Pumper	International	2000	1050	750	Yes	Yes
Pumper	International	1997	500	500	Yes	No
Tender	International	1993	500	1800	Yes	n/a
Tender	Fargo	1972	No pump	2000	no	no

6. Pilot Mountain VFD (25 volunteer firefighters)

Type	Manufacturer	Date	Pump capacity	Tank Capacity	NFPA compliant	ULC Compliant
Pumper	Freightliner	1997	1060	1000	Yes	Yes
Tender	International	1992	300 fill/250 pump	1600	no	no
Tender	Kenworth	1999	300 fill/100 pump	1800	No	No
Squad	Ford F-550	1999	100	400	no	no

7. Hixon VFD (14 volunteer firefighters)

Type	Manufacturer	Date	Pump capacity	Tank Capacity	NFPA compliant	ULC Compliant
Pumper	Freightliner	1999	650	750	Yes	
Pumper-currently used as tender	GMC	1986	650	750	n/a	
Mini pumper/reserve	Ford Mini	2008		300	yes	
1 @ Forest trailer						
1 @ 4 wheeler						

8. McBride District VFD (22 volunteer firefighters)

Type	Manufacturer	Date	Pump capacity gpm	Tank Capacity (gals)	NFPA compliant	ULC Compliant
Pumper	Hub	1996	1050	1000	Yes	45C
Tender	Hub	2004	1050	1000	Yes	9023
Rescue	Hub	2004	420	500	yes	9022

9. Ness Lake VFD (18 volunteer firefighters)

Type	Manufacturer	Date	Pump capacity	Tank Capacity	NFPA compliant	ULC Compliant
Pumper	Spartan	2007	1050	1000	Yes	57
Pumper used as a tender	Ford	1988	650	1000	Expired as pumper	Expired as pumper
Tender	International	1998	Portable pump only	1500	no	no

10. Red Rock/Stoner VFD (16 volunteer firefighters)

Type	Manufacturer	Date	Pump capacity	Tank Capacity gals	NFPA compliant	ULC Compliant
Pumper	Freightliner	2011	1055	958	Yes	Yes
Pumper used as tender	International Engine/Tender	1986	1050	800	n/a	n/a
Tender	Freightliner	2005	450	1500	yes	n/a

11. Salmon Valley VFD (15 volunteer firefighters)

Type	Manufacturer	Date	Pump capacity gpm	Tank Capacity (gals)	NFPA compliant	ULC Compliant
Pumper	Freightliner	2009	1050	1000	Yes	Yes
Pumper	Ford	1987		1000	expired	Expired
Tender	Freightliner	1989		1000		yes

12. Shell-Glen VFD (23 volunteer firefighters)

Type	Manufacturer	Date	Pump capacity	Tank Capacity	NFPA compliant	ULC Compliant
Pumper	Ford	1992	1050	800	Yes	Yes
Tender	International	2008	361 + 3688 portable	1500	Yes	Yes
Pumper (new)	Hub International	2012	361 + 3688 portable	800	Yes	Yes
Rescue Tank	Ford	1999	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Rescue Truck	Ford f 350	2005	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Rehab vehicle	Dodge	1978	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

13. Bear Lake VFD (21 volunteer firefighters)

Type	Manufacturer	Date	Pump capacity	Tank Capacity	NFPA compliant	ULC Compliant
Pumper	Freightliner	2005	1250	1000	Yes	126C
Pumper currently used as tender	GMC	1979	625	750	Expired	1466 expired
Tender	International	1979	Out of service	Out of service	n/a	n/a

Note: Above tables are reproduced and updated from Inspections and Audits of the RDRFFG Volunteer Fire/Rescue Departments report by Dave Mitchell and Associates Ltd. March 2012

## **Appendix 5 - Recommendations for systems and procedures to improve VFDs recruitment strategies in RDFFG:**

### **Recommendations for the local VFD**

- Continue to use existing practices that have been successful in the past such as:
  - Personal invitation to potential volunteers
  - Emphasizing the importance of family and community support to the VFD
  - Recognition awards, family picnics, fire prevention education in local schools
  - Participating in trade shows, such as PGX – firefighter games
  - Recognize skilled leadership from dedicated fire chiefs
  - Training programs
- Explore additional practices that would help with recruitment such as:
  - Involve current VFF in planning formal recruitment drives
  - Raise local awareness through traditional and new social media sources

### **Recommendations for RDFFG/Provincial level**

- Consider filling the gap of auxiliary support in regards to regional and provincial formal recruitment and retention strategies with specific overarching goals
- Help to raise the profile of VFDs by:
  - Develop a brand for VFF that can be used on provincial and regional level
  - Centrally coordinated public relations that could help to create attractive and informative websites for all VFDs
  - Use social media such as Facebook and YouTube videos to attract younger volunteers

- Expand the use of local newspapers to have local firefighter column featuring VFD profiles, members, events, new equipment, fire prevention tips, training opportunities, stories from retired firefighters and bucket brigades. Example was an insert in local newspapers for the Fire Prevention Week (October 6-12, 2013)
- Recruitment should involve people who would offer support to VFD, such as updating website and keeping records, photo galleries, stories – focus on extended families
- Newsletters (2-3 per year) from the VFD to be distributed to all households in the fire protection area
- Provide leadership training opportunities to Fire Chiefs, invite motivational speakers
- Consider extending some of the benefits that the RDFFG staff has such as extended health benefits and post-traumatic stress counseling