

March 13, 2008

Hello, my name is Ernie Polsom. I am the Acting Assistant Managing Director of Provincial Services and the Acting Fire Commissioner for Alberta.

As the representative of Alberta Emergency Management Agency (AEMA) and the lead Ministry for Search and Rescue in Alberta I am pleased to have this opportunity to speak to the volunteer community in Ground Search and Rescue.

I had the privilege of meeting some of you at the fall meeting last year and I'm eager to talk with the general membership in Lethbridge at the AGM. I have also had the opportunity to participate in some national activities including attendance at the annual New Initiatives Fund and Ground Search and Rescue Council of Canada meetings in Quebec City which really helped broaden my understanding of the complexity of Search and Rescue locally, provincially and nationally.

In the meantime there are some developments of interest to your community.

We should have really good news on the creation of our new Agency Response and Readiness Center. It will be a single point of entry into the emergency management and response world. This means a much simpler process of generating tasking numbers, connecting the right resources to an event and ensures that all of the right folks are called to the right things. We will have much more on this by June.

Minister Ray Danyluk has been reappointed to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and has reconfirmed his support to GSAR in the new mandate. Dave Hodgins (our Managing Director) remains committed to the engaging of GSAR into the wider Emergency Management framework.

At AEMA we are currently working on a consultation process that you'll be hearing about in the coming weeks. The goal is to engage our partners in the GoA, the federal government, municipalities, and you, the industry professionals, in a renewal process to redefine SAR governance in Alberta and address the system shortfalls as identified by the system partners. We'll be able to tell you more about the process very soon and I hope that some of you will be participating in the change.

See you in Lethbridge!



Ernie Polsom
Acting Assistant Managing Director/
Acting Fire Commissioner,
Alberta Emergency Management Agency