



*NEWS RELEASE*

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## **PVFD Hosts Successful Fire Training Conference**

The members of the Parksville Volunteer Fire Department recently hosted the British Columbia Fire Training Officers Association annual training weekend and conference, attended by trainers from volunteer and career departments from British Columbia and the Yukon. The conference theme was “training with purpose.” The Parksville Fire Department was pleased to receive overwhelming positive comments and feedback from the 209 registered delegates (representing 92 departments) about the conference, the level of professionalism and quality of training.

Fire Chief Doug Banks said, “I’m most impressed and proud of how our members stepped up to volunteer, their attention to detail and willingness to go above and beyond to welcome the delegates. This conference was a big undertaking for our department and we rose to the occasion extremely well.”

Deputy Fire Chief Marc Norris was the BCFTOA conference committee chair and as lead conference organizer began planning the educational components and logistics more than a year ago. Parksville members volunteered many hours of their time which contributed to the conference experience for the delegates. As well, assistance came from the Nanoose, Errington, Qualicum Beach and Dashwood departments.

“We wish to thank all the delegates, local departments and in particular our members for their dedication and commitment to fire service training. I would not have suggested we host the conference if I didn’t think we could and our members knocked it out of the park. Many delegates indicated this was the best conference ever and we’re extremely proud of the job we did,” said Deputy Chief Marc Norris.

Deputy Chief Norris also said, “Training is a cornerstone of the fire service; good training allows us to provide the effective services that our citizens need, want and expect. This conference is the place that BC fire service trainers can meet, exchange ideas, develop training and get exposure to training providers.”

Training weekend and conference sessions were held at several venues including Tigh-Na-Mara Conference Centre, the Parksville Fire Department Training Centre, Little Mountain, Errington Fire Hall 1 and the Nanaimo Fire Training Centre. The conference included a total of 32 courses, delivered in over 47 separate sessions, from quarter and half day sessions to three-day accredited courses. Programs included subjects such as fire service instructor, tender operations, technical rope rescue operations, strategies and tactics, auto extrication, forcible entry essentials, fire dynamics, incident safety officer, evaluator certification, emergency scene traffic control, essentials of honourable leadership, ventilation and management the fireground, strategic planning, natural gas awareness and emergency scenarios, volunteer challenges, training centre ideas, and engine company fire attack.

Members were most impressed by key note speaker, retired Chief Bobby Halton, the current editor in chief of the Fire Engineering Magazine and education director of the Fire Department Instructors Conference (FDIC), the largest Fire Training Conference in the World. Chief Halton served with the Albuquerque, New York and the Coppell, Texas fire departments and shared his views on the profession and why character, in particular in trainers, matters now more than ever.

Social events included a progressive dinner or “hall crawl” to Nanoose, Errington, Dashwood, Qualicum Beach and Parksville fire halls, an open house at the PVFD firehall, a training vender trade show and BBQ, as well as the annual BCFTOA Recognition and Awards Banquet. Delegates and spouses were pleased with the accommodations and service at Tigh-Na-Mara Resort and Conference Centre and with the success of the conference hosted by the Parksville Fire Department.

Next year’s conference will be hosted by the Township of Langley and there was a sense from the members Parksville had set the bar high and so the Township will have their work cut out for them next year.

Members of the Parksville Fire Department complete an average of 6,500 collective training hours per year, in addition to emergencies, public education, equipment maintenance and other activities. Members of the PVFD attend the BCFTOA conference annually in order to bring training and ideas back to the department for use and implementation.

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**For more information:**

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