

## **Phoenix Fire Department Symposium**

June 26<sup>th</sup> arrive Phoenix, check into the hotel and conference.

June 27<sup>th</sup>

06:30 Breakfast.

08:00 General session.

10:15 It's not ok to die in a structure fire.

12:00 Physical Fitness Testing.

13:00 Reflection on 9/11.

15:45 Current events in Health, Wellness and Safety.

16:15 Bodybuilding Workshop.

17:30 Aerobics Class.

18:30 Off for the evening.

June 28<sup>th</sup>

05:30 Squaw Peak Climb.

07:30 Breakfast.

09:00 A Firefighters Guide to inner Excellence.

09:40 What the IAFF is up to now.

10:45 Hormone Replacement Therapy.

13:30 Alternatives to Surgery, Prolotherapy.

15:15 Phoenix, Heart and Nutritional testing.

16:30 Aerobics Class.

17:30 Off for the evening.

June 29<sup>th</sup>

05:00 Squaw Peak Climb and Run.

07:30 breakfast.

08:30 Terrorism Before and After 9/11.

09:15 Life Stages, not Ages.

10:45 Wellness Opportunities

12:00 Conference over.

What a great experience! I learned we are doing great things at Woodinville Fire and Life Safety in the area of Health, Wellness, and Safety.

We are in a profession of high stress, high cholesterol, and early death from heart disease. We are around the sick and we are expected to perform in strenuous and sometimes awkward positions.

There are many things we can do to help combat this, to reduce the sick and injury time firefighters are away from work. We have programs that will give our firefighters a good quality of life during and after their career.

At the conference I took part in everything I could. I was up early hiking a local hill for my morning workout. I attended classes during the day, classes ranging from Firefighter survival to Hormone Therapy. Each afternoon I took part in the HEAT (High, Energy, Athletic, Training) class. In the class we combined cardio, functional training, and athletic drills. Functional training is the balancing and strengthening of the body to work in positions that are abnormal to help firefighters stay injury free while doing their job.

The following are areas we currently have in place.

- 1) A variety of resistance and cardiovascular equipment available for on duty personnel.
- 2) A program for using the equipment and evaluating on a semi-annual basis with record keeping.
- 3) A validated entry level-testing program.
- 4) A health and wellness board with current events and research.
- 5) An ongoing medical program for health and wellness testing of employees.

Some areas we might want to consider are:

- 1) Having certified personal trainers work with the firefighters to ensure proper lifting and to help with injury prevention.
- 2) A nutritionalist to help firefighters ensure a balanced nutrition plan to meet the firefighters needs.
- 3) An annual class on fire ground safety and firefighter survival.
- 4) A program to keep the Health and Wellness boards up and running.

One of the memorable statements I remember from Chief Alan Brunacini in regards to taking care of his firefighters was “When we hire firefighters they are here for 30 to 40 years, if we bought a car knowing we were going to have it for 30 to 40 years we would take care of it over the years.”

I feel this was a great experience for me. It taught me that we are doing things right and that we are at the top of the curve for a department our size. It also gave me some ideas to help us improve our program. I will use what I learned to try and improve the firefighters around me on a daily basis. I’ll work with them on Firefighter survival on the fire ground, firefighters nutritional needs, and a functional training exercise program. All this is to help ensure we are reducing firefighters missing work from injuries or illness and increase the odds we live a long retirement.

“Treat you’re body like you own it, not like you’re renting it.”

Firefighter Briner