

FIRE SERVICE RADIO NEWS

November 2011



3 More Fire Departments Benefit from Enbridge Grants

The Enbridge Safe Community grant program has made it possible for three more fire departments to make important investments in new equipment. Enbridge has donated funds to the Pipestone-Albert District Fire Department, Oak Lake Fire Department and the Wallace District Fire Department.

Pipestone-Albert District Fire Department based in Reston put the funds towards the purchase of a Rosenbauer tanker built in Lyons South Dakota. The tanker features a 3000 gallon tank, 10" swivel dump, Darley 20 hp Honda pump, 4' direct tank fill and is built on a 2001 Freightliner chassis with 410 hp Detroit Diesel.



Oak Lake Fire Department invested their \$10,000 grant in a set of rescue airbags designed to safely lift vehicles and heavy equipment when responding to motor vehicle collisions, farm equipment accidents and incidents along the Enbridge pipeline. Deputy Fire Chief David Houston says this is an important addition as they have had call for this equipment in the past and have had to rely on neighbouring departments to bring out their equipment.

Brad Yochim, Fire Chief at Wallace District Fire Department, has earmarked the funding for a new VHF repeater system to enhance radio communication capabilities for his department. The objective is to provide a wide area communications channel that will cover the entire response area. Brad intends to use this channel for on-route communications, to reduce reliance on MTS FleetNet and to support operations during any community wide emergency.

Oakbank Fire Hall Welcomes Milt Stegall to Open House

On Sunday, October 9th Milt Stegall and Blue Bombers Bryant Turner and Javon McKinnon came out to the Oakbank Fire Hall to sign autographs and enjoy a pancake breakfast with members of the local community.



Below: Community members gathered around to see a demonstration of vehicle extrication procedures.

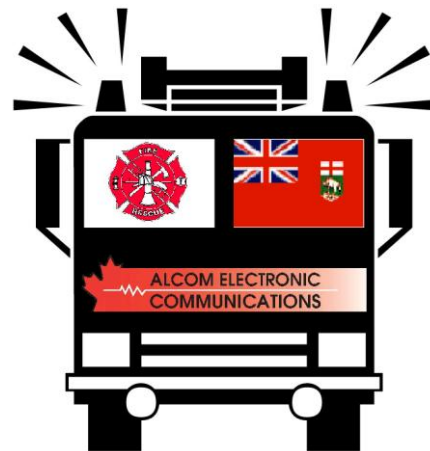
Bottom Left: Firefighter Jason Banack helps a future fire fighter learn proper nozzle handling technique.



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Meet Our Service Manager

In the fall of 1993 Ken Eastveld was a new graduate of the Industrial Electronics Program at Winnipeg Technical College. He was searching for a job where he could apply his education and came into Alcom Electronics to ask if there were any positions open. Alcom's founder, Al Read, interviewed Ken right away and asked him where he envisions himself in five years. Ken answered; "Sitting behind your desk with your job." and Al hired him on the spot.

Ken started at Alcom as an Installation Technician. By 1995 he was promoted to Senior Technician and in 1997 to Service Foreman. Ken accepted the position of Service Manager in 2000 and since then has been focused on making sure that every communications solution that Alcom implements is done right the first time.

Ken is continually advancing his knowledge through Motorola's technical training programs and is certified for all the new **MOTOTRBO** system configurations. In addition Ken went back to school in 2007 to get a Management Certificate from Red River College.

Over the years Ken has installed dozens of fire department paging systems throughout the province. He has come to understand the challenges that fire chiefs face in getting effective communications in place considering the tight budgets they work with. "Today one of the biggest challenges for fire departments is getting coverage for radio to radio communications in their municipalities." says Ken. He points out that Motorola's **MOTOTRBO** Digital platform offers a solution using its IP Site Connect capability. Ken explains that "we can connect multiple sites and allow communications over the wide area without having to rely in FleetNet."

Emergency Communications – An Essential Tool for Fire Departments and Emergency Coordinators

Recent events have focused attention on emergency communications. Over the Thanksgiving weekend more than a dozen fire departments worked together to battle wildfires in Southeast Manitoba. Radio communications using the FleetNet radio system played a crucial role in allowing responding agencies to coordinate their activity. Unfortunately there were break downs in communication due to the large volume of radio traffic that overwhelmed the system at times.

As noted in the Manitoba Emergency Plan: "The modern telecommunications infrastructure used in Manitoba is extremely reliable in day to day use, and is often taken for granted. Nevertheless, this infrastructure can be damaged or otherwise interrupted... Even though we may think of cellular telephone, landline, facsimile, email, internet, twoway radio as different technologies, they often share common "pipes." These "pipes" can be a mixture of radio, microwave, and landline/optical fibre. The destruction or failure of such a "pipe" can disrupt messages that travel through the "pipe" regardless of what technology was used to generate the message." (Schedule 7, Section 1.2)

So what kind of alternatives can be put in place to ensure that Fire Departments and Emergency Coordinators have the communications resources they need to respond to and manage a large scale emergency? What kind of systems will continue to operate even if the MTS "pipes" are filled or destroyed?

Satellite Phones: Every Emergency Operations Centre ought to have a satellite phone. A docking station can be set up in your EOC to easily connect standard corded, cordless or DECT phones or integrate to a PBX. If you must evacuate the EOC the satellite phone goes with you. When all else fails the satellite phone is your lifeline to the outside world.

IP Site Connect: Using the **MOTOTRBO** Digital platform Alcom is working with multiple municipalities to design wide area VHF radio systems for municipal and emergency operations. These systems will be completely owned and controlled by the municipalities without relying on any third party "pipes".

Mobile Repeaters: Take your coverage wherever you need it with a mobile repeater. Installed in a rescue vehicle or designed to be portable this approach is useful for allowing portable radios to be used over a wider area and can also allow fire ground communications to be sent back to a base station at a distance.

To learn how Alcom can support your Fire Department please contact

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