

2009 CANADIAN FIRE CHIEFS OF THE YEAR ANNOUNCED

For Immediate Release

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA September 24, 2009 — Prince Albert, Saskatchewan Fire and Emergency Services Chief Les Karpluk and Selkirk, Manitoba Fire Chief Dan Thorsteinson have been respectively named Full-time Career Fire Chief of the Year and Volunteer Fire Chief of the Year by the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs (CAFC).

Both awards were announced last evening at the closing ceremonies of the CAFC's annual conference in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

“Leading Fire Departments in today’s complex environment is a challenging task,” said CAFC President, Bruce Burrell, Chief of the Calgary Fire Department. He added “The Chiefs we honour this year have both displayed exemplary leadership to their staff and outstanding commitment to protecting the safety of their communities.”

Prince Albert Fire Chief Les Karpluk is a 27-year career veteran of the Fire and Emergency Services and became Chief in 2006, with a staff of 50 under his command. He has played a leadership role in founding the Fire Mentoring Program to help youth at risk in his community. Under this program, youths, many of whom struggle with addiction problems, are partnered with firefighters and exposed to an environment of teamwork, determination and trust, safety and family. Chief Karpluk is married and has four children.

Selkirk Fire Chief Dan Thorsteinson has served as a firefighter for 25 years, becoming Chief in 1999. A small business owner in the community of 11,000, his operation, with 32 volunteers, is able to supply the City of Selkirk and district with squads handling not only fires, but water/ice rescue and confined space and rope rescue, to name a few. In addition, the River Boat Burn Fund, of which Chief Thorsteinson is Secretary-Treasurer, has managed to raise some \$275,000 to the Firefighters' Burn Fund. Chief Thorsteinson is married and has three children.

The Fire Chief of the Year Awards are sponsored by the Fire Underwriters Survey, a national organization that provides data on public fire protection for fire insurance statistical work and underwriting purposes of subscribing insurance companies.

There are almost 3500 full-time, composite and volunteer fire departments across Canada, with over 108,000 firefighting personnel. Volunteers comprise 91 percent of departments and some 77 percent of personnel.

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