

New York State  
Emergency Management Association  
2017 Winter Conference  
February 21-23, 2017

Edmonton's Response to the  
Fort McMurray Wildfire

# Outline

- Your Speaker
- Background
- Wildfires
- Evacuation
- City of Edmonton- Organization
- Office of Emergency Management / Municipal  
Emergency Plan
- EOC Partners

# Outline

- Reception Centre
- City Employees
- Logistics
- External Relationships
- Warehouses
- Distribution Centres
- Lessons Learned
- Conclusion / Questions

# Your Speaker

- Joined Edmonton Fire Rescue Services in 1992 as a probationary firefighter
- Worked my way through the ranks on the operational side
- Appointed Deputy Fire Chief on May 3, 2016

# Background Info

- Province of Alberta
- Edmonton
- Fort McMurray





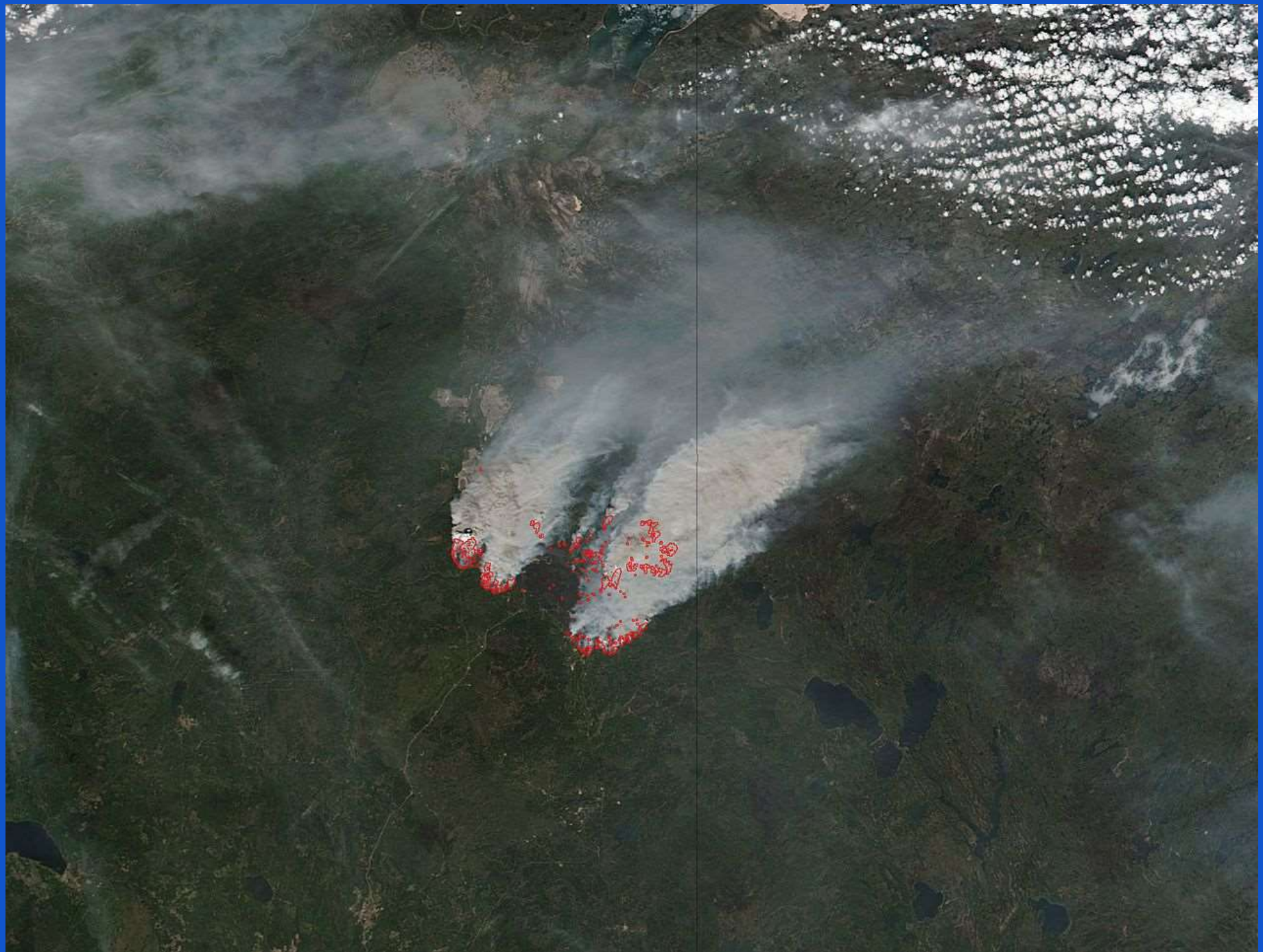












# Wildfires in Alberta

- Occur every year
- Wildfire season, across seasons
- Influenced by weather

# Fort McMurray Wildfire

- Started like many, but
- Grew quickly in size
- Impact

# The Phone Call

- 1630 H on May 3, 2016
- Provincial Operations Centre
- Mandatory evacuation of 88,000 people
- Request for firefighters and fire apparatus

# 33 Hours





# Fort McMurray Wildfire (2)

- Life, property, infrastructure, environment
- Largest and longest evacuation
- 2 lives lost indirectly
- 2500 homes, 600 structures
- 30 million barrels
- Dollar loss
- Critical Infrastructure

# What They Were Fleeing

- Fast moving fire
- Crown, ground, and spot
- Very dry year
- Temperature cross over
- Active size 10 times area of Syracuse.





















# City Organization: Normal



# City Organization: MEP Active



# Municipal Emergency Plan

- Changes normal City structure
- Organization becomes flatter- reporting relations
- Emergency Management Agency
- Meets daily
- Strategic decisions
- Operationalized at Emergency Operations



# Office of Emergency Management

- One of five branches within EFRS
- Core Values
- Agency, EOC, ESRT, MEP
- OEM small group
- Rely on cross trained COE staff when EOC activated

# OEM: Emergency Operations Centre (1)

- Operated for 25 days
- 42 Operational periods
- 120 City staff
- 12 hour shifts
- Implemented directions from Agency

# OEM: Emergency Operations Centre (2)

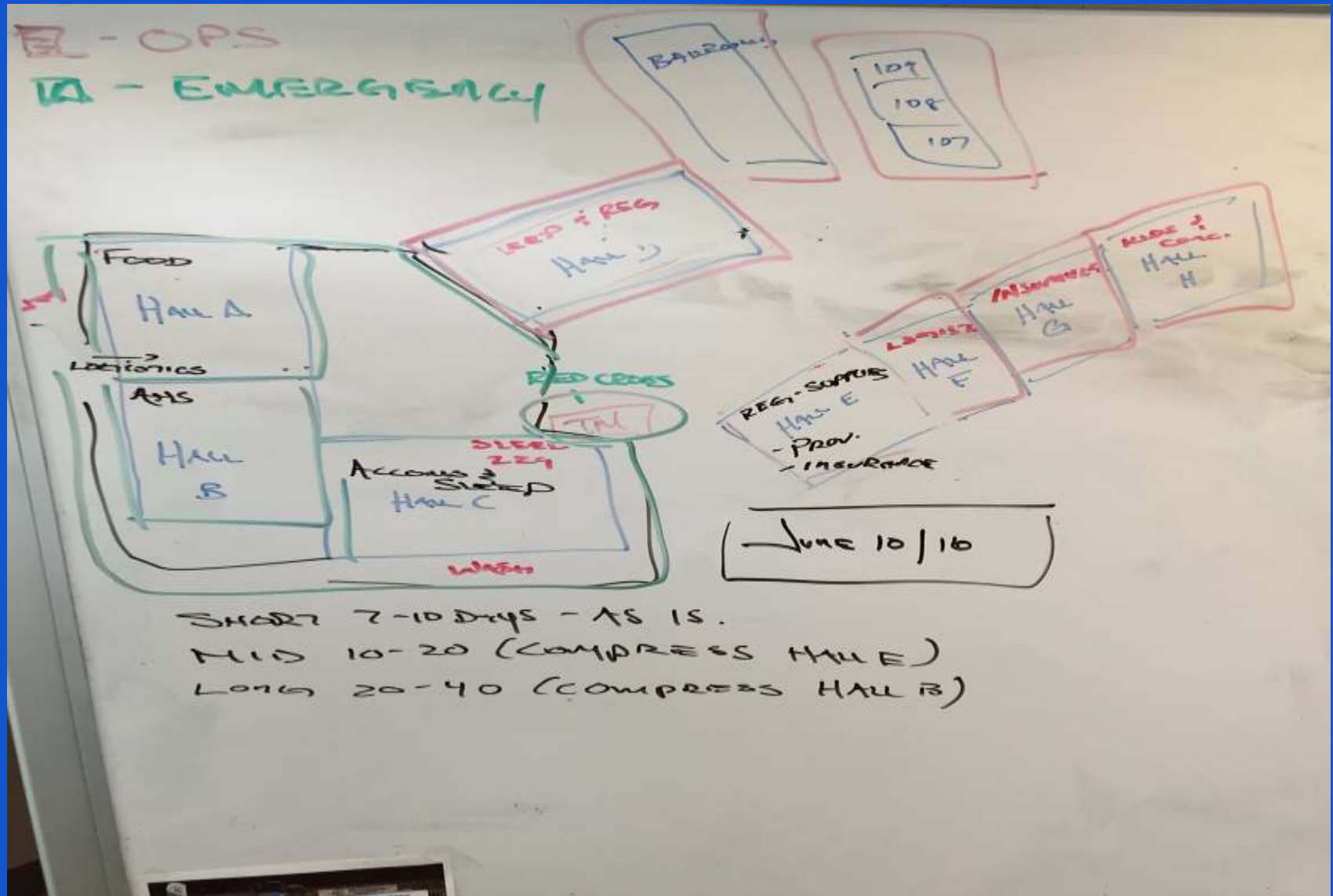
- WAMM
- Writ or Warrant- legal
- Activate- phone calls
- Movement- people, things, ideas
- Manage- MEP, ICS



# OEM: ESRT Reception Centre Criteria

- Roads / parking / transit
- Life safety: fire / police / ambulance
- Separate housing and reception
- Food, showers, bathrooms
- Warehouse facilities
- Northlands

# OEM: Reception Centre- Planning







# Reception Centre- Cots











# City Employees

Cross trained (two - hatted):

- Agency
- EOC
- Emergency Support Response Team

# City Employees - ESRT

- Lives in Office of Emergency Management
- Emergency Support Response Team- 1100
- Came from all areas of the City



# City Employees - ESRT (1)



# City Employees - ESRT (2)



# City Employees - ESRT (3)



# EFRS Deployment

In addition to EOC and reception centre:

- 7 fire apparatus
- 9 deployments firefighters, mechanics, CISM
- 30 days
- Travel time highway
- Calls in City
- Mother's Day

# External Relationships

- Red Cross
- Food bank
- Religious groups
- Community groups
- Other orders of government
- Spontaneous volunteers

# Logistics (1)

Movement of:

- People
- Ideas
- Animals
- Things



# Logistics (2)

Movement of people:

- Evacuees bring their lives with them
- Actors who support habits
- City staff

# Logistics (3)

Movement of ideas:

- Ground intelligence / observations
- Situation updates
- Instructions

# Logistics (4)

Movement of animals:

- Re - uniting people and their pets
- Animal care and control officers
- Vets / kennels / food

# Logistics (5)

Movement of things:

- Food, water, medical supplies
- Cots / blankets
- Material handling

# Other Assistance ?



# Donations

- Corporate donations
- Private donations
- Social media
- Second wave of the disaster
- New, in wrappers
- Storage and disposal

# Donations - Warehouse



# Donations - Warehouse



# Donations - Warehouse

- Fifth and final
- 60 thousand square feet
- Professional corporate procurement
- Hand off to Province
- 225 thousand square feet

# Donations - Distribution

- Distribution not from warehouse
- Vacant retail site / reception centre
- Close to transit hub





# LESSONS LEARNED

REGARDLESS OF A PROJECT'S OUTCOME, WE CAN LEARN SOMETHING AND  
APPLY THAT LESSON TO THE NEXT PROJECT.

"I DIDN'T FAIL. I JUST FOUND A THOUSAND WAYS THAT DIDN'T WORK." -  
THOMAS EDISON

# Lessons Learned (2)

- Exit strategy from Day 1 - planning section
- Communication
- Business Continuity / COOP
- Activate EOC quickly
- Long events
- Donation management / demobilization

# Lessons Learned (3)

- Bench strength
- Infection control
- People want to help
- Message from the top
- Organizational values

# Conclusion

- End goal
- Common themes

# Discussion / Questions

Rob Squire

Deputy Fire Chief

Edmonton Fire Rescue Services

Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

[rob.squire@edmonton.ca](mailto:rob.squire@edmonton.ca)

Phone: 780 668 2972