



# ***THE ARCHANGEL COMMITTEE***

**The Greater Portland -  
Russian Sister City Project  
2016 Firefighter Exchange Program**

# The Committee

Since 1988 the communities of Greater Portland and the Russian city of Arkhangelsk have committed to share cultures and experiences, in an effort to build better relations between our two countries.

This year the committee extended that exchange of best practices to include the Fire / Rescue / EMS / Fire Protection and Education

# Meeting our Brothers and Sisters

In January , we hosted 5 professionals from the Russian delegation.

- 3 Fire / Rescue Captains

- 1 Fire Code Specialist

- 1 Communications Specialists

In April , we sent 7 Fire Representatives to Arkhangelsk. The goal on these first two exchanges was to get a good overview of the similarities and differences between our fire protection programs.

# Common Ground

It was very clear as soon as we arrived that we were welcome, and in the company of a group of professionals that shared our passion for fire protection.

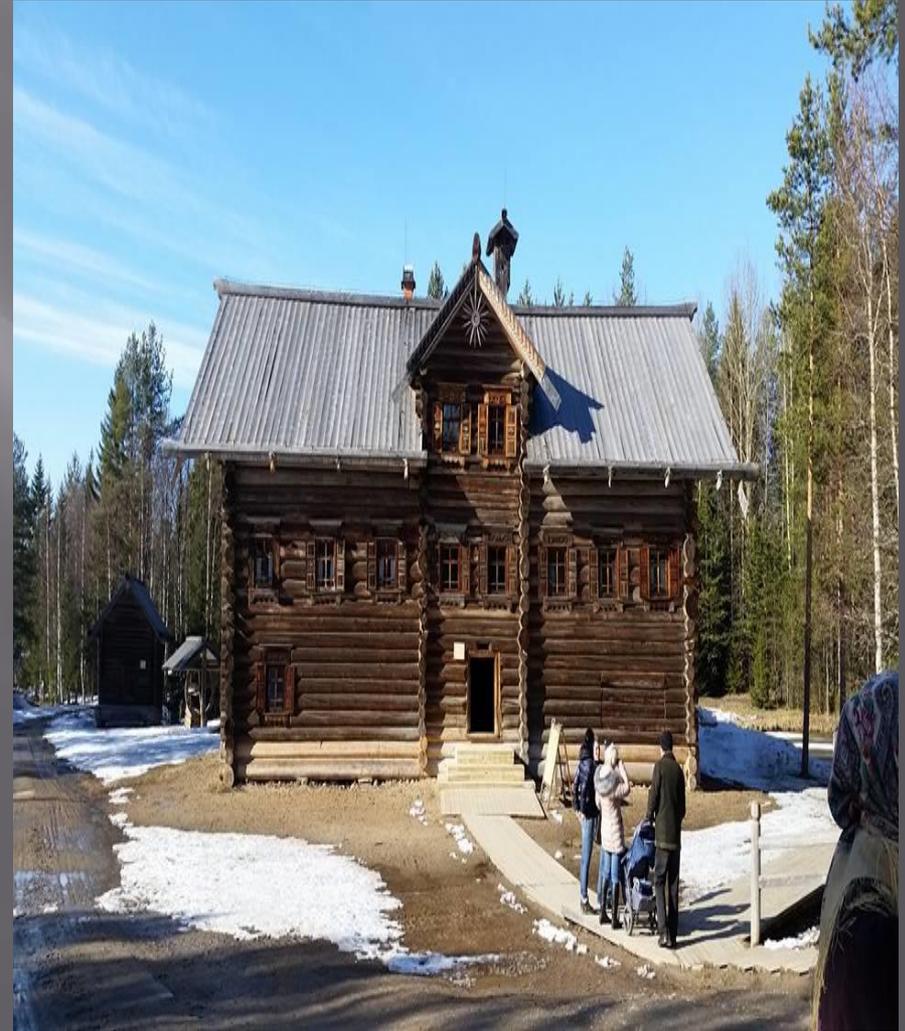
Throughout the visit we began to see that we had many of the same challenges, however there was much we could learn from the different approaches we each used to overcome those challenges.

# Russian Adventure Day 1

Our Russian guides realized we might be a bit sluggish from the travel so they planned a great tour of a museum of wooden architecture Malye Karley. Many of the exhibits were constructed in the 16<sup>th</sup> century without the use of any nails. The incredible craftsmanship and use of heavy timber was impressive.

The one thing that stood out to most of us, was the realization that the United States is a young nation compared to Russia.

# Wooden Architecture



## Day 2

We began our day with a tour of Station 17. It was amazing to see the many different missions they are faced with water / Ice rescue, wildland, building fire and collapse.

During the tour of the equipment carried on the firetruck, the reasons for these trips became clear. One of the firefighter opened a compartment and showed us a highrise hose pack which he had seen during his visit to Maine. The Russian firefighter's had nicknamed it the "American Dream".

# Station 17



Our day continued with a brief presentation from their fire prevention and safety education people. We were amazed by the efforts placed on education and prevention. They are in the schools everyday teaching. The proud feeling of sharing the “American Dream” with them, was quickly replaced we “ Boy we can learn a lot about how to education and injury prevention” .

Emergency Medical Care is delivered by a different entity and we were welcomed there. Ambulances are staffed with a driver, 2- paramedics, and a DOCTOR !!! At first glance you may think how can they afford this? However with 140, 000 calls and only a 27% transport and 23% admission rate. The savings justify the means.

# Injury Prevention Education



# Day 3

We spent the morning at the Fire and Rescue Training Academy. Subject matter seemed to be comparable to our training. However they do expand, and require in some cases, training to business managers and people in the community that may have numerous people working in their building. “Great Idea !!!! “

Communications is similar to our 911 except it is 112 , and may not have some of the more advanced systems such as reverse 911

In the afternoon we got to tour the Airport Fire and Rescue station. They had scheduled a full-scale training session for us to watch. The one thing that stood out to me was that they train, train, and train. When a firefighter comes off the truck running, stretching two lines, and he knows exactly how many strides to where the hose must be placed, it is not his first time !!!! The skill with which they performed made all of us comment on the same signal fact ...."We don't train enough" .....NOT EVEN CLOSE !!!

**Get out and train yourself**  
**and your crews !!!!!**

# Airport Training and Station Visit



# Day 4

We toured a fire station that serves a pulp and paper plant, and surrounding communities. We were impressed with the fire training faculty, and the level of Hazmat training and capability they had. We were invited to go through the smoke maze, and witness confined space training as well as rail car tank leak response. There were many similarities in our response capabilities.

# Pulp and Paper Pictures



Later we were given a tour of one of the newer Federal Fire stations. This station specialized in Large scale incidents

Most of the stations crew was away preparing the community for potential ice jams and flooding that was predicted. our guide was a young Russian firefighter who I am sure drew the short straw or was the junior man.

However his enthusiasm and knowledge impressed us all. We would later get to spend more time with him and build a friendship which will grow and last for years to come.

# Federal Fire Station



Also housed in this fire station was the Offices of the fire investigation and testing laboratories. We were able to spend some time comparing testing and investigation techniques. The one major difference was the lack of Arson trained K9's, so we are looking forward to sharing that with them when they visit in June.

- ▣ Dinner that evening we were joined by the Consulate General Tomas Leary, and Public Affairs Assistant Michael Byrnes . Joe Thomas led us in a special presentation from the committee and the State to the Arkhangelsk Fire Chief Vadim.

# Dinner Presentation



# Pictures of the flag presentation



# Day 5

The focus of the morning was on Fire and Safety education. Chris Goodall led a couple of classes on fire chemistry and did a great job the kids really seemed to enjoy it. It is refreshing to see the partnership between the schools and the fire department. We need to work harder to make that relationship stronger in our communities.

# Pictures of Chris Goodall Teaching

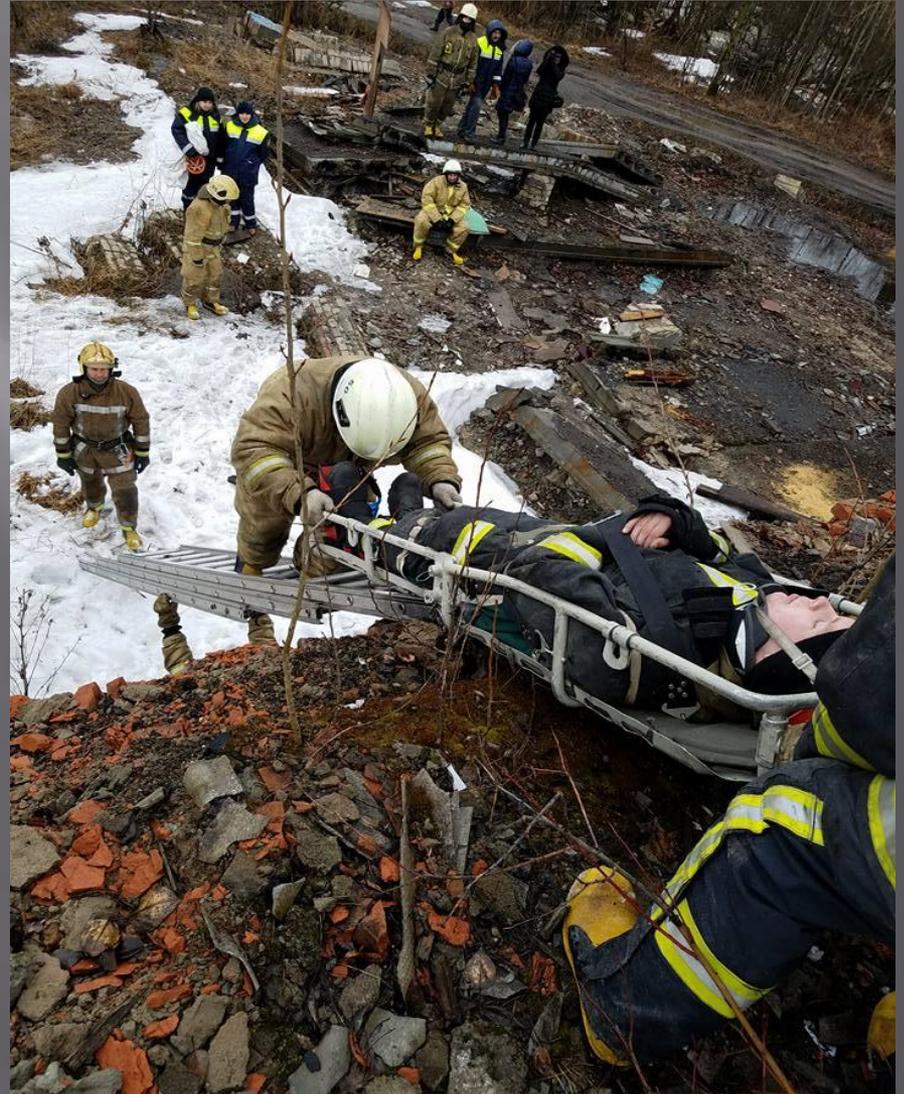


Later we were invited to watch a full-scale search and rescue training. We were able to see how well their search dogs worked and then the strategies and tactics used to complete the tasks. We were envious of the training site. However it is bittersweet to have such realistic venues available to use. It is apparent to us that this is a subject matter that they are well versed in. The crews work very well. The training was as real world as it gets, no simulations, and no corners were cut. The take away for us was sometimes we cut corners to make things easier, but we need to “practice like we play”.

# SAR Pictures



# SAR Pictures



# Day 6

In the morning we visited a Municipal Station, whose roles included sheltering and planning for events that impacted the community such as flooding. It was interesting how each of the levels of services fit together.

Then we were invited to watch a fire truck driver evaluation and drafting exercise. We were even allowed to participate. Been awhile since we had to shift gears manually in a fire truck, but we did pretty well.

# Driving Day



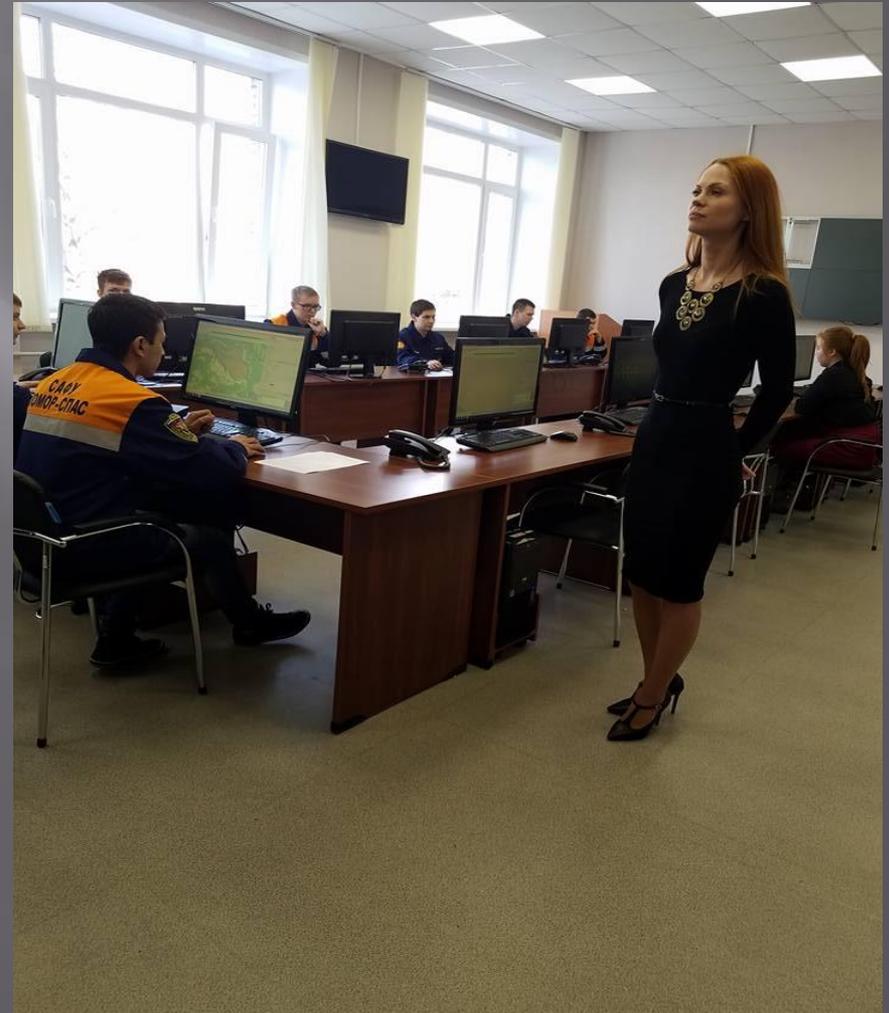
Next we visited the Northern Arctic Federal University. At first glance we compared this to SMCC's Fire science programs. However they are a four year program and also offer a Master Degree in emergency and industrial safety.

The classrooms were state of the art. The simulators and computer aided teaching equipment as good as anywhere we have seen. They even had a boat driving simulator. All of computers which interactive and allow for students from each discipline to be involved.

# Northern Arctic Federal University



# Northern Arctic Federal University



# Day 7

We returned back to Station 17 and met with the group to discuss our lessons learned and how to get the most out of our next visits.

Our hosts gave us all some very nice gifts and we focused our question and answer session to what each of us had learned during the week. We all agreed that our first two exchanges had been a great overview and we would focus our next groups on the best practices of each others departments.

# Wrap up Day



# Wrap up Day



# Russian Banya

Our last day was a rest and relaxation day. Our Russian hosts treated us to a day at the Banya. This was something that none of us had ever experienced before. It was very relaxing and invigorating with the swim in the icy river. The food and drink and conversation was the perfect way to end our visit.

# Banya



# Looking Forward

As we prepare for our next visit, I think we were all inspired to make the most out of it. On the flight home and since, we have all been talking and planning to learn and share and bond as much as possible. We have all made new friends and learned that no matter the language or the country. Firefighters are all Brothers and Sisters. Thank you to the Archangel Committee for allowing us to share in such a great once in a life time experience .