**A Firefighters Story from Eastern Washington**

The mantra “Do More With Less” is a tremendous challenge for a profession already stretched of vital resources. For decades volunteer and rural firefighters have come to the aid of friends and neighbors when fire has threatened lives, homes and memories. However, recent years have challenged this admirable and dedicate core with dwindling resources while costs, training requirements and the population of previously uninhabited lands steadily increase.

There may seem no easy resolve. The number of volunteers is steadily decreasing in many Eastern Washington fire districts and as those numbers decrease training and safety requirements, very much supported by the Chiefs, are increasing.

There are Chiefs in eastern Washington who, due to limited resources, will not and cannot engage in interior attack. A commendable decision when the threat to firefighters rightfully dictates safety before sacrifice. The threat, however, has changed. It has become greater than it should. A single room and contents fire, once managed through a calculated, offensive, interior attack, now becomes a defensive operation; hold the fire, not to the room of origin, but to the structure of origin. The once aggressive volunteer fire fighter is fast becoming a manager of controlled burns.

But we still want our community to feel safe, cared for and protected. We still want to help protect our neighbors and we feel we have found a way. Residential sprinkler systems.

Residential sprinkler systems will become our partners in fire protection.

* As the numbers of rural firefighters continue to decrease residential sprinkler systems will continue to stand ready to protect.
* As training and safety requirements for the protection of our members continue to increase residential sprinkler systems will be ready to respond with minimal attention.
* As our environment, our water and our air, continues to be of concern, worthy of good stewardship, residential sprinkler systems will limit the demands of those precious resources.
* As the cost of development, access roads, water systems for fire flows and storm sewer requirements continue to increase residential sprinkler systems remain affordable and effective.
* As firefighters become more and more restricted in their ability to help their communities in the traditional fire attack model they are afforded an option to ensure the safety of their friends and neighbors; residential sprinkler systems.

I am opposed to removing the fire sprinkler requirement in the IRC and I am in support of a statewide requirement.