Dear Council, Citizens, Regional colleagues,

We protect, preserve, and restore public safety through programs and services of the Lesser Slave Regional Fire Service, 9-1-1, and emergency and disaster response systems. We do this with a staff of 105 dedicated paid on call, volunteer, part time personnel and 9 fulltime staff, in partnership with community agencies, social partnerships, and a network of provincial and federal departments and emergency management agencies.

In 2016 we continued to move forward in a positive and responsive way. I am proud to say that our fire service is strong, and very capable. The diverse, dedicated men and women have used teamwork, respect, and leadership to protect and educate the residents and visitors within our region. This vast area has grown with the change thrust upon it, and we continue to meet new challenges on a daily basis. It is with your support that we succeed.

The pride and respect that our team has for the residents in this region can be felt every time they are asked to help, support, volunteer, or educate the people in our many communities. From the Safety Fair at Walmart, to Fire Prevention Week, and our open houses to the Future Firefighter Program, our firefighters enjoy spending time with the people they protect. Fundraising efforts throughout the year, Smile Cookie Week, Slave Lake Fishing Tournament, and others show their commitment to the Firefighters Society and their responsibility to the communities we are part of. The Firefighters Society donates equipment, and money to support community groups, educational endeavors, and the Lesser Slave Regional Fire Service. In 2016 the Slave Lake Firefighters Society supported the Regional Fire Service and Search and Rescue with over $30,000. Our firefighters and SAR personnel worked hard to assist and partner with many Alberta fire, sar, and forestry crews.

The Lesser Slave Regional Fire Service attended 314 calls regionally in 2016. Having this many calls stretches the regional firefighters and SAR staff, their families and employers. We have researched and discussed options for 2017 to ease this burden and will move forward as sustainably and affordably as possible. Recruitment and retention are our top priorities for 2017.
**Annual Stats at a glance:**

In 2016 the emergency response personnel (firefighters, SAR) in our region trained and responded for a total of **10 854 hours**, including all practices, and certified training, and responses for all people.

**Fire services callouts – 3623 hours total.**

**Training hours for each hall consisted of the following:**

- **Hall 1** – Slave Lake – 2737 hours
- **Hall 2** – Widewater – 644 hours
- **Hall 3** – Smith – 370 hours
- **Hall 4** – Flatbush – 410 hours
- **Hall 5** – Mitsue – 374 hours
- **SAR** – 1256 hours

**TOTAL above** – 5791 hours

**Exercises** – 800 hours

**All day training sessions** – 640 hours

**Responses all halls** – 3623 hours

**Total all categories** – **10 854 hours**

Crews spent 1382 total hours on MVA’s.

**Incidents by hall – 2016**

- **Hall 1** – Slave Lake – 252
- **Hall 2** – Widewater – 27
- **Hall 3** – Smith – 44
- **Hall 4** – Flatbush – 18
- **Hall 5** – Mitsue – 12
- **SAR** – 7

**Total for all** – **360 (314 calls, 46 where halls assisted each other)**
A total of 314 calls for the regional crews in 2016 kept them very busy. This is a huge commitment for firefighters, SAR personnel, and their families, friends and employers.

There were a total of two forestry structure protection deployments which included firefighters from across the region. We were deployed to Fort McMurray and High Level. This year was a record breaker for us in our abilities to assist the provincial government with these structure protection projects, protecting thousands of people, and hundreds of homes.

To maintain this pace our regional members train throughout each week on the various tasks facing them:

- Emergency response and structural firefighting
- Search and Rescue – land, air, water
- Wildland and vehicle firefighting
- Technical rescue – confined space, high angle, water, ice and swift water rescue
- Dangerous Goods
- Emergency vehicle – pumps, aerial, tankers
- Community safety programming
- Prevention, inspections, investigations

Certified training included: 1001 professional firefighter, 472 dangerous goods, 1006 technical rescue, SAR managers, team leader, aerial as well as all of our in house training

**Regional Life Safety Program**
Inspections for 2016

Total  67
TSL    59
MD 124  8

Fire Investigations for 2016

Total  14
TSL    10
MD 124  4

There were 186 public service calls. This is a new tracking system put in place for 2015 to account for requests from the public. Public service calls include: inspections, investigations, open houses, school visits, Firesmart education at schools, and boat patrols.

Life Safety – Public Interactions 2016

The Lesser Slave Regional Fire Service had a total of 2338 interactions during our public events in 2016.

This included:

1528 with children, 610 with adults.

Open houses for 2016: 700 in Slave Lake, 200 at MD open houses.

The breakdown by type of interaction is below:

Education  153
Fire Prevention  721
Firesmart  126
Safety and First aid  200
Open houses  755
Public service  184
Tours  199

Regional crews interacted with 30% of Slave Lake residents, and 20% of MD 124 residents. The public and crews enjoyed this year’s public relations greatly, especially all of our open houses during Fire Prevention Week.
Memorable Moments in 2016

I’m sure that 2016 couldn’t be broken down into one defining moment for us, but if I had to pick one I would say assisting Fort McMurray and High Level at the same time would rank at the top. From early May into June we had a string of unforeseen events that changed the way we look at ourselves, and how we have grown as a regional service. During the 2016 wildfire season we were called upon to assist with multiple events.

Although this year tested our crews and regional protective services partners we can say that we responded to, and assisted with everything sent our way. All were unique, and all were a huge surprise. This region has seen so many different types of disasters over the years that when we received calls for assistance from Fort McMurray and High level at the same time we sent regional crews to both. While crews were in both places we were handed another massive fire at the core of Slave Lake when the Lakeside Motor Inn burned down threatening other buildings and the public. Regional crews handled it all in stride, showing the true benefits of all the training and professionalism.
Providing Services that Residents Rely on

The regional fire service provides service with our dedicated, professional staff to all areas of the Town of Slave Lake, Municipal District of Lesser Slave River # 124, and the Sawridge First Nation. Services include: Firefighting, Rescue, Search and Rescue, Medical Assists, Duty Officer calls (alarms, false calls, requests from other agencies), technical rescue, dangerous goods, wildland firefighting, public service calls and disaster services training and operations. These services are provided in conjunction with our partners from the Regional Protective Services Group, which is regarded in the Province of Alberta as a very successful operational group.

Hall 1 – Slave Lake

Hall 1 in Slave Lake is home to 30 part paid firefighters, 8 part time duty officers, 4 fulltime staff, 4 Firesmart staff (100% provincially funded), 1 administrative support, 1 student, 12 Future Firefighters. Equipment consists of 4 pickups, 1 laddertruck, 3 municipal pumpers, 1 tanker, 1 wildland truck, and a 6x6 UTV. Firesmart equipment: Tractor and implements, Bobcat and mulcher, Bobcat implements, 1 ton truck, chipper, and trailers are also housed here.

Hall 2 – Widewater

Hall 2 in Widewater is home to 10 part paid firefighters. Equipment consists of tanker, municipal pumper, and a Firesmart sprinkler trailer. This was a new building in 2012. Also houses 25 SAR people and their equipment trailer and Quad.
Hall 3 – Smith

Hall 3 in Smith is home to 12 part paid firefighters. Equipment consists of a tanker, and a municipal pumper. This hall also has a SCBA fill station.

Hall 4 – Flatbush

Hall 4 in Flatbush is home to 13 part paid firefighters. Equipment consists of a tanker (replaced with a 2500 gallon tandem axle in 2015), and a municipal pumper. The building was newly renovated in 2011, with new siding added in 2015.

Hall 5 – Mitsue
Hall 5 in MD 124 Industrial Park is home to 12 part paid firefighters. Opened in 2013 the firehall houses a 69 foot elevated waterway, a municipal pumper, Firesmart Education trailer, and a 4 bottle high pressure air trailer.

**Search and Rescue**

This group is housed at Hall # 2 in Widewater and has 25 volunteer members. Equipment consists of an equipment trailer (new 2017 donated by Slave Lake Petroleum), quad. The group uses shared resources with the regional fire service that include: Command trailer, 6x6 UTVs, pickups, firehalls as needed. They operate with a fully volunteer crew and had many successful operations in 2016.
Regional Live Fire Training Centre

The regional live fire training center is located just off highway 88 by the CN railway and is home to multiple training events every month. All live fire, confined space, sprinkler, water management, and vehicle extrication exercises are done at this facility. The facility includes a 4400 square foot burn unit, confined space prop, 3 propane burn props, full classroom, and compressed air breathing system. The facility has been built up since 2005 and is a valuable asset for the regional protective services group. 2016 allowed us to use a GOA grant (Community Improvement Program) fundraised money and volunteer hours to add a 53 foot high angle training prop that allows our technical rescue team the ability to train for the dozens of possible emergencies found at oil, and gas plants, and mills in the Mitsue Industrial Park. This facility has been made possible by donations from tri council, the Alberta Government, and dozens of local businesses. The firefighters and Slave Lake Firefighters Society built this from the ground up, and enjoy the training done here very much.

Firesmart Program
This 100% provincially funded program is in its 5th year. Housed at Hall 1 in Slave Lake this crew of 4 works on FireSmart projects, assists the regional fire service, and contracts wildland firefighting to Forestry out of the Slave District. Their equipment consists of: Tractor and implements, Bobcat and mulcher, Bobcat implements, 1 ton truck, chipper, and trailers. Lockers and maintenance are done at Hall 1, and equipment storage is split between Hall 1 and the newly renovated FireSmart trailer.

The FireSmart program continues and we will support this endeavor with all applicable resources, and fight back against wildfires in our region with pre-suppression planning, sprinkler trailer training, education and increased firefighting capabilities.
Dangerous Goods Responses

Dangerous Goods NFPA 472 at a local shop in Slave Lake.

All regional firefighters are trained in DG awareness, 50 regional firefighters are trained to operations level, including fully encapsulating suits, decontamination, and use of their DG equipment.

Fire Prevention and Life Safety

Fire Prevention and Life Safety are key inspection and education programs within the region. 54 fire and life safety inspections are done annually on residential homes, businesses, schools, hotels, senior lodges. All inspections and fire actions are done by 7 local Basic Fire Safety Codes Officers from 2 halls and logged in an Inspection database. Fire investigations are done with insurance representatives and local RCMP. The education pieces are with the regional children, from the Flatbush Playschool to the Southshore playschool, and all in between the firefighters enjoy talking fire safety with the kids and showing off our friend SPARKY the fire dog. Countless hours are spent showing the fire safety tips, STOP, DROP, and ROLL and many other fire and injury prevention topics. Throughout the year firefighters throughout the region host open houses, hall tours, take part in parades, and engage the public whenever and wherever possible.

Hall and Equipment Maintenance

Maintenance is done by a maintenance officer, high school student, contractors, and town and MD staff. These are busy jobs that help to maintain 5 firehalls, 36 pieces of mobile apparatus, 50 small engines, 60 portable radios, 60 self-contained breathing apparatus, 6 sets of heavy hydraulics, 2 aerial apparatus, 110 sets of firefighters gear, thousands of feet of hose and
hundreds of other pieces of firefighting and rescue gear. The sheer volume of the equipment that needs daily, weekly, monthly, and annual inspections and repairs is overwhelming, but is done with an extensive schedule, maintenance program and an excellent team of dedicated professionals.

(Picture above 5 frontline pumpers from all 5 regional halls – in for equipment standardization – equipment in these five trucks are 75% in same locations making it easier for regional firefighters)

2017 – The Year Ahead

2017 - The year ahead still looks challenging but the loyal, hardworking, dedicated staff of the Lesser Slave Regional Fire Service are up for the challenge. Our firefighters are motivated, our officers, and advisory committee are excited for the future and our full time staff are planning and moving forward. With continued support from all three councils the LSRFS will continue to
provide the residents of the region with high quality, timely, professional services in an affordable reality.

We will continue to cross train in all areas of emergency response including wildland firefighting, disaster response and planning, NFPA 1001 professional firefighting operations, NFPA 1002 aerial operations, NFPA 472 Dangerous Goods operations, technical rescue, incident command system, and emergency medical training. We will maintain our schedules for maintenance, training, callouts, duty officer work, committees, and community support. We will continue to support and encourage the Firefighters Society to build and secure the Lesser Slave Regional Fire Service, and the communities we live and work in.

We are very proud of some of new programming, including the Community Heroes Program, and the Regional Protective Services Committee and will work hard to continue these programs.

**WE WILL BE PREPARED FOR WHATEVER COMES OUR WAY.**

**WE WILL PROTECT THE PEOPLE THAT LIVE AND PLAY IN OUR REGION.**

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**Challenges for 2017 and beyond……..**

As we move forward with the Lesser Slave Regional Fire Service we must also look at the challenges facing us. In 2012 the Fire Service Review was done by a consultant. With the information provided within this document and the Fire Underwriters Survey completed for the
Town and MD in 2010 we have started working on a Lesser Slave Regional Fire Service master plan. We have been acting on high priority recommendations and planning for the challenges of the rest.

As we normalize and find ways to do business according to standards and national guidelines we also always look to the sustainability of the fire service. We understand that we compete for municipal and provincial dollars with all departments and pride ourselves in doing as much in house as possible. The Firefighters Code of Practice OH&S for Alberta has forced us to change the way we operate and look at our “volunteer” workforce as part time employees. There are still many OH&S standards that we fight to meet annually. Two areas we are very proud of are our medical and physical testing of our firefighters. This program helps firefighters with their own personal health and safety.

The fire service has changed over the last decade and we will need to change with it to survive. We are doing assessments of our training programs, maintenance schedules, equipment needs, and building requirements. In both studies recommendations were presented and we have continued to research these recommendations and plan for the future. New training schedules for all regional halls have been implemented since 2012, a new complete maintenance schedule is now being followed, and equipment trials and purchasing are ongoing. Hall # 1 has seen growth and we are working and reworking areas to allow for a balance between full time, part time and volunteer staff, leaving all with areas to work out of. We are researching ways to meet OH & S legislation while not burdening the taxpayer. Hall 1 and 3 are short of training, office, and maintenance space, but we are working with these issues and budgets to find affordable and realistic solutions.

Using our fulltime capacity to assist with scheduling, training, and projects alleviates some pressure from our volunteer firefighters. We will continue to explore solutions that work for all, in a sustainable, affordable fashion. In 2017 we will look at our Firesmart crew, and DC rural ops positions to make sure we are using these 100% provincially funded recovery positions to their fullest extent to benefit the municipalities we serve. We have started working with the Province of Alberta to find long term solutions and funding that will see this crew and others flourish. Tracking and budgets are of a huge concern to the Lesser Slave Regional Fire Service, and we work hard to stay on budget while being proactive and responsible.

Our database allows for more efficient tracking of personnel, training, maintenance, inventory, callouts, and inspections and investigations to meet the fire services’ needs.

**Recruitment and retention of firefighters is our top priority.** With high call volumes and the busy lives of our residents it has come to be the top priority of the regional fire service. We need to find, recruit, and train dozens of new firefighters over the next few years to maintain our viability as a fire service. The regional fire service has been reinvented over the last five years and we will sell ourselves to these potential firefighters. By providing the best training, equipment, and protective gear we can afford we will be successful in recruiting new firefighters and keeping all firefighters within the system.