

## Customer Service and the Fire Service

The fire service has changed drastically over the years. “Mostly for the good”, however, a concept that has been long coming is viewing those that we have sworn to protect and serve as our “customers”. It is a concept that the private industries have embraced for many years. The fire service and namely the Salida Fire Protection District has and continues to view every interaction with the public as an opportunity to serve and make a positive impact on our customers in our community.

A very successful business in the area of customer service has a motto that would serve us well. 100% satisfaction for everything they sell is not a just a goal it is a guarantee. Their motto states *“All our products are guaranteed to give 100% satisfaction in every way, if otherwise, return it for a full refund”*. That type of attitude serves us well. The citizens of Salida who call us with their problems are not interruptions to our work they are our work. In their time of need and crisis they are dependant upon us, however we are also dependant upon them.

Attitudes are very important. Everyday we serve the community and we have the opportunity to showcase our positive attitude. As the calls for service increase so does our interaction with those we serve. Over half of our calls for service are for medical aids. In most cases not only do we interact with the patient but also family members and in some cases bystanders. This experience although an emergency and trying on everyone involved should be a positive experience for our customers. Although we cannot solve every problem we should do our best to make an honest good faith attempt using all of our abilities and resources to help the person or persons involved.

We are in almost all cases the first emergency personnel to arrive on scene. That puts the Salida Fire District in a very important role. We can and should view ourselves as the principle safety net for the citizens of Salida. The Salida Fire Protection District has long had an active role in the community of Salida and all its firefighters have a great desire to serve the “customers” of this great community. As professionals we must provide excellent service on each and every call, to each and every customer. It is a role that our members do not take lightly and it is a torch we carry proudly.