



Tsuut'ina Nation Fire Rescue Service, AB, Canada

The 34-member Tsuut'ina Nation Fire Rescue Service protects the lives and property of about 2,100 residents, who occupy some 700 homes -- many clustered in a residential development with city services and others spread across the 110-square miles of mostly undeveloped prairie and marshland. Firefighters also serve as medical First-Responders, usually arriving ahead of the ambulance service provided by Alberta Health Services. The Nation's borders are bounded on the east and a portion of the north by dense, suburban developments of Calgary, a city of 1.3 million people.

Deputy Chief Tom Jukes' first experience with Aladtec came when he joined the agency in early 2019. He was told some of the members had used Fire Manager, Aladtec's old name, with other departments, and had recommended it. The department had sought out a scheduling solution to meet the needs of both full- and part-time employees that was user-friendly, cost-effective, and reliable, Jukes said in an e-mail exchange.

Previously, department leaders assembled monthly schedules on spreadsheets. "It was inefficient as it took up a lot of time and also made scheduling coverage for book-offs difficult as it meant phoning, texting, or e-mailing all of the part-time employees. A switch was needed to reduce administration time," Jukes said.

Jukes liked Aladtec from the start. He uses the Required Messages utility frequently. "We use that when it's [conveying] messages we need to know people have read, so typically directives or policy changes that need to be reviewed or read by all staff. We just put out our Cold Weather Operations Directive (reminding staff that fire pumps need to be drained daily to prevent freeze-up). That way, there's no excuses like 'I didn't see that memo,' so it's those higher-level things that we need to make sure each person reads, and we have a record of them reading it."

He also likes the Forms tool.



Department Info:

Roster: 34 firefighters, 5 command and admin staff.

Calls for service: 303 in 2018.

Apparatus: One engine, a tender, an aerial, a rescue truck, two bush buggies and a UTV equipped for wildland firefighting, a sprinkler trailer, a Tiger Dam trailer, and two command vehicles.

Unique challenges: Sheer diversity of their assignments -- from very rural firefighting and rescue calls, to issues involving their popular suburban casino and hotel.

Aladtec users since 2017

Neighboring agencies also using Aladtec:

Rocky View County Fire Service, Calgary; 4 Seasons Transportation, Calgary; Town of Okotoks, Okotoks; Cochrane Fire Services, Cochrane; Foothills Fire Dept., High River; Foothills Regional 911, High River; High River Fire Dept., High River; Wheatland EMS, Strathmore; Nakoda Ambulance Service, Morely; Kananaskis Fire Department, Kananaskis





“Before, everything was old-fashioned, done on paper. We’re now using Forms for all our check sheets for all the trucks, and I’ve found it just [provides] real-time reporting instead of a sheet being filled out that eventually makes its way across my desk and I realize this piece of equipment is damaged, or something is missing off the truck. It lets me know immediately if there are deficiencies or something needs to be repaired or replaced.”

“We have started using it for our apparatus checks, which has allowed for real-time reporting, reduction in paper, and a more effective process. And we’re going to begin using it for Incident Reports in the new year as well,” said Jukes.

“Our members love Aladtec. It makes booking time off a simple process for our fulltime staff. It also allows for a fair process for our part-time staff to sign up for shifts,” he said. “The ability to message members has also been a huge help as it allows us to get information out right away.”

Calgary’s continued growth has provided new opportunities for the Tsuut’ina people. In 2007, the Nation constructed the Grey Eagle Casino on its eastern border, readily accessible to the greater Calgary area. The casino’s success spurred the construction of a hotel in 2012 and an expansion in 2014. The Nation recently opened the \$56 million Seven Chiefs Sportsplex, one of the most extensive sports facilities in the province. It has two NHL-sized indoor arenas, an outdoor rink, a fitness center, multipurpose gym, and more, and is expected to draw 500,000 visitors annually. A new Costco retail center is set to open in late 2020.

“The new highway’s going through, and because of it, the Nation has set aside three parcels of dedicated lands so, over the next 10 years, there’s going to be a tremendous amount of development,” said Jukes, citing Costco, and planned residential and shopping complex investments expected to tally \$3 billion.

“The Nation’s going to be quite prosperous, so because of that, all the Nation’s services will grow. As a fire department, we are going to double in size over the next five to eight years. We’re going to have a second hall that will be built once the development up toward Gray

Eagle starts, and we’ll be doubling our staff as part of that,” said Jukes.

“Overall, [Aladtec] is super user-friendly. I didn’t have anyone sit down and go over things with me. Everything I’ve touched -- both from using it and from behind the scenes administrative stuff -- it’s a pretty easy system to use. The hardest part when you’re building a form is to remember to hit ‘save,’ as bad as that sounds. Super-easy platform to use, and that’s both using it from a phone in the mobile version or using the desktop version, which I use a fair amount.”

Jukes has contacted Aladtec Support a few times. “The customer service is amazing. Anytime we call our problem has been solved, and the service has been great. From an administrative perspective, it is a simple program to use that saves time and makes managing staff much easier.

“We had a couple of people that changed platoons, so just getting their rotations and stuff all put in properly, was the first time I’d done it. I just ran into some trouble, so calling them and getting them to walk through the process has been super-helpful. And the same way, we promoted someone from floor staff into an administrative role, so just calling [Support] to make sure we were doing things right. I have nothing but positive things to say, every time I’ve called, the problem has been fixed right away, which is nice.”



Dpty. Chief Tom Jukes

Tom Jukes has 16 years of fire service experience. He was named Deputy Fire Chief, Operations & Training, at Tsuut’ina Nation Fire Rescue Service in early 2019. Previous, he served with Brampton (ON) Fire & Emergency Service, the Fort McMurray (AB) Fire Dept., and the Airdrie (AB) Fire Dept. He gained technical rescue experience as a member of the Brampton Tech-Rescue team, and helped develop a tech-rescue program for Airdrie Fire. He is passionate about training, and developing training programs.