

**EXCHANGE:** Program has been in place for several years

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fourth year, Burke said

“It really contributes to the professional officer relationship cross-station, and cross-nation,” he noted.

Burke enjoyed getting to run and train with a different department and see how things work in a different environment.

“I didn’t have any agenda going in and was really open-minded to learning new tactics and techniques,” Burke said.

The main difference the two firefighters noticed during their time was the difference in construction.

“They have all old, brick buildings, whereas here we have wood and fast-burning materials,” said Burke.

There, the burn time is longer and the structure holds up better. Both got to practice using an ultra-high-pressure lance unit which is a specialized high-pressure water hose that shoots metal shards and water through brick to make it safer for firefighters to enter.

The department there does not have an EMS sector, they strictly deal with fire calls and rescue calls — no patient care — which was a difference from the training and interaction EMTs have at the Sisters department.

“We spent every day with the department training on buildings and in different environments and assisting on rescues and jump calls,” said Burke.

Burke’s favorite part of the exchange was getting to develop personal relationships with the crew and connecting over their profession, whilst still learning other training and methods.

“The experience was eye-opening and rewarding. We all fight fire similarly, and we learn from each other, and in the end, it is about making the profession better,” said Burke.

Damon Frutos is a firefighter paramedic and the “acting in capacity” officer (where he takes over an officer position if one is otherwise disposed).

He was the second officer on the exchange with Burke. Frutos, before coming to Sisters, had other experiences with departments in Washington so he knew the importance of working alongside other departments.

“Having other experience and then going on the exchange helped me to learn that people have other ways of doing things,” said Frutos.

Frutos had wanted to do

the exchange for many years, getting to go to a different location and learn on-site and in a city environment. The equipment and construction differences allowed for a broader understanding of how fire is dealt with overseas.

“They use engines and mechanisms with a higher volume of water and just overall different tactics when approaching a fire because all their buildings are quite different than ours,” said Frutos.

“The hazmat team there is a lot bigger and a lot more involved because it is an international and highly urbanized area,” he said.

Another thing Frutos appreciated about the

experience was getting to work and explore the buildings in Hampshire and surrounding London area that carry hundreds of years of history. “The buildings there, there are some that are older than our country and saw war and moments in history; it was interesting to see how they were built and how fire is fought within them,” he said.

With the training, the departments are able to learn from one another about various techniques and approaches they have to firefighting.

The two wanted to take back with them the hands-on experiences they had and put more tools in the tool belt.



PHOTO BY PHOTO PROVIDED

Sisters firefighters Damon Frutos and Pat Burke trained in a highly urbanized environment — with different spaces and building types than they are used to here.



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Damon Frutos and Pat Burke participated in a firefighter exchange program in Hampshire, England, last month.

“We are such a rural area, we have to constantly be thinking and training for that once-in-a lifetime type of call, and this experience adds to that tool belt of knowledge, which is the most important part of the training so we are prepared,” said Frutos.

The firefighters worked every day with the Hampshire department, but didn’t go on a huge number of calls (they said due to the fact that they were there, calls weren’t as frequent). But they got to train on and in various building types, learn rescue operations and explore the world of firefighting in an urbanized area.

One of the most memorable moments for both of the firefighters was their day with the London Fire Brigade on the London Fire Boat

being taken down the River Thames.

“We got to see how the boat works, and historically where it was docked right in the heart of London,” said Frutos.

Burke would like to go back to England as a visitor.

“I would love to return to the area and take my kids to explore the New Forest,” said Burke.

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