

3-2015

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Scholarly Commons Citation

Herron, R., & Graber, J. (2015). Boeing Workshop: Aircraft Construction and Familiarization. *Aircraft Rescue Fire Fighting Working Group News*, 26(2). Retrieved from <https://commons.erau.edu/publication/88>

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Boeing Workshop: Aircraft Construction and Familiarization

by Rene Herron and Jason Graber

In May, the ARFF WG, Boeing Fire Department (BFD), and Port of Seattle Fire Department (Sea-Tac) offered an aircraft construction, familiarization and educational workshop. This three-day training event reached the full capacity of fifty attendees and focused upon the Pacific Northwest ARFF training and Boeing Aircraft production for the 737, 747, 777 and 787 aircraft. Attendees represented thirteen U.S. states and three foreign countries: Canada, Germany and Singapore.

The workshop began with a full day of presentations on various current topics of interest within the ARFF industry from representatives of several Pacific Northwestern emergency agencies. After initial welcomes and introductions, Lieutenant Dan Atchison, from the Washington State Fire Training Academy, joined a panel of BFD and Sea-Tac officers for an open discussion. The audience took advantage of this session and asked questions on a range of pertinent topics within the industry. Aaron Tyerman, with King County Medic One, presented on his experience with infectious disease, active shooter, and rescue task force. During lunch, Battalion Chief Jason Graber, ARFF WG Director of Section 2, discussed educational trends and opportunities for the ARFF industry personnel. In the afternoon, Pat Clancy, Manager of Airport Certification at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, spoke about SMGCS and low-visibility operations at the airport, while Captain Keysha Ross, Officer-in-Charge at the CDC Seattle Quarantine Station, briefed the group about the CDC's role and procedures with infectious diseases. Assistant Fire Chief Keith Taylor concluded the first day of the workshop by sharing information about the triennial drill conducted at the Port of Seattle, which consisted of over 300 victims.

Day two of the seminar consisted of a tour of the Everett Boeing facility, which is the recorded largest building by volume in the world, and houses the manufacturing of the 747, 777 and 787 aircraft. ARFF WG participants were joined with some staff from Sea-Tac and Port of Portland (PDX), as Boeing ARFF personnel and engineers guided the group through the specific aircrafts. With these subject matter expert guides the tour was extremely in-depth and provided attendees with a unique insight into the creation, design, and safety features of the aircraft.

On day three, the participants traveled to the Renton Boeing facility, which is the manufacturing location of the 737 aircraft. The day was split between another extensive tour of an aircraft that is a workhorse in the aviation industry and two additional lectures. Derek White and Jerry Paluszek, from Boeing, spoke about aircraft recovery and salvage using various methods and equipment. Then Assistant Chief Rob Mathis, ARFF WG Director of Section 6, addressed the group about seat belt airbags, Emergency Locator Transmitters (ELT) and evacuation slides.

The comprehensive guided tours of both Boeing facilities and specified discussions were an aviation enthusiast's dream. The level of detail and knowledge gained from this experience was priceless. The ARFF WG is working with Boeing to provide this program again within the next few years. Please watch for this opportunity, because it is not one to miss!



A very special thank you is extended to the Boeing Company for allowing the ARFF WG members such access. Additionally, recognition and thanks for all of their hard work are given to Boeing Fire Chief Michael Mauvais, Sea-Tac Chief Randy Krause, Boeing Assistant Chief Rob Mathis, Sea-Tac Assistant Chief Jason Schnase, PDX Battalion Chief Alan Lashbrook, MWA Battalion Chief Jason Graber, and Boeing Fire Captain Bill Streuber. Thanks are also extended to Boeing Assistant Chief Kevin Hayes for the use of the photograph. ■

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