



Winter Issue

# U r Smart

magazine

## Brotherhood of firefighters

With the help of a 911 fund, volunteer firefighters are coming together to make a difference

## Steak to please

Steak lovers in the Otero County area, finally you have options

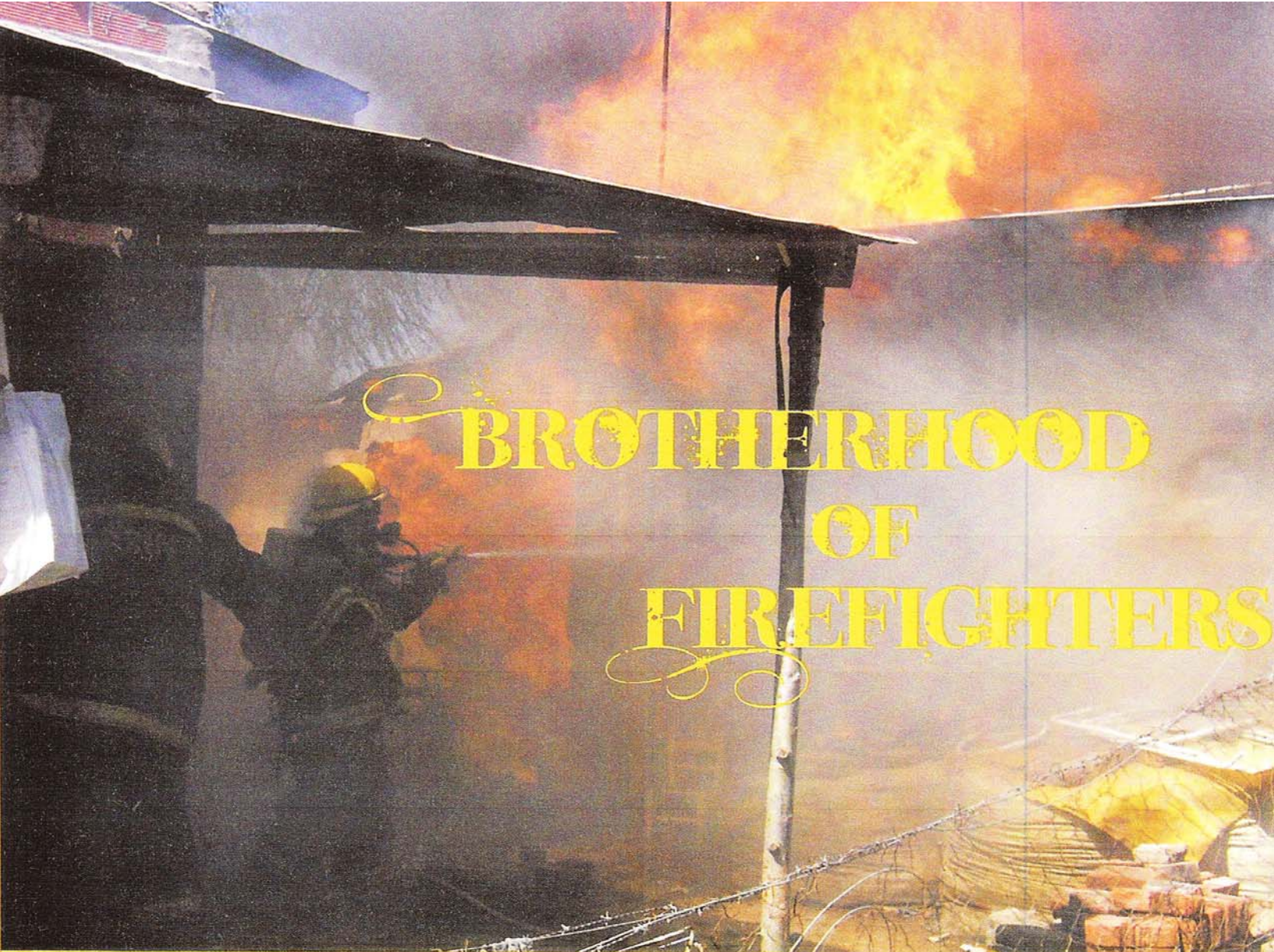
## Flying into desert blue

We are a unit, part of the vehicle, embedded in the space between earth and sky.



Enriching Lives

in Otero & Lincoln  
Counties



# BROTHERHOOD OF FIREFIGHTERS

As Dennis Haas from Ruidoso cleared customs and entered into the waiting area of Ezeiza International Airport in Buenos Aires, he immediately recognized the faces of friends he hasn't seen in over a year. And as usual, he was met by ten or so members of the Bomberos Voluntarios de Garin (Garin Volunteer Firefighters), including some of the wives. It is nice to be back in Argentina and to be a part of something so gratifying.

Dennis and the other 4 men traveling with him represent the 911 FUND, an international non-profit group whose sole mission is to provide free equipment and training to firefighters around the world in an effort to reduce risk for those who defend their communities against the ravages of fire. These men are joined by Dr. Stephan Hittmann, Director of the 911 FUND and two other firefighters from

New York, who arrive about an hour later.

All have donated a week of time to instruct firefighting classes at the 2nd Annual International Training Conference in Garin, and to share the camaraderie that binds them as a brotherhood of firefighters.

Since Dennis's first visit in 2005 when he and Dr. Hittmann answered a plea for help from Adrian Peralta, Chief of the Garin Volunteer Firefighters, the 911 FUND has donated countless hours of training, hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of firefighting equipment and no less than a dozen emergency vehicles to the firefighters and communities of Argentina, all of which were donated by fire departments across the United States.

This 2nd Annual Conference is attended by about one hundred firefighters

from as far away as Paraguay, with some driving twenty-two hours to attend. This team, made up of both active and retired firefighters from California, New Mexico, New Jersey and New York are joined by a dog trainer and handler from North Carolina who has donated a drug interdiction dog and will be training a police officer to handle and use the dog over the next few days. The others jobs will be to conduct four main topics of training.

First and foremost is firefighter safety, which all of the firefighters will receive on Day 1 of the conference. Then on the second day, the firefighters are divided into groups and will receive training on pre-hospital care and patient packaging that is taught by a Paramedic from New Jersey and an EMT from New York; or, they may attend a fireground operations course that includes ladder use and live fire training,



taught by a firefighter from New Jersey and California; or lastly, a pump operations course that will focus on water supply shuttling operations, as there is no fire hydrant system to utilize. This is the course that Dennis and a fire captain from New York will be teaching.

As they make their way along the congested roads of Buenos Aires, Dennis tells the "new guys" about the first visit to Argentina where they found many departments like Garin, who has about forty volunteers, yet had only about a dozen sets of protective clothing for their firefighters to share. Most of their fire trucks were thirty or more years old and in quite a state of disrepair. He told of riding to a fire with the Chief on that first visit to witness first hand, a "working" house fire and seeing firefighters with no hoods, no gloves, no protective pants and no breathing apparatus. Yet they, like firefighters around the world, have a job to do and they do it to the best of their ability. That job is unchanged despite their lack of protective equipment..... **TO SAVE LIVES & PROPERTY!** Now, within the span of five years, Garin has enough protective equip-

ment for each member and proudly displays five fire trucks, donated by gracious fire departments to the 911 FUND for donation to departments just like this.

The 911 FUND is making a difference in the lives of residents and firefighters here, and Dennis, who serves as a member of the International Advisory Board, is very grateful to be a part of it!! Just in 2009, the 911 FUND has donated eight fire trucks, one ambulance and a twenty foot container of firefighting equipment. The 911 FUND is known throughout Central and South America for donations to Panama, Columbia, El Salvador and Argentina.

The 911 FUND never solicits for money and will never accept money. However, they do accept donations of fire trucks, ambulances, command vehicles, protective clothing, EMS supplies and other usable items, such as airline miles or tickets that allow for teams to travel without expense to the foundation or to the firefighters of Argentina.

Even before the conference is over,

Dennis has been asked to return in March to teach a Wildland Fire Investigation course that he has developed to firefighters from the Patagonia region and forestry personnel of the National Parks of Argentina.



To donate items or for more information, go to [www.911FUND.org](http://www.911FUND.org) or contact Dennis Haas in Ruidoso at 575-808-2849 or email at [investig8@earthlink.net](mailto:investig8@earthlink.net), or Dr. Stephan Hittmann in New York at 914-479-8800 or email at [hittmann@911fund.org](mailto:hittmann@911fund.org).

