



Granite Mountain Hot Shots

"Esse Quam Videri"

March 27, 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

In 2004, Chief Darrell Willis, Chief Duane Steinbrink, Chief Tim McElwee, Marty Cole, Todd Rhines and others shared a vision to create a Wildland Fire suppression force that would set a new national precedent. After courageous support from the City of Prescott and much hard work and dedication from the crewmembers, in 2008, Granite Mountain Hotshots became the newest members of an elite group of Firefighters, the Interagency Hotshot Crews.

IHC's were formed by the US Forest Service in the late 1940's to provide a highly mobile, well trained, and disciplined work force to suppress the largest fires in the most inaccessible areas. Hotshot Crews quickly became recognized for having the highest level of physical fitness, the most training, the best cohesion and teamwork, and the ability to overcome problems in the most demanding and dynamic of situations. Today, there are 108 Interagency Hotshot Crews in the nation, providing not only the highest capabilities during wildfires, but responding to other all-risk incidents, such as hurricanes, floods and other natural disasters.

Granite Mountain IHC set a national precedent by becoming the first, and currently the only, IHC to ever be hosted by a municipal Fire Department. Breaking into a field dominated by federal resources was no easy task. If a business model is applied to our crew, we are in direct competition for personnel with the IHC's within the federal system. In order for our "business" to compete for highly capable and well trained employees, we must be able to offer them at least as good a deal as they can get elsewhere. Industry standard pay and benefits for our Full-Time Permanent staff is *imperative for recruitment and retention*. By the time a Hotshot Crewmember is qualified and capable to be promoted to Full-Time, they have generally five seasons of experience and training in all aspects of incident management and leadership. This process represents tremendous dedication from the employee and an investment on behalf of our entire organization to only hire and promote those people which display the highest levels of character. IHC's are bound by a national standard to maintain a certain number of career positions on each crew in order to foster the high level of productivity and crew cohesion necessary for the most challenging of assignments.

Granite Mountain Hotshots enjoy a strong reputation amongst our peers, and we will continue to display the same courage and vision that our founders instilled from the beginning. Our crewmembers take seriously the responsibility to represent our city and citizens both on and off duty, wherever we may be.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric Marsh", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Eric Marsh – Superintendent
Granite Mountain IHC