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\$171,000 TRAINING PROGRAM
FOR 600 FIREMEN SCHEDULED
BY UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

By Bobby Freddie
UM Information Services

MISSOULA--

Final preparations are being made at the University of Montana in the first stage of a unique \$171,000 training program for 600 paid firemen throughout the state.

The program, which is being handled through the UM Division of Continuing Education in cooperation with the office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Division of Fire Fighter Training, involves the use of audiovisual and instructional materials, primarily video tape recordings, which will be used to supplement fire departments' in-service training programs.

Laurence J. Nash, Butte, a UM graduate who has bachelor's degrees in radio-television and business administration, is program director. Nash, who is headquartered with the UM Department of Continuing Education on the Missoula campus, said the training facilities being offered the paid firemen in Montana may eventually be expanded to include the state's 6,000 volunteer firemen.

Money to purchase the equipment and support the training program is being granted by the State Department of Public Instruction from federal funds provided under the Vocational Educational Amendments of 1968.

The production facilities of the UM Department of Radio and Television are being used to produce the master tapes and to duplicate the tapes for various fire departments. At the same time, UM radio-TV students are gaining experience as production assistants.

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UM HAS TRAINING PROGRAM FOR FIREMEN--2

All of the fire fighting training tapes used in the program will be based on material contained in "The International Fire Service Training Association Fire Training Manuals."

Portions of the programs to be used in the training sessions will include video tapes of fire department training exercises, practice burns and, in some cases, actual fires.

Nash said this technique is useful because it allows firemen to see mistakes they make.

It also enables them to study fire fighting methods used in different parts of the state.

"Montana is the first state to begin training firemen in this manner on such a large scale," Nash emphasized. "This type of program has proven to be successful in many large cities, but it has never been attempted on a statewide basis anywhere in the nation before.

"The efficiency of firemen during practice drills increases considerably when they know their actions are being recorded on video tape," Nash said. "The increased efficiency is carried over into actual fire fighting situations."

The estimated cost of the training program over a five-year period is \$171,000. This includes the cost of video tape machines to be distributed on loan to each of 13 fire departments and the equipment needed by the UM radio-TV department to produce master tapes.

"These machines have been purchased and will be distributed to the participating fire departments during training sessions on the use of the machines on Jan. 17 in Great Falls, Jan. 19 in Billings, Jan. 21 in Butte and Jan. 24 in Missoula," Nash said.

Other towns represented at the training sessions and scheduled to receive the training equipment include Anaconda, Bozeman, Glendive, Havre, Helena, Kalispell, Lewistown, Livingston and Miles City.

The training sessions will be conducted under Nash's direction and will include complete operation of the television equipment. The equipment includes the Sony Videover II camera and portable tape recorder and a 19-inch video monitor to be used to view the television tapes.

Nash said the fire departments are being encouraged to use the video equipment to produce their own training tapes, which might include recording any actual fires the local training officers feel would prove valuable in improving fire fighting skills.