

## **Richard Cowger, Columbus (Montana) Rural Fire District #3**

### Why Do I Want to Serve as a VCOS Board Member?

I have spent my twenty-five-year fire service career, 15 years volunteer and 10 years paid, wanting and working in whatever ways I can to make the fire service a better place. I have done this at the local level and at the state level by serving as the Montana State Fire Chief's Association President for over 9 years. I'm not satisfied with status quo, or the attitude of just doing things because we have always done things this way. While I respect history and tradition in the fire service, I also believe in the fact that if we aren't looking into and working for the future, then we are going to stay in the past.

I was appointed to serve on the VCOS Board in August 2017 to fill a vacant board seat and since have been elected to serve as the Vice Chair, a position that I am very humbled to serve in. I believe that there are significant challenges that face the volunteer fire service in the years ahead, and there are challenges to migrating to, and managing successful combination departments as well. I think that my experience in managing that change from volunteer to combination in a positive way can help the VCOS stay strong. I bring to the Board an understanding of what it takes to make a rural department a success as well as understanding the role that EMS can play and the unique challenges and issues of wildland response.

It's a privilege and honor to serve on the VCOS board, and I want to continue to work hard for the volunteer and combination systems out there today to make a successful tomorrow. I hope you will give me that chance!