

United States and Canada.

They exchanged ideas and techniques on fighting fires, while polishing lifesaving skills at the fourth annual Fire Department Instructional Conference West this week in Sacramento.

"That's one of the neat things about FDIC," Valenzuela said. "It's nice to talk to (other firefighters) and see how they do things because there's more than one way to fight a fire."

out more than 45 fires.

The firefighters are heading home today with new concepts to share with and help train other personnel in their fire departments.

"It's a huge resource for us to be able to do what we call 'train the trainer,'" said Lisa Larsen, spokeswoman for the Rocklin Fire Department.

Larsen said that, as a teaching  
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Rocklin's Chris Valenzuela takes a break, but even lunchtime found firefighters at the conference comparing notes.

Robert Roscoe, a veteran of 25 years in retail water service, has been appointed general manager of the Sacramento Suburban Water District.

Roscoe has served most recently as Northern California manager of the California-American Water Co. in the Sacramento area and previously was vice president and general manager for Citizen's Utilities Co., which is now part of California-American. He was appointed to the Sacramento Suburban Water District's top

Sacramento Suburban board President Steve Eggert said the district received about 50 applications. Eggert said Roscoe was selected for his experience and his impeccable credentials.

"He's clean as a whistle," Eggert said.

Roscoe, 47, will assume his duties March 10. He was hired under a contract that expires Dec. 31, 2005. His starting salary is \$120,000 a year.

The contract includes a severance  
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# 1,600 cons doing time in the county jail are keeping it quiet

**Virtual jail:** Welcome to the Sacramento County jail where the gates are left open during the day. Where inmates sleep until noon, awaiting parole hearings. Where the food is tasty, guards friendly and nobody can remember the last suicide. Unlike the troubled main jail downtown, Rio Cosumnes Correctional Center near Elk Grove is a backwater. Nothing happens. The biggest problem is pruno, homemade wine. "That's the way we like it," said Sacramento County Sheriff's Sgt. Earl Warren, a veteran at the joint called R Triple C. The jail, with about 1,600 inmates, has dorms dating from the 1940s and modern security cells. Behind the fence, inmates can attend school, fix cars, grow veggies. Most R Triple C cons have been sentenced. They lack the anxiety of downtown inmates facing trial. "Down here, they

just want to do their time," said Earl, grandson of the late California governor and U.S. Supreme Court chief justice. They have a "prostraint" chair. They don't use it. An inmate boasted he could escape the chair. Just for kicks, he did. They close the gates at night. To keep visitors out. ...

**Still burning:** Ugly allegations of harassment among Sacramento firefighters don't shock Denise "Denny" Blehm. Denny and Anita Tager were the first female firefighters hired by the city in 1976. "This isn't the first time something like this has occurred," said Denny, who retired in 1997. "In the past, it has gone so far as to include physical contact. Employees were



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transferred then, too." This time, a woman found an obscenity written on her ax. Police and Fire Department managers are investigating - more than 30 firefighters have been interviewed - but aren't saying much. Denny blames the problems on "ignorance and contempt for the law." She closes with a question. "What's it going to take to hold people accountable and responsible for their actions?" Time will tell. ...

**Wrong watermelon:** Another injured party has emerged from the muck of the Memorial Auditorium appearance of Gallagher, whose show stopped being funny when a kid from the audience slipped on stage and was taken to Sutter General Hospital. (He

wasn't seriously hurt.) The latest victim is Jack Gallagher. Jack is a Sacramento-based comedian who is nothing like the other Gallagher, whose first name is Leo. "People have been coming to me and saying, 'So, Gallagher, I hear you're throwing kids off the stage.'" Jack said. "The other Gallagher, Leo, has been the bane of my existence for years. I tell people, Leo Gallagher smashes watermelons in his act. I use a microphone and try to get by on my wit. Big difference. But people still think I'm him." Process servers, take note. ...

**Celebrity swirl:** Rare is the Sacramento restaurant that can match Il Fornaio on Capitol Mall. The dining room is beautiful. The staff is attentive. This may explain why the actor Gene Hackman was enjoying a salad there. The trend in local celebrity sightings continued - nobody bothered

him. ...

**Up in smoke:** Ask tobacco executives to name their favorite place to defend a product-liability lawsuit. They could say Sacramento. Big shots from R.J. Reynolds and Philip Morris apparently were poised to fly to Sacramento to testify in the penalty phase of a suit filed by a smoker and cancer victim, Laurence Lucier. But a Sacramento jury found Big Tobacco not guilty. "The tide is turning," said Harold Gordon, a lawyer for R.J. Reynolds. "We've lost some cases. But hopefully, we can get more juries like this one." An endorsement unlikely to be adopted by the Metro Chamber of Commerce.



The Bee's R.E. Graswich can be reached at (916) 321-1087 or rgraswich@sacbee.com.