



**Golden Landmarks Association**  
*Preserving Our Past, Protecting Our Future*

## **Living Landmark Award**

**2011**

# **Golden Fire Department**

Golden Fire Department traces its beginning to January 16, 1872, when the newborn Golden Town Council enacted "An Ordinance Concerning the Fire Department" providing for the appointment of fire wardens in Golden. That October 2<sup>nd</sup>, volunteer citizens formed the Golden Hook & Ladder Company, from which members split in 1873 to form the rival Rescue Hook & Ladder Company. To avoid confusion, Golden's Hook and Ladder changed its name to Excelsior Fire Department No. 1. Still later, Rescue Hook & Ladder became F.E. Evert Hook & Ladder. Despite their rivalry, Golden's firefighters immediately united when Golden received a distress call from Central City on May 21, 1874, when a great fire was threatening to burn the entire city. Mayor William Loveland ordered the firemen into action, and they loaded all their equipment on one of his trains which made the narrow gauge trip in a record 1 hour and 20 minutes up Clear Creek Canyon. Golden's firefighters made their stand at the Teller House, saving it, the office of the Central City's newspaper, and the residential portion of the town. It was the first mutual aid call in Colorado history, and the largest scale urban firefighting Golden has done to date.

In 1877 the fire companies reorganized, with the Excelsiors renamed the Excelsior Hose Company, and the Rescuers becoming the Everett Hook & Ladder Company. W.A.H. Loveland succeeded in getting these rival companies together and formed the Loveland Hose Company. On December 1, 1879, the companies established the unified Golden Fire Department.

If it were not for Golden's Fire Department, we probably could not call ourselves "Historic" Golden. In the beginning, circa 1890, fires were small and quickly extinguished. In November of 1899, a defective flue almost took the Astor House. Mines students living there succeeded in confining the fire to the chimney. Additional historic buildings saved by our alert volunteers are: Woods Mortuary, Barnes Mansion, Opera House, Armory, Loveland Block, Old Capitol Grill, Rock Flower Mill, Courthouse, Stratton Hall, and two homes of the 12<sup>th</sup> Street Historic District.

In 2010, the Golden Fire Department responded to 1279 calls. They also have an award winning swift water team which trains departments nationwide. In November 2010, Fire Chief John Bales received the coveted John H. Buckman, III Award for his innovative program leadership presented by the Provident Insurance Company. Golden citizens consider their volunteer fire department second to none and to be true preservationists.