The Monthly Newsletter for the Urbandale Fire Department... December 2009

Merry Christmas

On the Line

Our Core Values: Pride, Respect, Duty, Unity, Integrity and Compassion.

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Special Gift from Monte Burr to our department...see page 6 for details.

Upcoming Events

The date for the 2010 Awards Banquet will be February 27th

Christmas Party—December 22nd

Fire Safety Video—See page 9 for details

Lt. Gentosi home for the holidays: December 18th

Be sure to check the pub-ed calendars for upcoming events!

UFD statistics for November

Calls for service: 179 YTD: 2,157

Average response Time – All incidents: **6 minutes and 47 seconds**

Average response Time – ***Emergency*** incidents: **6 minutes and 50 seconds**

Emergency Medical Service calls: 131

Average Response Time EMS: 6 minutes and 41 seconds

Emergency: 6 minutes and 45 seconds

Non-Emergency: 6 minutes and 39 seconds

Fire related calls: 48

Average Response Time Fire: 7 minutes and 02 seconds

Average turnout per fire incident: 6 people

We received mutual aid four times – three times for fire calls and once for an EMS call

We did not provide mutual aid in November.

Types of Fire Calls

The 48 fire calls we had in November fall into the following categories:

Fire / Explosion:	**10**
Overpressure, Overheat:	**1**
Service Calls:	**12**
Good Intent Calls:	**14**
False Calls:	**11**

Birthdays:

Dr. Healey Dec 11

Fully Involved, Flames Showing, or Just Smoldering?—Chief Jerry Holt

Sound like fire conditions? No…more like a personal check-up on how engaged you are in the fire department. I've always heard so much about "burn-out" and how it affects one's job but I haven't heard a lot about what I believe to be a deeper and more meaningful aspect of job satisfaction; you can't be "burned-out" if you were never on fire.

In my career, I've seen several people who said they were burned out. Some indeed were but others were not "burned-out" nor any where near "burn-out"; they had never even been on fire. Do you know what I mean? A person with three year's of experience who states that they are "so burned out from all of the calls". It is not likely in most systems that a person without ***many*** years of service is at the end of the rope with "all of the calls". Don't get me wrong, one can certainly "burn-out" in a high volume service, I just don't think it is that likely in a service like ours. I think there is more to the story than "burn-out" from the calls.

I have seen people say they were burned out. They had enough of the job and wanted to move on to something else. The job is certainly not for everyone but if one feels that they are at the end of the rope, I think an introspective look might reveal some other things that often get lumped into "burn-out". I am not talking about simply wanting to do something else – that's understandable. Many people have embarked on careers only to find later that they were not suited for that career. There is no shame in that. Interest change, lives change and as one grows, one might find that things they were once passionate about no longer hold the "fun" that they once did. Or one might simply find that the reality of the job doesn't match their perception of what the job was going to be.

So…if I am not talking about wanting to go in another direction, what am I talking about? I am talking about my definition of burn-out. That definition is when one spends so much time trying to facilitate change in a positive manner and they keep meeting resistance or roadblocks. Trying to make a difference but not being able to. You know, getting "beat down". I've seen it a lot in my career. "We just don't do it that way around here", "That's not the Urbandale (insert department name here) way" or "That's the way they do it the big city, we don't need any of that big city stuff around here". It really can beat you down to go out and find other ways of doing things simply to be told no all of the time. I think that is a very dangerous situation and sometimes even deadly (Charleston, SC?). There are plenty examples of departments that were not interested in outside training and "new" ideas…until it was too late.

So what does all of this have to do with the title of this article? Everything! Simply put, how are you doing within our department? Are you on fire? Or are you just smoldering because you could not get a change made? It can go either way…but one thing I am proud of in this department is your ability to facilitate change. You want a new SOG? Write one! Submit it for consideration. Want to change a procedure? Make a draft procedure and send it up the line. It will be considered. People who are fully-involved have suggestions and they make sure they get their ideas to the people who can give consideration to them. It requires work but it beat the alternative; sitting their smoldering with an idea that never is considered. I've seen that many times…"I've got a good idea but "they" won't do it". How do you know? You don't until you take it thought the chain of command for consideration. Of course, not all ideas can be implemented and there are always many different things that need to be considered before implementing a new policy, procedure or idea but one thing is for sure, if you don't try, you can't make it work.

The sad truth is that a defeatist attitude has kept many great ideas from ever being considered. It is easer to give up and say "They won't listen" or "It won't do any good" than to take the chance of having your idea reviewed. In our department, you have the opportunity to be heard and considered…be sure to take advantage. It takes effort – it takes risk but if you feel strongly about it, it is worth taking the idea up the chain. Timing is also an issue…your idea will not have the credibility if you don't bring up your idea ***before*** you have been negatively effected by the policy you want to change such as suggesting a change to a policy after you have been caught violating that policy. You are much more creditable when you lead by suggesting change as opposed to reacting to feedback for failing to follow existing policy or procedures.

All of the ideas require work but all too often the quote "When it is all said and done, there is usually a lot more said that there is done" comes true. Great ideas that are discussed but never receive the follow-up necessary to bring them to fruition. You know, "Bay" talk – the ideas that are discussed in the bay or at the table but never get past the "talk" phase. Don't get "burned-out" – get fully involved…take the effort to see that your ideas "catch fire" and get the consideration that they deserve. Be willing to fight for your ideas and invest the time and effort to see that your ideas are heard and that they are backed up with valid data.

That's fully involved!

Thoughts of the Season… AC Rob Light

As my time came for another article, the idea for this one came quite easily. I then hesitated, knowing that I would inevitably forget something or someone. But I feel it needed to be said.

With the holidays upon us, this topic is appropriate and is simple. I have been working with many of you on different things and just wanted to say "thanks". There are many projects going on that you may or may not be aware of. Each project involves others and most projects could not get done without your help.

I want to thank Kyle Bissell for the work he is doing on our protocols. With all our different staffing, it will be nice to have our protocols in an easier to read format. It is something that I have wanted to do for a while, but knew what a time intensive process it would be. Kyle stepped up and volunteered to work on this. Though it will take some time, I guarantee you will like the result. I do know he has plenty of time to do this though because C-shift doesn't run many calls. Just ask A and B shift if you doubt me.

I want to thank Cory Macumber and Kyle again for their work on the CQI program. We will tweak the system here and there as needed, but it seems to be working pretty well so far. All suggestions will be considered.

I want to thank the ambulance committee (Lt. Routson, Eric Ennen and Cory Macumber) for their help in creating the specifications for the new ambulance. Hopefully, by the time you read this, the specs will have been sent out for bid and we will be getting ready to place the order. I want to thank all of you who have had input for this project also.

I want to thank Lesley for all her work in keeping this place running and getting us paid. EMS billing can be a nightmare as well, and it takes all of us doing our reports properly to make her job a little bit easier.

Lt. Birkett, the handyman he is, has coordinated many improvements to the stations. I want to thank him and all who have chipped in to help improve our facilities. Thanks Dan!

I also wanted to thank Lt. Gentosi for serving our country and those who are filling in while he is away. Mike is having an experience of a lifetime, one I wished I would have done when I was younger.

I want to thank Julie Stuckle for her work with the CPR and AED programs and all her work with the newsletter every month. These are often thankless jobs, so I say "thanks Julie".

Then there's AC Cardwell…a rather unique individual who I don't quite have a handle on yet but am starting to figure him out…at least I think I am anyway. Just kidding…I want to thank him for his work on our training program and the specs for the new ladder. Thanks for providing us with that accent too!

I want to thank each of you for the shout outs and smiles. You never know when you make a difference in someone's life or just make a bad day a little bit better.

I want to thank everyone's families. Whether full time, part time or paid on call, because each have made sacrifices that help this place operate.

I know I haven't listed all of you but that doesn't mean what you do each day doesn't go unnoticed. We all play a part, some bigger parts than others, but all add up to the final product we provide.

Last but certainly not least, I want to thank Chief Holt for his leadership and guidance. He has the most challenging job of all, trying to keep us all happy and doing our jobs properly. He has the most responsibility and pressure of all of us and you can see that by the amount of hair he has lost…he even lost his mustache at one point when he was really stressing out, but that has grown back so things must be a little better now.

In closing, we are a very diverse department with the same goal of providing quality emergency services and customer service. When we all work together, we get things done. Just as one project is finished, it seems there is another (or many more) waiting to get done. Together, we can get them done with patience and perseverance. THANKS, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all of you. It is a pleasure to work with all of you!

Safety Tip – Take it Slow and Stay Aware.

Seasons are changing, along with weather. With it comes a few new possibilities that we haven't been exposed to for awhile. With the cold, more people will be using fireplaces – which increase the chance of chimney fires. Also – with the holidays, people are decorating, *both inside and out*. Be careful of all the extra wires, lights, decorations, trees, or who knows what might be laying around. And with the cold weather – comes snow and the increase of ice. A lot of times we get rushed in working a fire, but take your time, watch everything around you, and be safe. We want everyone to go home safely.

New Opportunities vs. Comfort - Captain Jim Mitchell

All of you are aware of the daily opportunities presented to us as members of the Urbandale Fire Department, i.e.; open FTE shifts, open full-time shifts, general tone alarms to respond to, "Tools & Skills" to complete, weekly training to attend, etc., etc., etc……

We can all take credit for slipping into the "Comfort Zone"! We get comfortable working with the same people, working the same number of shifts, attending the weekly training ONLY ON TUESDAYS, conducting the "Tools & Skills" with the same people every week or month, etc. Well, this is called a routine. As a routine is great and comfortable and provides a predictable environment, it can also lead to getting into a rut! We have talked about this problem in past newsletters and suggested several different ways to get out of the "rut". However, I think you will agree, it is very easy to slip right back into that "rut".

Well, here is a news flash! We have something new that can be an avenue to get us out of that "rut" and it's as close as just out our back door! It's a Training Facility! Have you thought about the several different facets that this training facility can offer this Fire Department? The very first thing it offers is new partnerships! We have become legal/financial partners with the City's of Clive and Windsor Heights. You might be saying to yourself something like "We've used Clive FD for mutual aid forever routinely and if we have something "real" and "big" we typically call Windsor Heights FD for aid as well. Which is very true, but this is binding, forever and will provide a new type of relationship with these two departments that we have never had before. We will have the opportunity to train with each department routinely! The training facility will provide us with several other opportunities with these departments.

The other opportunity involving this training facility is obvious, MORE TRAINING! This building will enable us to fine tune our skills that will potentially make us more effective, efficient and the best firefighters in the metro! Now, let's not kid ourselves! Some may be thinking, "Great, more training! You're trying to kill us now and there will be NO time to relax". Others will be thinking," Great, more training! I'm excited about expanding my knowledge and skill base and up for the physical challenge"! Hopefully, the majority is excited and up for the challenge! We all know that repetitive training will make us proficient in skills, which will make us successful firefighters!

Eventually, another opportunity will be to offer training to other Fire Departments using our training facility that is the nicest facility in central Iowa! Perhaps, a regional training facility! Now, there is NO way that Chief Cardwell and I and the Training Officers from Clive and Windsor Heights can do this alone. So, this will be a NEW OPPORTINITY for YOU! We will need you to assist with instructing classes, lighting fires, being the designated Safety Officer when other departments use the facility, etc., etc., etc….. This will be a GREAT opportunity!

There is a lot involved in providing quality training. It is true; we have the nicest and largest training facility in the area! But, you know the saying," Just because you're the biggest, doesn't mean that you're the best"! The building is only one part of quality training! We all will need to sharpen our skills, education and knowledge in order to be the BEST training center in central Iowa! A good start is to read and re-read the Essentials of Firefighting manual. It is one point of reference and it allows everyone to be on the same page. The internet provides a variety of information, some being incorrect. So, one point of reference is a great starting point. I feel that a good way to become proficient involves your initial training followed by refreshing or continuing education and then to teach the subjects. Preparing a lesson plan and the research involved will provide you with the most available information about the subject. Then, repeat your teachings! Repetition will engrain the subject matter in your head. Just like the repetition of performing skills!

I foresee fun challenges and opportunities that most of us have never experienced are on the horizon! This training facility should enable members of and the Urbandale Fire Department as a whole to be the shining star of the metro and maybe even central Iowa! So, don't stay idle anymore or continue to keep doing the same thing! Bump it up a notch and sharpen your skills! This could be the OPPORTUNITY of a LIFETIME!

What's Happening Around the Department...

- The process for approval of Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) is in full swing. The preliminary meeting with the CIP Committee was November 30th—0700 at City Hall. The next meeting is Monday December 7th—0700 at City Hall. The public hearing will be Thursday evening December 17th. To view the preliminary 2010—2015 CIP for the entire city, go to http://www.urbandale.org/finance-and-records.cfm. The FD specific items can be found in the "Building, Equipment and Technology" section—section five of the document. The new items for the FD are; a fourth ambulance, a computer simulator/training lab, and a parking lot expansion project at station 42. Existing items that are currently in the CIP are; replacement of E410 (2011) and Station 41 renovations (2010). Other items "un-programmed" are; Fire Station 42 living quarters, and Station 43 construction.

- Work on the 2010-2011 budget is in full swing and will likely be submitted in December. It is looking like a status-quo budget will be in store excluding the additional of personnel. At this point, it looks like we will be requesting 4 new positions in 2010/2011.

- Work on the SAFER grant is continuing. The grant is due on December 18, 2009. At the time of the newsletter, we are planning on requesting six new positions using SAFER funding. We are excited to pursue this grant opportunity however, the Department of Homeland Security anticipates 4 to 6 billion in request for this $210 million program. Realistically, the odds are against us but we are moving forward with the application with hopes of securing funding.

- Construction on the training facility is complete! The *building* is done but other parts of the project will continue in to Spring. Included is landscaping and concrete work . We anticipate having a formal open house in March.

- The new ladder truck proposal was presented to the City Council on Dec. 1st. It was approved and we anticipate a delivery date in January 2010.

- The specification for the replacement of our 2000 model ambulance are complete. We hope to have the specifications out for bid in December.

- WestCom will be making a change in dispatching procedures. Essentially you will be hearing one of three response codes; emergent, non-emergent and first due emergent. This is a result of new Pro QA software on EMS dispatching. The first two are self explanatory, the third one means that the system recommends sending additional units—the closest unit responding emergent and the others responding non-emergent. This does not change any of our response procedures. You still can deviate your response mode based on the information you receive but you will need to justify that deviation. This change will likely happen in January 2010...More to follow in the month of December.

- We have continued to work on the radio coverage in the area of Merle Hay Road and I80/35. We are working with a new channel as a trial for this area. As part of the 800 re-banding project, the frequency has been changed for the repeater located at the Holiday Inn. When working in the trouble area, you will switch to the channel marked MH RPT. This channel will be re-broadcast on UPD1 so if you are not in that area and want to hear what is going on, you can switch to UPD1 and hear what is happening in the trouble area. UPD will always be operating on that UPD 1 channel as they will be in that area on a regular basis. If we have a significant issue in that area necessitating a lot of radio traffic, UPD will take their communications to UPD 2 for all other areas of the city so as not to interfere with our operations. UPD officers working the incident with us in the trouble area will remain on UPD1 so that we can communicate with them. (See page 8 for a graphic display of the new system)

  As of the date of making this change, Clive and WDM FDs and EMS will not have this channel. This channel will be programmed for them in the future based on our experience with this trail.

Chief's thanks...

Many thanks to Lt. Birkett and the B-Shift guys who installed a cabinet and hanger system in R418 that allows for the ice and water rescue equipment to be carried in the cab area. This will allow the gear to be deployed faster and in a warm environment. The PDF are located in this area as well as the throw bags eliminating the time it took to go to the top storage area. This move should really improve our ability to act immediately upon arrival. The new location for the ice rescue suits is not designed to allow the suits be fully donned while responding. Seatbelt usage is required and responders in the cab area are to remain seated and fully belted while responding. This was a great idea from Lt. Birkett and B-Shift!! Thank you for the great job...it is obvious that they were "fully involved"!

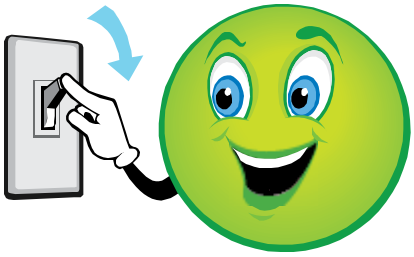
Other programs/training/projects completed by UFD in November:

Training Report: 391 **hours** of training were completed in November.

Fire Training: 257 hours EMS Training: 134 hours

Prevention & Inspection Activities:

- Completed 18 Inspections
- Completed 16 re-inspections
- Completed 7 preplans
- Conducted 7 plan reviews
- Conducted 3 Car Seat check
- Conducted public education for 264 people: 87 children and 177 adults



Reminder—when you leave a room, please remember to turn off the lights. We continue to have lights on when no one is in a room—please help us conserve energy and keep our utility bills as low as possible.

A Special Gift from Monte Burr

When Monte Burr passed away September 7, 2009 we all knew that Monte was a special person. It is a rare quality to have a member who no one can recall seeing him mad, upset or even acting like he was disappointed. Monte enjoyed his time on the department more than most of us ever knew. His love of the department was all the more apparent when talking to Monte's family about the things Monte shared about his time at the department. Monte's time on the department meant a great deal to him.

I met with Monte's family on November 21 as they wanted to "drop" something off that Monte wanted us to have. Monte had remembered the department in his will and he wanted the department to have two huge commemorative folding firefighter knifes. They are a very nice collector's item and his family suggested that he would want Chief Light to have one and that the department could do whatever we would like with the other. To that end, one of the two knifes will be presented to Chief Light. It doesn't stop there. Monte's brother Rick, his wife Kathy and Monte's parents had another item that they wanted to present the department from Monte's will. Monte remembered the department with a $10,000 gift! Monte's wishes were that the Chief would decide how that gift would be used. (If you have ideas, please let the Chief hear from you). The family requested that we make arrangements to have Monte's name placed on the Firefighter's Memorial Wall in Iowa City and the paperwork necessary has been requested.

Monte was very generous in remembering the department. It is obvious that his time with our department meant a great deal to him. We received a gift with the friendship and brotherhood that Monte provided—this second generous gift is merely proof positive that he wanted everyone to know that while he was quiet, his time with us was very special to him...and he was special to us. Rest in peace brother– you won't be forgotten.

Member Profile...

Member Profile: John McCannon

Length of time with UFD: A little over two years.

Level: POC FF/EMT

Committees: Association Treasurer.

Why I became interested in the UFD: To do something to try to help make a difference in the community. Also to explore the possibilities of a career in the fire service.

Previous EMS experience: None

Previous Fire experience: None

Family life: Married to Kayla for 8 years. Children include Lucas – 6 years old and Rylie - 19 months old

Current Profession: I work in the IT field, currently as a web application developer. Been in the field for 15+ years.

Activities or hobbies I enjoy: Biking, riding RAGBRAI, home improvement projects, lifting weights, working out.

Most memorable moment with UFD: Having my badge pinned by my son Lucas. Assisting with the delivery of a baby during an EMS call.

Most memorable moment outside of UFD: The births of my kids.

Favorite TV programs: The Office, Dirty Jobs, MythBusters, Emergency!

Favorite movies: Star Wars trilogy

Last book that I read: Built to Win by John Schuerholz.

Personal goals: Being the best father I can for my kids. Starting a full-time career in the fire service.

Words of advice for someone new getting into EMS or Fire: Listen & absorb as much info, training and guidance as you can.

What I enjoy about the Urbandale Fire Dept: Having met & working with a great group of individuals and friends.

Last Safety Incident

As of December 1:

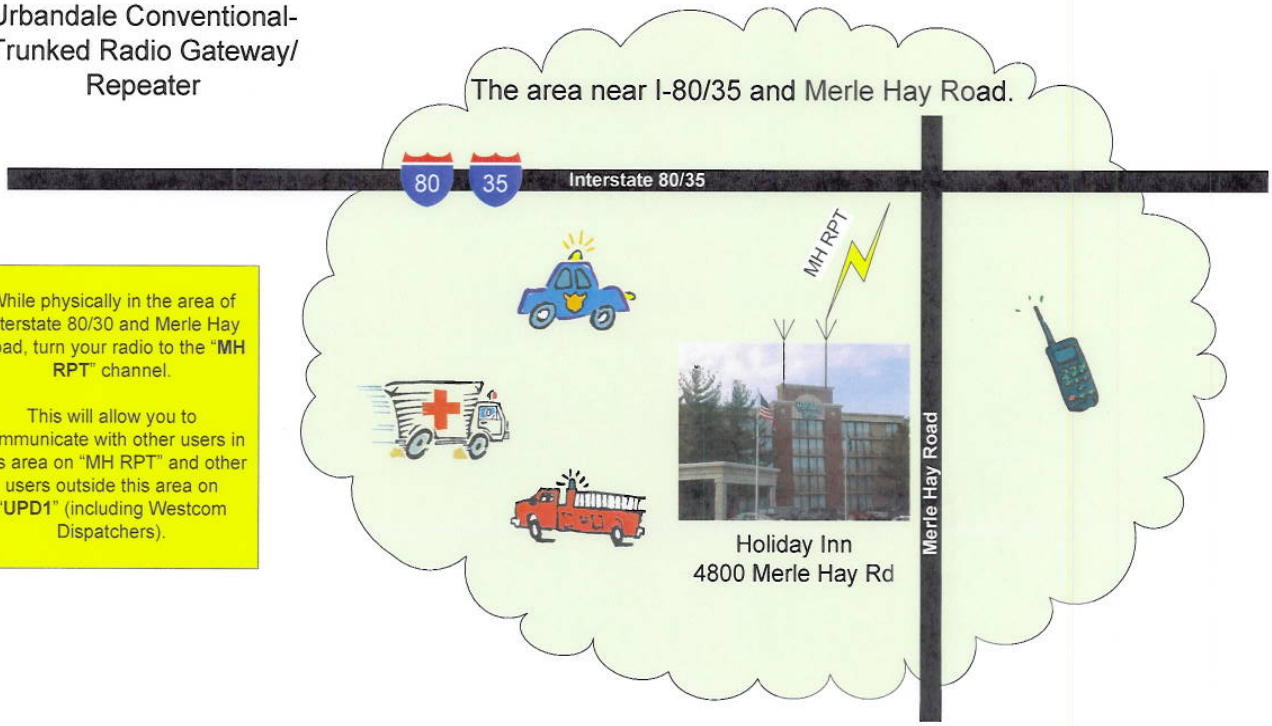
6 days without a safety incident

223 days without a lost time injury

Remember:

If you are responding and the MDB in the apparatus is not working, **you MUST notify WestCom to track your times**. If you do not state this on the radio when you go enroute, the times that are recorded might be inaccurate.

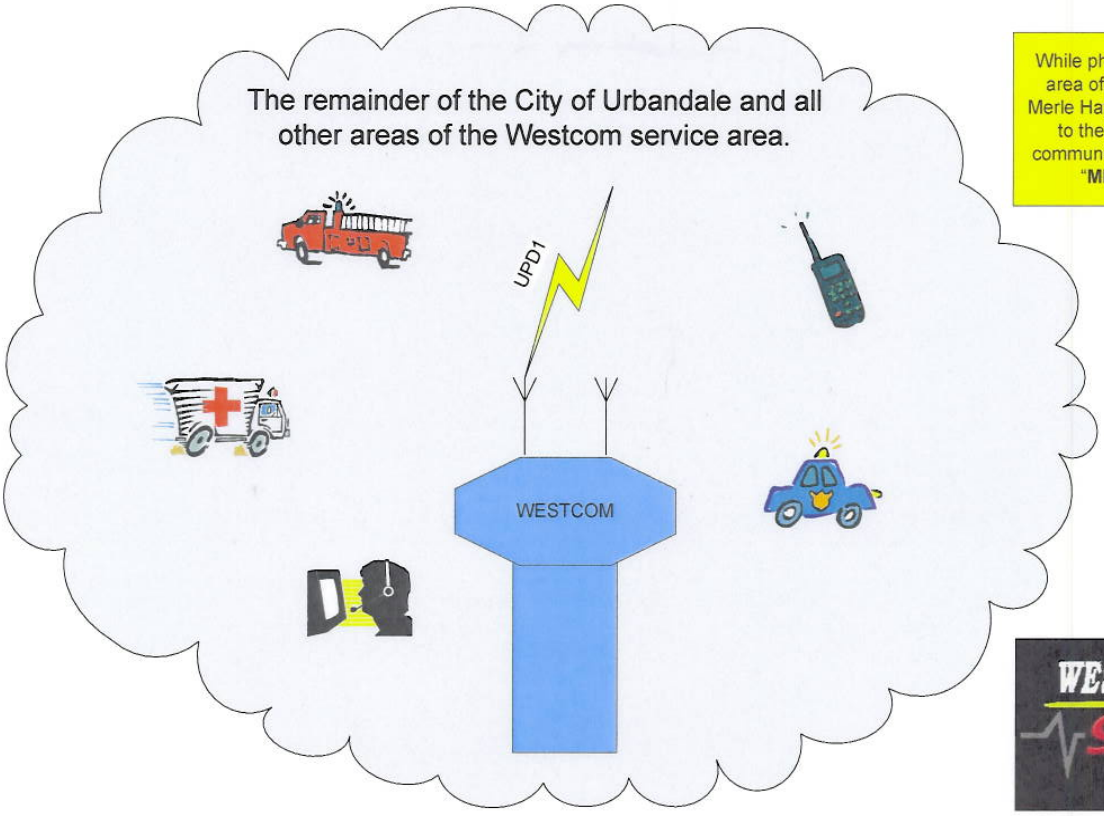
Westcom's
Urbandale Conventional-
Trunked Radio Gateway/
Repeater



While physically in the area of Interstate 80/30 and Merle Hay Road, turn your radio to the "**MH RPT**" channel.

This will allow you to communicate with other users in this area on "MH RPT" and other users outside this area on "**UPD1**" (including Westcom Dispatchers).

MH RPT ↔ UPD1



While physically outside of the area of Interstate 80/30 and Merle Hay Road, turn your radio to the "**UPD1**" channel to communicate with users on the "**MH RPT**" channel.

rob.dehnert@wdm-ia.com

Urbandale Fire Department
3927 121st Street • Urbandale, Iowa 50323
(515) 278-3970 • Fax (515) 278-3972

Fire Safety Video Contest

Hey Urbandale Resident!

The Urbandale Fire Department needs your help. We are sponsoring a fire safety video contest this holiday season. We are looking for individuals or groups to make innovative and creative videos that will help remind people of all ages the importance of fire safety wherever you are. **The video you make must include 3 of the following 5 topics**:

1. **Cooking Fire Safety** – the Do's & Don'ts
2. **Escaping a Fire** – explain how to develop a plan, learn it, & practice it
3. **Hazards in the Home** – find 3 other potential fire hazards in your home and describe how to prevent them from becoming a fire hazard.
4. **Smoke Detectors** – How many should you have? Where should they be? When should the batteries be replaced? When should the detectors be replaced?
5. **The Truth about Fire Sprinklers** – explain how fire sprinklers really work, not the way they are shown or portrayed in movies and TV.

The videos should be 5-10 minutes. Videos will be judged on content, creativity, and the ability to deliver a good fire safety message. Prizes will be awarded for the top 3 videos. All video submissions become the property of the Urbandale Fire Department and will be used to promote fire safety and fire prevention efforts in the community. Videos need to be submitted on a disk and be able to be viewed using a Windows-based media player. Winners will be announced during the week of December 14, 2009.

The deadline to receive videos for the contest is Friday, December 11, 2009 at 5:00 p.m. They can be dropped off or mailed to the following location:

Urbandale Fire Dept.
3927 121st St.
Urbandale, IA 50323

Make sure the form below is included with your video submission!!!

Name _____

Address _____ Phone # _____

Email _____

Parent/Guardian Name (if under age18) _____