



On the Line



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

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Upcoming Events

January 16th

Charity Hockey Game benefiting Special Olympics

Where: Metro Ice Arena 5100 NW 72nd Street,

When: Saturday, January 16, 2010 @ 3PM

Who: Metro Firefighters vs. Metro Police Officers

February 27th

Fire Department Banquet

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

UFD statistics for December

Calls for service: 213 YTD: 2,373

Average response Time – All incidents: **7 minutes and 33 seconds**

Average response Time – **Emergency** incidents: **7 minutes and 35 second**

Emergency Medical Service calls: 157

Average Response Time EMS: 7 minutes and 18 seconds

Emergency: 7 minutes and 10 seconds

Non-Emergency: 7 minutes and 28 seconds

Fire related calls: 56

Average Response Time Fire: 8 minutes and 14 seconds

Average turnout per fire incident: 6 people

We **received mutual aid twelve times** – eight times for EMS calls and four times for a fire calls.

We **gave mutual five times** – twice for an EMS call and three times for a fire calls.

Types of Fire Calls

The 56 fire calls we had in December fall into the following categories:

Fire / Explosion:	7
Hazardous Condition:	5
Service Calls:	11
Good Intent Calls:	15
False Calls:	18



Birthdays:

Dan Seda Jan 6





Chief's Corner—Chief Jerry Holt: Garbage In, Garbage Out!



You ever wondered why you have to take the time to enter so much data in FireHouse? Is it really worth your effort? Well, aside from the legal ramifications of inadequate documentation including cost recovery (a whole different discussion for another time) that data is the backbone of justification for everything from needed apparatus to station location to skill documentation. Those items are important and when they are skipped, we pay the price.

Let's look at a couple of examples. Unless you weren't around much last year, you know we have had some pretty major repair issues with our ambulances. In the shop, out of the shop, only to go right back in! Some of the stays in the shop were lengthy – remember? Now...prove it. Sure, one could look at the invoice and see how much we paid, but can you tell how long the truck was actually out of service? Not if it wasn't recorded. The invoices don't help much because they may show that a repair started on the 3rd and wasn't completed until the 15th. That doesn't mean that the truck was out of service for that long but rather the repair was not complete until that date. A part could have been ordered on the 3rd and come in on the 12th and we didn't get the truck back to the shop until the 15th. So... without proper documentation, there is really no way of knowing how long the truck was out of service.

So why is it important to know how long the truck was out of service? We just went through the CIP process where an additional ambulance was requested to be purchased. One of the justifications used to justify the new ambulance was the amount of down time that we have where at least one of our units are out of service. The question was asked on how much time is actually spent out of service...it was a difficult question to answer as we all know that it is "a lot" but quantifying "a lot" is much more complicated than anecdotal stories of down time. Decision makers need factual data to base decisions about public funds. In this case, the information should have been readily available but we hadn't done the documentation to be able to quickly provide the data requested.

Let's look at another example. You are doing a fire report and you responded with three other people on the truck. The alarm is false and you are back at the station doing your report within 5 minutes. You don't check to see if anyone was at the other station and you document that only four people showed up in FireHouse. When the report is run from our records management software, it shows that four people showed up. The reality is that six people showed up but the two at the other station were not counted. Why is it important to count them if they didn't actually respond? Three letters – ISO! ISO evaluates the average number of people who respond to alarms as part of staffing calculations. It is critical that we get all of the credit that we earn. When we don't count them all, we leave credit on the table and our numbers do not reflect the actual response.

You've heard me say it a million times – we need to be

"data driven" and to that end, we have a very good records management program but we don't always use it to the fullest. It is critical that we count all data so that it can be measured and used to determine needs and credit. Data management provides the ability to measure performance – good or bad, it must be measured. That can only happen when staff enters all valid data in to the records management software. The old saying garbage in, garbage out is so true – the data must be valid data to be meaningful.

One more discussion item about the subject of the task of data entry; we need to focus on the process. The data follows the service delivery – and drives future resource allocation. Do not get so lost in one side of the process that the other is rendered useless. Let me give one more example.

I am a people watcher. Anytime I am at the airport, I watch people. You see a little bit of everything. This past weekend I was at the airport in KC and my daughter's flight was delayed so I had some time to "people watch". I was sitting directly across from the screeners as you enter the gate...you know, where they check your Driver's license and boarding pass and they let no one enter without the proper documentation.

I watched the screener for more than 45 minutes. Not once in all that time did she actually look at the person handing her the boarding pass and Driver's license. Every time she would take the boarding pass and DL, she would look down at the DL with that little light to verify that it is not a fake, and then write something on the boarding pass and hand both documents back to the traveler. Not once in 45 minutes did she ever look the traveler in the eyes to determine if the person handing her the documents even resembled the person in the Driver's license that she was checking so closely. I am convinced that I could have presented her someone else's Driver's license and boarding pass and as long as those documents matched each other, it wouldn't matter that the picture on the Driver's license had long hair and weighed 80 pounds less than me with blue eyes and was female. I think she would have let me pass without a second thought. The process is good but it has gotten so routine that she wasn't comparing the two documents against the person who was handing them to her. In this case, she has the data but wasn't using all of the available data – and in this case, the most crucial data was not even evaluated.

I personally think that the airline industry and the fire service have a great deal in common (read the crew resource management book!). In this case, the comparison shows how crucial it is to evaluate all of the data available. Maybe it is for the justification of a new piece of equipment or maybe it is to keep people safe. Either way, it requires all of the participants to gather and evaluate the data – all of the data, all of the time. Garbage in, garbage out... quality data in, meaningful data out to evaluate the needs of the organization. You are a critical link in the data management chain.

The Training Tower – Undressed – AC Cardwell

By now, you probably have noticed the as yet unnamed training tower at the rear of Station 42. Like most big projects, a lot of time, effort and energy went into all phases of the project. And while it's not completely finished, it is at a point where we can begin to use it. So I wanted to take a few moments and explain the thought process that went into its design, layout, and construction.

The process began with defining statement which shaped the building. "Our purpose is to develop a practical skills training facility which meets the core firefighting and rescue skill requirements in a safe yet challenging environment." The difficulty was meeting this purpose in a building which had to be challenging, yet flexible. Since the doors, windows, and stairs are all fixed, the trick was to try and identify as many fireground situations as possible, then design in elements of those situations for firefighters to deal with.

The tower (on the North end of the building) is designed to provide challenges of dealing with height – upper level windows, rooftop rescue problems, operating from stairwells. Like a typical stairwell, it provides wrap-around stairs and standpipe connections for each floor. The tower section is wider than a standard tower by six feet to accommodate technical rescue training – rope operations from the roof and confined space operations between the 4th and 2nd floors.

The residence (facing the station) is designed to provide a blank slate of challenges for instructors to design and create. Again the size of the residence was enlarged to provide more opportunities. The stairs leading to the second floor are enclosed and give direct access from the burn annex to the burn rooms on the second floor. This will allow crews to ascend and descend under realistic fire conditions.

The roll-up door will be outfitted with a steel frame to hold garage door sections. This, and the forcible entry door on the back side will allow crews to practice their forcible entry skills. Finally, a series of full- and half-sized dividers will allow instructors to create different room layouts for search and rescue.



The burn annex (on the back side) is one of three areas designated for burning. The other two are smaller areas located on the second floor of the residence. The roof of the annex has two doors leading to the residence. The burn lining is capable of withstanding temperatures above 1500 degrees. With multiple doors leading to the annex and residence, there are more than 20 configurations for live burn training available to instructors. Another unique feature is the inclusion of a working sprinkler head in the burn room. This will allow us to demonstrate the effectiveness of home sprinkler systems.

As part of the planning process, as many firefighter tasks as possible were looked at for possible inclusion. The sprinkler system has multiple heads allowing for practice in securing open sprinkler heads. Standpipe connections on all floors will allow crews to practice laying out hi-rise packs. The building has two ventilation chop-outs to practice vertical ventilation. A smoke distribution system has been built into the building to deliver artificial smoke to all levels. Finally, the attic space of the residence will be set up with a SCBA mask confidence course.

This is truly a unique opportunity for our department to take training to a higher level. Personnel from Clive and Windsor Heights will have the same opportunity. It is our intent to regularly plan live fire trainings open to personnel from all departments. When you get a chance, take a few moments to check out the new building.

◆ **Safety Tip - Operational considerations in winter weather** By Michael Lee from firerescue1.com ◆

On-scene operations will be affected by a number of things. Remember that combustible gas meters may not work properly or will take longer to warm up in cold weather.

Gasoline in pumps, saws or power tool tanks may have water in them causing them to freeze, while hoses can become more brittle and difficult to move.

And remember that ladders can freeze up, impacting their ability to extend or retract. Meanwhile, hand tools will be more slippery and difficult to hold onto.



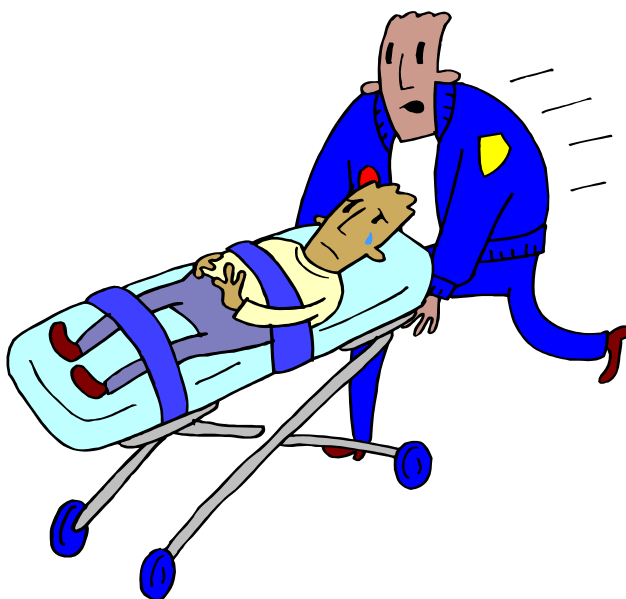
Popsisms: Kyle Bissell

Over the years I have amassed many nuggets of information that I use daily. These are not earth shattering by any means just simple truths I try to live by.

- **Little old ladies don't have stomach pains they have heart attacks.** Be very suspicious when you are called out for a 78 year old female having abdomen pain. Run that 12 lead. Abdominal pain is one of the signs of an AMI in little old ladies. Rule it out.
- **Don't put out the laundry in front of the patient.** Sometimes things don't go as you plan in the back of an ambulance. The monitor doesn't work; the cell phone has poor reception. Fine deal with it, but never bring it to the attention of the patient.
- **Act like you've done it before.** There are things we should be proud of: the birth of a child, finishing our college degree, seeing your children succeed. When in the field there is no need to slap yourself on the back, show class and continue to do your job.
- **You look stupid, we all look stupid.** This seems pretty harsh but it does have its place. The public expects a certain level of professionalism from the Fire Department. It only takes one act or inaction to tarnish our good reputation.
- **First thing you do as you arrive at a CPR in progress is to check your own pulse.** Slow down, take a deep breath and think about what needs to be done. If you rush in like a hyena on crack, barking orders with a "Behold I am here, fear not, all is well" attitude then you are only making things worse. A calm and confident demeanor assists the crew in staying focused on the task at hand.
- **I don't do run.** When I was a wee lad in EMS and on my first unconscious person call at a nursing home, a staff member yelled "Hurry run she isn't breathing." What did I do? I ran. I slipped on the linoleum floor... feet up in the air, first out bag sliding down the hallway, the Lifepac 5 slamming into the hallway wall and me yelping like a school girl. Since then I don't do run. Walk with a purpose, you will get there with all of your gear and self intact.
- **Realize you don't know everything.** You will never know everything. Continue your education be it a formal setting such as college or through more informal

means of conferences or trade journals. Never stop learning, if you do the game will pass you by.

- **If you need help get it.** Never be too macho to seek help if you feel that you are in need. I am talking about your mental well-being. There are programs in place to assist you if you need. The worst thing you can do is hold it inside and bury it. I know this from experience. Get help before it is too late.
- **First things first.** After you have established ABC's and so forth don't forget the basics. Hold C-spine. This is trauma 101. Let's put the Pericardiocentesis on hold for minute and grab the patient's melon. I know it's not the most glamorous job but it needs to be done right away.



- **"You're gonna feel a big poke."** When starting an IV, don't tell a patient you are going to feel a big stick or "1-2-3 poke" or some other form of this. This causes apprehension in the patient and that is not what they or you need. Just tell them what you are going to do and do it.

- **Being sincere will buy you another stick.** We all miss an IV every now and then. If you are sincere and treat the patient as we should, you just may get a second chance at an IV. If you are short with the patient you probably will not.

• **Hand holding is a treatment.** I cannot tell you how many times I have simply listened and held the hand of a patient and that is all they needed. Comforting a patient is worth more than you can imagine.

- **It's a wonderful life syndrome.** When George Bailey wished he had never been born in Frank Capra's "It's a Wonderful Life" he was granted this wish by his guardian angel Clarence. He traveled through the lives of his family and friends as if he had never been born. He saw how without his life others lives were much different and most often worse. Clarence told him "Every person touches many lives." We touch lives. Even if we don't think we are...we are. You are making a difference. You may not see flags and banners celebrating your triumphs, but if you were to look close enough you would see you are making an impact. A grandma being able to see her grandchild's birthday because you attended to her while she was having chest pains. A young lady growing up and getting married because you attended to her during a car wreck. It is mind blowing if you stop to think about it.

ON THE LINE

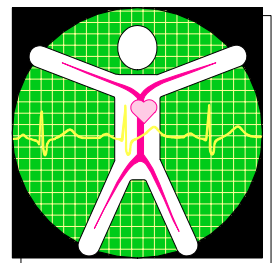
WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND THE DEPARTMENT...

- Bids for the replacement of A424 were mailed in December. The bid opening is January 18th and we hope to take it to the City Council for approval on the 26th.
 - We continue to move forward with the preparation for using the new training facility. We plan on having some minor live fire training in early January to develop an instructor package. We continue to meet with Clive and Windsor Heights to develop SOGs for use of the facility.
 - Progress is being made with the renovation project for Station 41. We are currently in the process of selecting an architect firm for design and project management. We sent out an email in December looking for people to serve on a committee to assist with the selection of the architect firm and to help with project planning. As of the writing of this article, Cody Thorne, Jon Rech and Stu Wilson are on the committee and other names are being considered.
 - The budget has been completed and submitted for consideration. The City Manager has reviewed and he will be making a recommendation to the City Council in January. As it stands, the budget is basically a "status quo" budget with the exception of four new FT positions, a planned 3.5% raise for POC/PT, three new FT Lieutenant positions, and a vending machine for our pharmaceuticals. All of these are preliminary and subject to Council approval. We should have the budget locked down some time in January.
 - The SAFER grant application was completed and submitted in December. The grant request funding for six FT firefighter/EMTs. After submitting our application, the DHS amended the rules and extended the deadline for application until Jan. 15, 2010. This extension adds to the pool of competition and realistically our odds of receiving the grant have diminished. As last word, the projected request was \$4 to \$6 million for the funded amount of \$210 million.
 - We are working with the Association Officers and other representatives of FD staff to develop a new organization that represents all of the fire department members. This work group will be bringing a proposal forward in early January to make this new organization a more functionally sound entity that works toward the common good of all.
 - We continue to work to identify a name for the training facility. Several people in all three departments have submitted suggestions and while they are great ideas, none really "jumps out" as the "one". We have narrowed the list from 30 choices to eight choices however, as time is not critical, we rather spend some additional time to review these names and any other new names or combination of names that might be developed. To that end, we will continue to work on identifying a name for the facility. If you have any ideas, please let me know as soon as possible. As you look over the list, do not limit yourself to only these names - we will consider them all as we search for a name that captures the collaborative nature of this project. We liked the acronyms and we like the process that captures all three departments. (Not ranked any particular order)
1. Fire & Rescue Training Facility
 2. Regional Fire & Rescue Training Facility
 3. West Central Regional Fire & Rescue training Facility
 4. Walnut Creek Fire & Rescue Training Facility
 5. Tri-City Fire & Rescue Training Facility
 6. FLAME Center (Fire Suppression Life Safety And Multi-Agency Education)
 7. FIRST Building (Fire Incident and Rescue Simulator Training)
 8. FAST Building (Fire And Safety Training)
- Remember, it could be a combination of any of these such as Tri-City FAST Building or something totally new.

Articles that appear in this newsletter represent the opinions of the author...any change to official UFD or City policy or procedures will be announced via official communications.

Thanks to Our CPR Instructors – Julie Stuckle

It's that time of year to give thanks. I know it's listed on activities completed within UFD, but I want to stress once again that this past year we taught 12 classes – consisting of CPR that may also include First Aid or AED. That's 70 more people that know how to do CPR (or went through a refresher). These are people that are NOT affiliated with our fire dept. The more people we get trained in CPR – and perform it on scene – increases our chance of survival for the patient. Now, this may not seem like much, but if it's during the day, then the FT staff handles the classes on top of all their other activities/calls. Instructors that we have within the department are: Dan Birkett, Lance Routson, Mike Gentosi, Brennan Burke, Stu Wilson, John Ouverson, Eric Ennen, Craig Pope, and myself. Thanks to all our instructors that take the time and do a great job with the classes!



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

Training Report: 330 hours of training were completed in December.

Fire Training: 180 hours

EMS Training: 180 hours

Prevention & Inspection Activities:

- Performed 7 inspections
- Performed 7 re-inspections
- Performed 7 Preplans
- Performed 4 Plan Reviews
- Performed 4 car seat checks



2009 Christmas Party



Additional Training Opportunities:

The following are training classes that are offered around the state. If you are interested in any, please turn in a training request to your Officer.

Winter Fire School – Ames, Iowa Jan 30 – 31

Central Iowa EMS In Action Conference – West Des Moines, Feb 27-28

“YOU’VE BEEN CAUGHT DOING AN OUTSTANDING JOB” LETTERS...

We continue to recognize your efforts. Whenever we receive a thank you letter, card or a phone call, we pass that along to the people involved in the form of a “You’ve Been Caught Doing An Outstanding Job” letter. As of December 22, 2009 we have sent 94 letters to our personnel this year. The following people received “You’ve Been Caught” letters since our last newsletter:

417=Lt. Birkett & Eric Ennen, 424 Ross Frank and Rob Zahnd

We received a thank you note for our involvement in an EMS call on March 30th. The Police Chief received a thank you note from the wife who lost her husband due to cardiac arrest on this call. She had written to him to thank everyone who had helped – she states that “the sympathy & care I received from all your people was overwhelming and wonderful”.

424=Lt. Birkett & John Ouverson, 409=Rod Silvers, & 424=Stu Wilson & Eric Ennen

We received a thank you note for our involvement in an EMS call on November 13th. The Police Chief received a thank you note from the wife who lost her husband in a DOA on this call. She had written to him to thank everyone who had helped – she states that “everything was handled in such a dignified and gentle manner. I will never forget your comfort and kindness”.

Thanks to all of you for providing outstanding service!!

Congratulations!

- Patrick Comstock – for meeting all of his requirements and is now running as and EMT-PS.
- Dave Wyner and Joe Poschner – for meeting the recruit requirements and both are now FT members.

Congratulations on all the hard work!

- Congratulations to Lance and Kylie on their recent engagement!!

Last Safety Incident:

As of Jan. 1st:

37 days without a safety incident

254 days without a lost time injury

Member Profile...

Member Profile: Dan Seda

Length of time with UFD: One year in January

Level: Finished Fire recruit class in May, and currently finishing up EMT-B class.

Why I became interested in the UFD: Lifelong desire to be a firefighter and now finally settled in a community. Also a need to get away from a desk job once in awhile.

Previous EMS experience: None

Previous Fire experience: None

Family life: Married to Katie for 3 years. We have no children, however do have a St. Bernard named Molly and 2 cats-Charlie and Sammy.

Current Profession: Financial Consultant (Principal Financial) - 4 years

Activities or hobbies I enjoy: Baseball, Basketball, Football, Golf (both watching and playing); traveling/camping, home improvement, cooking, tailgating (any event but Iowa State's are the best)

Most memorable moment with UFD: My first day-going through entrance exams.

Most memorable moment outside of UFD: The day I met my wife.

Favorite TV programs: Sportscenter, The Sopranos, The Wire, No Reservations, Arrested Development

Favorite movies: Lord of the Rings, The Big Lebowski, Into the Wild, Training Day, The Shawshank Redemption, The Departed

Last book that I read: Prehospital Emergency Care 8th Edition; non-school or work related: Kitchen Confidential by Anthony Bourdain

Personal goals: Become a career firefighter and start a family (eventually)

What I enjoy about the Urbandale Fire Dept: The people and the opportunities that have been presented to me.

Dan also states: 'I'm looking forward to getting more involved now that I've finally finished school!'



2009 Christmas Party



Picture this...

2009 Christmas Party

