



On the Line



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

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Last Safety Incident:

10 days without a safety incident

26 days without a lost time injury

Upcoming Events

Summer Picnic

July 25th

First annual Red and Blue making wishes come true softball tournament to raise money for Make A Wish Of Iowa

August 28 & 29th

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

UFD statistics for June

Calls for service: 217 YTD: 1,166

Average response Time – All incidents: **7 minutes and 23 seconds**

Average response Time – **Emergency** incidents: **minutes and 9 seconds**

Emergency Medical Service calls: 154

Average Response Time EMS: 7 minutes

Emergency: 6 minutes and 43 seconds

Non-Emergency: 7 minutes and 28 seconds

Fire related calls: 63

Average Response Time Fire: 8 minutes and 13 seconds

Average turnout per fire incident: 6 people

We **received mutual aid 15 times**—5 times for fire calls and 10 times for EMS calls.

We **provide mutual aid two times**—once for a fire call and once for an EMS call.

Types of Fire Calls

The 63 fire calls we had in June fall into the following categories:

<u>Fire / Explosion:</u>	9
<u>Hazardous Condition:</u>	4
<u>Service Calls:</u>	5
<u>Good Intent Calls:</u>	9
<u>False Calls:</u>	35
<u>Lighting Strike:</u>	1



Birthdays:

Zach Clear July 5

Jeff Gilchrist July 26





Chief's Corner—Chief Jerry Holt



These are my remarks made during the Fire And Safety Training (FAST) dedication...

Welcome to the opening of our new training center. This facility has been a vision since 1998. Thankfully we are blessed in that the number of fires has declined over the years but that is problematic in that the number of fires are down, the ability to practice our skills has declined as well. The Fire And Safety Training Center will help us provide well trained responders to help us deliver the highest level of services that we can to our customers.

This facility will allow us to conduct live fire training, rescue training, realistic scenario based technical training on incidents that are infrequent in our jobs. Those infrequencies demand that we be ready when they occur. The incident scene is not the place to learn. We owe it to our customers to be well trained firefighters. In fact, we are in a unique business. If anyone here was to consider replacing a roof on their home, having a plumbing job or other home repair, they would likely call around and get information about the job that a contractor has done in the past. How good of a job did they do, did they clean up? Were they courteous? Did they miss any details? Did they do a good job? When you dial 911, you don't get to check references. You should expect that a well trained group of responders are going to come and handle your incident in the most efficient and effective manner. You don't get to choose. Because of that, we owe our customers nothing but our very best. OTJ training doesn't provide a safe, conducive environment to allow new skills to be "tried" for the first time nor does it provide a means for the mastery of skills that are used infrequently. This facility will allow us to safely teach and practice our craft so that we perform as we practice...and we all know that practice makes perfect.

Hopefully you have all had the time to tour the facility but for those who haven't, this training center provides a four story training tower so that we can practice hose placement and advancement, ladder work, rescue skills and the highly technical rope rescue skills. There is an area for skill development involving search and rescue in dark environments like those encountered in burning structures. The building provides the ability to provide limited confined space training, roof operations, and most importantly, live fire training including fire sprinkler training and education – not only for firefighters but for the general public who have been bombarded with misinformation about the effectiveness of fire sprinklers. Our efforts won't stop with "response" training. We hope this building will be used in other public educational offerings so that we continue to teach fire prevention activities as we are all aware of the fact that the best fire is the fire that never starts. We are committed to prevention and we will all continue to work to

eliminate the impact of fire on our customers and our firefighters.

There are many people to thank for making this facility possible. Chief Cross will introduce the elected officials but I would be amiss if I didn't thank the citizens of our three communities, the Mayors, Councils, CIP Committees and City Managers for allowing this collaborative effort to occur. To you, I say thank you for the investment in our efficiency, effectiveness and safety. There are many staff members who have been instrumental in bringing this vision to completion and Chief Roe will recognize those people shortly but I have to thank Chief Roe, Chief Cross, A/C Cardwell, FM Rech, Capt. Mitchell, Lt. Birkett and all of those who served on the committees that did all of the hard work to make this possible.

Let me close my remarks by saying that our three fire



departments work together on a regular basis and we work well together. Unlike some places in our country, there are no turf battles and our service is mission driven and customer focused. This facility will allow us to take our training to a new level and I can only say thank you to all of you, our Mayors, Councils, CIP Committees, Manager, my peers and all of our firefighters for the support in making this happen. Thank you.

I was honored to represent our department and each of you at the dedication. This project was a vision I had almost 13 years ago...and I am so very proud to have been able to play a part in making it happen.

Again—thanks to all of you that have been a part of making this vision a reality. A lot of work has gone on behind the scenes to make this happen...and all in the name of having the most WTF (Well Trained Firefighters) in Iowa.

“Routine” Gas Leak Call - Assistant Chief Denny Danford

I'm concerned that we might get complacent about the so called “routine” gas leak call. We receive these calls on a regular basis. And yes, most of them turn out to be minor in nature. I want to emphasize the difference between an outside/outdoor leak and the “smell of gas” (or any unusual odor) inside a structure.

Chief Goldfeder wrote about a call of this type recently in Firehouse Magazine. It happened Feb, 13, 2010 in Poland Township, OH. The call was received as a possible gas leak from a stove in a residence. One engine and one ladder responded. Upon arrival one crew approached the house and another member started looking for the gas meter. Just as the crew reached the porch, the house exploded in flames. The firefighter that had just located the gas meter was thrown approximately 10 to 15 feet. The porch the fire crew was on collapsed. The crew was able to self-extricate themselves from under the debris. The firefighters involved sustained minor to moderate injuries. They were very fortunate. Both firefighters on the porch were in full PPE and masked up. They were also blessed to have two response units on scene to assist with rescue and fire suppression until other equipment arrived.

So, we must be sure to:

1. Wear full PPE at any inside possible gas leak call.
2. Have sufficient staff on scene or enroute.
3. Hoselines should be placed and a water supply established.
4. Remember, there is no such thing as a “routine call”



More Customer Service Needed! - Lt Dan Birkett

I want you to think about this scenario. You are about to walk up to the counter of a fast food restaurant at noon and it is obvious they are having an extremely busy day. Maybe it's not a restaurant maybe it is a busy gas station, grocery store, doctor's office, or a number of other places. Now I want you to be honest and think about how you expect that you are going to be treated. Without asking I can guarantee that a high percentage of us would have similar answers. There would be comments such as “the person behind the counter was rude”, or “the person behind the counter appeared that they were being over worked”, or “the person behind the counter made me feel like I was ruining their entire day maybe even their entire life”. The list could continue and we could easily fill a page with examples of ways we may be treated in this scenario. Now I want you to think about how you would like to be treated and the way you should feel when you are paying for service as a customer.

I was unfortunate enough to have to deal with numerous customer service issues this week. I had a couple work related issues and a couple personal issues. One work related issue involved a patient's mother who called and wanted to know why we transported her mother to the wrong hospital. She had been trying to find her mother for about an hour and finally found her located at a hospital that was not requested. Her mother also stated that this was not the hospital she requested. As we can understand the level of frustration the patient's mother is having. I did not make any excuses and stated that I would gather the information I needed and call her back as soon as possible. Within minutes of investigating I found that a bystander on scene that had been talking to the patient's daughter on the phone had told us to take her to the wrong hospital. I immediately called back the daughter explained to her that this was a communication error. I also apologized and offered to personally apologize to her mother if

she felt necessary. I explained to her that this would be used as an example we can learn from. I let her know that we provided good care while taking care of her mother. My final honest question was that if she knew of any way that we could make it up to her I would be happy to assist. After the conversation she was very understanding and grateful for our service. She thanked me numerous times before hanging up the phone. The scenario could have ended in many different ways by just choosing the wrong approach to the problem. I was glad to know that this customer was willing to call and voice her complaint so that it could be handled. I thanked the customer for calling and let her know how important any customer concerns are to our department.

One of my other problems this week involved taking my truck to a dealership to have it diagnosed and repaired. It was shortly after 0900 when I received a call about my truck. I was read the diagnosis and quoted a price of almost \$900 to fix three items. I became very upset when I found out that one of the parts I was told I needed was over \$300 with labor included. Why was I upset? It was a direct lie. I being somewhat mechanically inclined knew that the part they were telling me was seized up and not working was actually working just fine. I was so frustrated that I told them not to touch the truck and to park it outside so that I could pick it up in the morning. I also expressed my dissatisfaction with the list of twenty items I have had repaired on a vehicle with such low miles, many of which I feel are quality control issues. I was told by the manager that I could call the corporate customer service line and that he would write the number on my invoice. I asked him why he was not calling customer service on my behalf. He could only state that they would not normally do that and that it would probably mean more coming from me.

Continued on the next page...

More Customer Service Needed! *Continued...*

Needless to say I have been wondering how many people are being taken advantage of and paying for repairs they did not need? Obviously, I will never go back to the dealership and I will be calling the corporate customer service line to voice my concerns. The worst part of the situation was being lied to, but to add to the frustration I have completed all the repairs by myself for a grand total of \$170. The part that was supposedly seized and needed replaced is working great. I also found out that the technicians work on commission when repairing a vehicle. Does that seem right?

To keep the article somewhat short I will not go into detail on the other two problems this week. I will say that both problems involved people that had the attitude that “it’s not my job” or one specific quote of “this is not our responsibility”. Both of these issues were handled wrong and made other people look bad even though they were not directly involved with the problem.

My point to all of this is that as a paying customer I have many choices. When I am not happy with a certain service I will not return. I will probably tell others that I am not happy and I will find somewhere else that can provide me the same service. I am also like most customers when I am unhappy I will probably not voice a complaint or concern to the management. There is only one problem with that, how can customer service improve if no one knows there is a problem?

Now let’s relate this to our department. If I call 911 in Urbandale, Iowa for a fire or EMS related problem I do not have a choice who responds to my house. I definitely don’t have the ability to shop around during my emergency. What if I have had to call 911 in the past and I have had problems such as the scenarios above? What if I don’t like the Fire Dept. or one of my friends has had a bad experience? What choices do I have? What expectations do I have of the personnel that will be arriving at my house?

These are all honest questions that an employee of a customer service oriented department must ask themselves. It is so important that our customers receive professional, nice, and efficient customer service. There is no excuse for a difference in customer service because it is 0200 or we have already had ten calls that day. We only have one chance to make our customer happy and to exceed their expectations. I believe our department has been doing a great job and all the customer letters prove that, but I feel there is always room to do more. With all the new people coming on board this year we have a great opportunity to teach them the level of customer service we expect at the Urbandale Fire Dept. This is challenging because it requires every employee on this department to take responsibility in this area and be a leader for our new members. I also believe that we should be our customers’ biggest advocate. As in the first example, I am truly glad when someone is willing to voice a concern so that we can solve a problem. It can be a little hard to take, but we should want to know things that we can improve on from a customer

point of view. In the second example we can prevent this by doing what we say we are going to do and being honest with our customers. We should also make every effort to do as little damage as possible and respect their property. We should be looking for ways to provide exceptional service on every call. We should also be trying to discover new ways of delivering better service. We have to make sure that our customers will not want another choice after we have been to their emergency. After all, they are paying for a service that we provide. They should never be an inconvenience to us. No matter what the problem it is “our job” and “our responsibility” to solve their problem.

Our dept. is changing so fast in so many ways and we cannot lose sight of why we are here. I want our dept. to be at the level that a city like Phoenix is at. Now is our chance to be that department. More personnel should reflect a greater ability to provide even more customer service. Our goal should be to prove to our customers that they are truly getting what they pay for which is a professional, nice, and efficient fire department. Now is our chance, we can not afford to pass up this opportunity.



Thanks,
Dan

**Safety Tips During Overhaul from
www.firerescue1.com**

1. Do not throw objects from a window during overhaul unless the area is clear, and you have been signaled to do so by another firefighter acting as a guide.
2. When trimming broken glass from windows, knock the glass shard inside, not outside.
3. When assigned to operate around the perimeter of a burning building, be aware of the danger of falling objects and wear proper protective clothing. A well-fitted helmet, gloves and an eye-shield in the down position can protect you.
4. When venting windows from inside, attempt to open the window before breaking glass. Double paned windows in new and renovated buildings can be more quickly and fully opened manually than by breaking glass.

Chief's thanks...

- To everyone who helped make the Training Center dedication a success. We exceeded our expectations on turn out as we had prepared to have food for 100 people...and we ran out! The turn out was great and everyone seemed to be impressed with the facility and all the work and effort that everyone put into the project. EVERYONE is to be thanked for their effort in helping this 12 year old vision become a reality.
- Thanks to Lt. Routson for all of his efforts in coordinating the Golf Tournament for the Fallen Firefighter's Foundation. Lance did a tremendous job putting the event together. Everyone that played had a great time...except Cody and Derek who drew the short straws and had to play in a foursome with Chief Cardwell and I...it was ugly! The food was great, the gifts and prizes were fantastic and the weather was certainly "Chamber of Commerce" weather! In addition to putting all of this together, Lance was able to gather support from many business and other fire departments and friends of the fire service. A big thanks goes out to some non-firefighters for their tremendous help—Nikki Birkett, Lance's fiancé, Kyla Kiester and her mother Lois, Lance's sister, mother and father, Dawn & Nancy and Dan Routson. In addition to these helpers, Zach Clear, Jamie Erie supported the event by helping out. I cannot tell you how proud I am of all of your efforts to help Lance as he put this together for a great cause. Awesome job all of you!
- Thanks to Lt. Birkett for all of his efforts in organizing the "Red Shirt Friday & Saturdays" that we will be beginning soon in honor of Lt. Gentosi and all of the troops being deployed to Afghanistan. Dan has invested a lot of time and effort to take this idea, make it fit our department and see it through to implementation. This will be a great way to show our support for Mike and all of the troops. Great job Dan. Both Dan and Lance have gone above and beyond to show their sense of support for the brotherhood...I am proud to work with both of you!

WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND THE DEPARTMENT...

- The new ID cards are being issued—and we all have new cards coming. That's right, the 2nd card you were issued has an error so everyone will be getting a new card in early July. We are exploring all the options of this new card that includes possibly using the card for the new drug inventory system that will be coming later this year.
- The new timecard system should be in place in early July. We will continue using both the electronic timecards and the "older" paper version for a couple of work periods to make sure that everything is working correctly. There are many things to work through and there will be training forth coming but the end result will be more accurate tracking of time and providing you a better method of tracking your hours and pay. For POC, you will be moving to a bi-weekly pay system as well...everyone will be paid every two weeks.
- The bids for the Station 41 renovation project were opened on June 30th. Preliminary numbers were higher than expected but the Engineering Department which is overseeing the project hasn't reviewed all of the bids as of this writing. The project is expected to go to the City Council July 13, 2010 to award the contract.
- Work on the city's revised disaster plan continues. We hope to have the project finished in July or early August.
- Five new fulltime employees started in June. Cory Young, Josh Boyle, Bryce Landers, Drew Stiles and John McCannon have all been hard at work during orientation. We look forward to getting all of these new firefighters on shift and up and running. Please be sure to welcome all of them!
- The testing process to fill the remaining five open positions has been announced. The closing date for applications is July 16th with testing scheduled August 4th. We hope to have the newest employees on board in early September.
- The testing process to fill the three new Lieutenant positions has been announced as well. The deadline to apply is July 16th with testing in August.

ON THE LINE

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

Training Report: 1,211 hours of training were completed in June.

Fire Training: 403 hours
(403 in-house hours)

EMS Training: 313 hours
(298 in-house hours – 15 outside hours)

Recruit Orientation: 480

Prevention & Inspection Activities:

9 Inspections, 8 reinspections, 4 pre-plans, 16 plan reviews, 1 car seat check and one Home safety inspection

			Children	Adults	
6/5/2010	4500 65th	Truck Request	12	5	
6/8/2010	7305 Aurora	BP Checks	0	17	
6/9/2010	St.41	Station Tour	12	3	
6/14/2010	St.42	Kids Fire Academy	16	0	
6/15/2010	St.42	Kids Fire Academy	16	0	
6/16/2010	St.42	Kids Fire Academy	16	0	
6/17/2010	St.42	Station Tour	50	8	
6/17/2010	St.42	Station Tour	35	8	
6/18/2010	4718 105th Cir.	Replace Detector Batteries	0	2	
6/19/2010	3825 106th	Truck Request	15	15	
6/23/2010	St.42	Station Tour	45	6	
6/25/2010	St.42	Station Tour	3	2	
6/27/2010	15806 Tanglewood	Truck Request	22	12	
6/27/2010	155th & Airline	Truck Request	16	9	
					Total
			258	87	345



Congratulations!



To **Jesse and Kristi Christensen** on their recent marriage. We wish you all the best.

“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 July 1 we have sent 49 letters to our personnel. The following people received “You’ve Been Caught” letters since our last newsletter:

Zach Clear, Eric Ennen, Paula Merfeld, John Ouverson, Lance Routson and Stu Wilson: We received a thank you card and a \$50 donation for a truck visit at a child’s birthday party.

Dan Birkett & John Ouverson: We received a thank you card for visiting a child’s birthday party.

Craig Jensen, Ed Palizzolo & John McCannon: We received a thank you phone call for an EMS call in May. The patient called the station to thank us for the “kind and professional” help she had received. She spoke to Lt. Birkett when she called and he put her remarks in an email.

Thanks to all of you for providing outstanding service!!

Member Profile...

Member Profile: Mark Tauscheck

Length of time with UFD: 9 months

Level: EMT-B

Why I became interested in the UFD: I just wanted to do something different at this point in my life. My career was not very inspiring and I thought it would be fun to do a job that challenged me both mentally and physically.

Previous EMS experience: None

Previous Fire experience: None

Family life: Married to Tiffany for 6 years. Children: Number one is due in December. We also have a longhaired teacup Chihuahua named Buxton.

Current Profession: I've worked at St. Joseph's Emergency Family Shelter with Catholic Charities since the fall of 2009 and I also do freelance video production jobs. I produce, write, and voice videos for several local companies and charities.

Activities or hobbies I enjoy: My favorite pastime is taking off on my bike (bicycle) and heading in any direction for a few hours. My favorite escape is playing in the Mid-Iowa Baseball League every summer. We've only won 4 of our 32 games the past two years but winning and losing is not what keeps me coming back for more.

Most memorable moment: Having my company send my wife and I to New York City to accept my Edward R. Murrow Award for news reporting. It was fun to be wined and dined, meet some of my broadcasting idols, and see the look on my wife's face when I got off the stage.

Favorite TV programs: Parenthood, The Office, River Monsters

Favorite movies: Life is Beautiful, No Country for Old Men, Young Frankenstein

Last book that I read: I narrate books on tape for the Iowa Department for the Blind so all the books I read are assignments. The last one I enjoyed is one I highly recommend. It's called The Drake Diner Murders and came out this year. It was written by former Des Moines Police Officers Pete Hale and Jim Rowley.

Personal goals: To be happy and surrounded by people I care for when I'm an old man.

What I enjoy about the Urbandale Fire Dept: It's fun to be way out of my comfort zone and learn new skills from people who are passionate about doing their jobs well.

FAST Dedication photos...



Picture this... FAST Dedication...

