



On the Line



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

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This issue is in memory of Monte Burr—June 12, 1950—September 7, 2009. Long time member of the Urbandale Fire Department...may he rest in peace.

UFD statistics for September

Calls for service: 177 YTD: 1,775

Average response Time – All incidents: **6 minutes and 31 seconds**

Average response Time – **Emergency** incidents: **6 minutes and 14 seconds**

Emergency Medical Service calls: 123

Average Response Time EMS: 5 minutes and 36 seconds

Emergency: 5 minutes and 36 seconds

Non-Emergency: 6 minutes and 27 seconds

Fire related calls: 54

Average Response Time Fire: 7 minutes and 32 seconds

Average turnout per fire incident: 5 people

We **received mutual aid three times** – all three times for EMS calls.

We **gave mutual twice** – once for an EMS call and once for a fire call.

Upcoming Events

October 5-11

Fire Prevention Week

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

Last Safety Incident:

As of October 1

158 days without a safety incident

162 days without a lost time injury

Types of Fire Calls

The 54 fire calls we had in September fall into the following categories:

Fire / Explosion: 10

Hazardous Condition: 4

Good Intent Calls: 10

False Calls: 20

Service Calls: 10



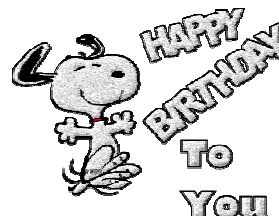
“Prevention is superior to suppression!”

Birthdays:

Ryan Shafer Oct 3

Joe Poschner Oct 6

Stuart Wilson Oct 18





Chief's Corner—Chief Jerry Holt



This month's edition is packed full of pictures and good articles. In an effort to keep the size of the newsletter down, I will forgo my usual ramblings and keep this month's allocation of space to keeping you informed on what's going on around the department:

- Construction is up and running on the training building. After getting off to a slow start, we are moving forward full steam ahead. The next few weeks should see significant movement and the project should be completed this month. I know everyone is looking forward to utilizing this great facility to sharpen your skills and perhaps learn a few new ones. This is an exciting project with the potential to greatly improve service delivery and firefighter safety as well as provide the opportunity to have some fun!
- The window replacement project is mostly completed at station 42. The windows have leaked periodically and needed to be replaced. All of the windows on the south side of the station have now been replaced. This is the same project that was conducted on the west side of the station and in the south side office area a few years back. We are still working on getting a contractor to replace the windows seals and to address the sheetrock around those windows.
- We have been selected as one of the 1,500 departments across the country to receive the new Nintendo game, "Real Heroes Firefighters" for the Wii gaming system. The game is from Crave Entertainment and a portion of all of the game sales will go to support the Firefighter Cancer Support Network. An email was sent out on Sept. 9th asking for those with Wii systems to respond. All of those who responded (their were 12 people) had their names placed in a hat and a winner was drawn...the winner is...John McCannon. Cody Thorne's name was pulled second...he received the game poster.
- Lieutenant Gentosi leaves for Basic and Advanced Individual Training for the Iowa National Guard in October. His training will be conducted at Ft. Benning, Georgia and he will be returning to our department in February. Please keep Lt. Gentosi in your thoughts and prayers as he works through this grueling military training. While he is gone, Derek Manser will be working in a temporary capacity on C-shift.
- We are still awaiting the announcement of the SAFER grant. If we are successful in our application, we will be able to fund six positions. If our grant is rejected, we will move forward with the hiring of two new positions. We expect that grant application period to be opened in October or November with awards following review of the applications. Grants can be awarded the first month following the application period or for up to more than a year after the application period closes. I will keep you informed on the progress of the SAFER grant.
- After months of negotiating with American LaFrance, we finally received the refund on the ladder truck we had on order. We will be moving forward with ordering a replacement ladder in the coming month or so. The decision has been made to order a 75' ladder as opposed to the original order of 100'. It is felt that this smaller unit will provide us more consistency with training and deployment of a truck that closely resembles L425. A smaller more easily maneuverable unit will better fit our needs at this time. Target hazards that have been identified as needing the additional 25' will be addressed through automatic aid agreements with surrounding departments.
- Chief Light and the committee are working on the specifications for the replacement of A424 continue to work on that project. We hope to get the specifications out for bid soon.
- An inquiry was recently received from the IRS regarding meals for firefighters. The question was as a condition of employment, are our firefighter/EMTs required to contribute to a "house fund", "meal fund" or any other fund used to purchase meals, or supplies for meals? The response provided to the IRS was: There is no requirement that employees contribute to any such fund as a condition of employment. Employees often "pitch in" for the cost of meals prepared during their shift but again, there is no requirement to do so and participation is strictly voluntary. The impetus for this question is not known however everyone is reminded to check with your tax advisor when deciding what work related items are tax deductible.
- We are headed in to budget time of the year. This includes Capital Improvement Projects. Officers were asked to submit items for the CIP back in August. Three new items were submitted for consideration in the CIP: expansion of the parking lot at station 42; the addition of a fourth ambulance to the fleet; and a computer training lab. Other items already included in the CIP but un-programmed are: Construction of Station 43, Living Quarters for Station 42—including a Live-in program, and the replacement of E410 (2011). CIP hearing should happen sometime this fall. If you have budget items that you would like to see in the upcoming budget, please visit with your officer to see that your suggestions are considered.
- We will be getting new ID cards soon...standby for pictures!

As always, if you have questions about what is going on around the department, please see your officer. They will be happy to share what's happening around the department with you!

What is the Benefit of Risk? Assistant Chief Mike Cardwell

During the April, 2009 Fire Department Instructor's Conference, Lt. Ray McCormack (Fire Department of New York) delivered a keynote address at the general session. In his presentation "Keep Fighting for your Life," Lt. McCormack made the argument that too many firefighters had forgotten or failed to understand that firefighting is at its very heart a dangerous profession which at times requires us to place ourselves in harms way to protect lives and property. Too often, in his opinion, departments are not willing to put firefighters' safety at risk in order to accomplish this mission. His presentation received a rousing ovation from those present, but within days the FDIC had disavowed itself from his words and he was placed on desk duty at FDNY.

Why is this issue too hot to handle or discuss? Was it the delivery or the message? In my opinion a little of both. Fire Service Instructors spend a lot of time preaching and (hopefully) practicing safety. Presentations focus on recognizing hazards and avoiding them. Company officers reinforce this safety message during company training and on calls. Often we emphasize risk little or risk nothing when there is little or no benefit. But what is risk? What is the benefit? Aren't we supposed to take risks?

To understand risk vs. benefit you need to understand the backdrop against which it was first promoted. Twenty-five or so years ago, the widespread use of full personal protective equipment was becoming the norm and firefighters found themselves in the position to push interior attacks beyond where they could be traditionally made. This, coupled with increasing fire load, more fires in run-down buildings, and the introduction of lightweight construction placed firefighters in situations from which they had no escape. As this trend continued unabated some key fire service leaders said "enough," and introduced the concept of risk vs. benefit.

Twenty-five years later, some in the fire service are beginning to wonder if we haven't done too good a job with preaching this safety message. Some advocate that risk is a negative, and as such should be avoided at all costs. Unless a human life is at stake, then no risk is acceptable; houses, possessions, pets can all be replaced. Or can they?

Lets back up to original message. The message wasn't to avoid risk at all cost – it was to slow down, and measure risk against possible benefits. Officers were challenged to look for imminent hazards prior to committing their personnel. What benefit was to be gained in making an aggressive interior attack on a building marked for demolition that had already been attacked by previous fires? At the same time, we were called to protect lives and property, and often that property had great, almost immeasurable value to a family.



Risk is not a positive or a negative, it is a factor to be weighed. We weigh the potential risks encountered during interior offensive firefighting against the equipment and training we have to control the situation. Risk can be measured in time: the longer a crew operates inside, the higher the risk level becomes. Risk can be measured in benefit: an interior hoseline deployed quickly to the seat of the fire will contain it before the contents of the building are destroyed. Risk can be measured in fire growth: we can get to the seat of the fire before it grows to the point of flashing over or burning through structural members.

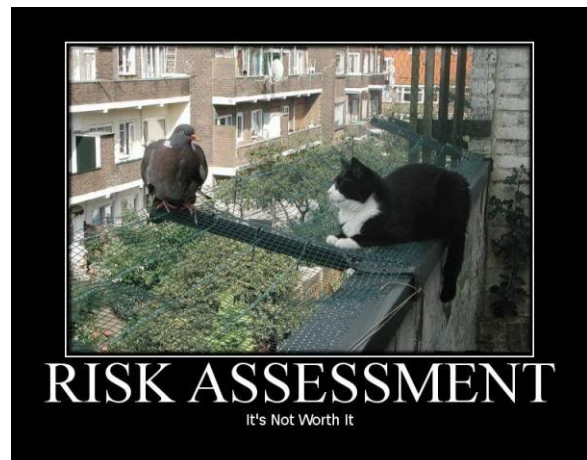
Since the early 1980's, there have been significant advancements in our ability to overcome the risks associated with fire. Our turnout gear protects us to a much higher level. Our 1 ¾" handlines now flow 50% more water than the old 1 ½" lines did. Our air packs last 33% longer, yet weigh less and can tell us when we are running out of air.

At the same time we have a much better understanding of the risks involved. Our knowledge of fire behavior allows us to anticipate rapid fire events and read smoke conditions. We understand how buildings are built and how building layouts affect fire spread. We understand better the hazards which make up the risks we face.

Lt. McCormack's presentation may have struck personnel as being out-of-place, or maybe as something that needed to be said. Only time will judge. The message, with all the emotion removed, rings true – we can never remove all the risk from firefighting. To this day, and probably at least through the end of my career, interior firefighting will remain a dirty, hot, dangerous job. But when the benefits are there, it's a job that needs to be done. Our job – my job as a training officer – is to make sure we truly understand those risks and train to do our job to overcome them.

"Take calculated risks. That is quite different from being rash."

General George S Patton



The Politics of Public Safety - Fire Marshal Jon Rech

Ahh.....the fun topic of politics. Cash for Clunkers, Universal Healthcare, First Time Homebuyers Tax Credit, the list of potential fire department conversations goes on and on. And while some of us are pretty shy about politics (Chief Light) and have pretty neutral viewpoints (Chief Light), there hasn't necessarily been a lot of discussion on the politics of public safety. Chief Holt's article in last month's newsletter certainly was focused on the politics of residential fire sprinklers and those in the fire service who choose not to "get it," but the politics of public safety is more than fire sprinklers. It encompasses all aspects of our job. I will attempt to illustrate this by breaking the politics down into two categories: visible and invisible.

Visible Politics

In our current economic times, it is easy to see the political impact on public safety. It seems almost daily that there is a story about fire department layoffs and furloughs. Akron, OH recently laid off 38 firefighters. While career departments have been hit the worst by this, you will occasionally see a story about a volunteer department that has had to shut down due to budget issues. When something 'visible' like this takes place the first thing you usually hear from the fire service side is that an action like this will affect the safety of citizens and firefighters. Certainly a valid point. Fewer personnel = less efficiency & safety. But the fire service often forgets that our existence is within the confines of a reactive-focused environment – the government. It is our job to predict the unexpected and plan for the worst, while elected officials want to know how much it's going to cost and how many times a "bad" outcome has happened. Like it or not, this is reality.

Have you ever taken the time to read the nice UFD monthly reports that are posted in the dispatch rooms? You will find very detailed information on response stats, training, and Pub-Ed. Do you think Chief does these because they look pretty? This is one way we try to justify ourselves. Crazy you say? But it's not. Despite our inadequate staffing issues, we have lost a significant amount of money in our budget over the last few years because of unfilled FTE spots. When it is 'visible' that the allotted money is not being spent, it will be lost. As many fire departments are finding out, being the fire department doesn't mean you won't be scrutinized about your existence.

When there is a LODD, staffing is usually the issue that is focused on by the fire service. If you read the NIOSH reports staffing is often noted as a factor, but there are a variety of other points/recommendations that are typical in these reports: accountability, ICS, equipment maintenance/needs, pre-planning, just to name a few. But how come the fire service doesn't talk about these important aspects of our jobs when job or budget cuts are being proposed? The focus seems to be all about staffing. While this is a critical aspect, I think the underlying issue is that the fire service has relied on the reactive part of our job for so long that all the other "little" things take a back seat when it comes to the money game. But this is

exactly the time that the fire service should focus on all the other things that we do. We are the preverbal safety net for the community. Think about all the things people call us for. These are all very 'visible' things that help us justify our existence. But if you feel your existence on our department is going to be based on going to the "big one," you are truly missing the big picture.

Invisible Politics

Let's now switch gears and briefly discuss where a lot of our problems begin. Over the last few years, I have become more aware and involved in the political aspects of public safety at all levels of government. It has been eye opening to say the least! On the whole, the fire service has a huge disadvantage in the world of politics. We don't have deep pockets. We don't have the powerful and influential lobbyists, and we often don't have the full attention of elected officials. That being said, the fire service can have a voice – if it wants to.



In past newsletters I have discussed the 'invisible' politics associated with residential fire sprinklers. But this is certainly not the only public safety issue that affects the fire service. Recently, the State Fire Marshal once again delayed the start date of the dual sensor smoke detector requirements. The new start date is now April 1, 2010. Ironically, it was driven by political influence of one of the manufacturers of dual sensor smoke detectors. Here are a couple other pieces of legislation that fortunately did not move forward last year in the State of Iowa:

Legislation was introduced that would prohibit dual sensor smoke detectors from being required. The driving force behind this was a company that sells fire safety products.

Legislation was introduced that would have not required sprinklers in commercial buildings built before a certain date. The driving force behind this was an owner of a building in Iowa who lives on the east coast. How's that for 'invisible' politics!

The moral of the story is that elected officials will introduce legislation that their constituents feel is important even if it makes no sense or they don't understand the impact it will have on other groups – like the fire service. When situations like this arise, there are only a few fire service groups in Iowa that keep tabs on the 'invisible' politics. But in order for the fire service to have a voice, all the groups must be involved. If one or two groups choose not to get involved it will mean defeat for the fire service. I would encourage all of you to get a better feel for the political challenges the fire service in Iowa faces. If we don't speak up, we truly will be 'invisible.'

Continued on the next page...

ON THE LINE

The Politics of Public Safety...continued from page 3 : Fire Marshal Jon Rech

I Just Put Fires Out

If your biggest concern while working a shift is what you're going to eat or that you may have to run a lot of EMS calls, you're doing a disservice to our department. It is important that everyone understand that what we do is not just about running calls or how you may be individually impacted. Everything we do in this department is interconnected. If one area is lacking, it affects all the other aspects. The same can be said for politics. What happens at the Federal, State, or local level affects everything we do.

I can certainly attest that the political process is frustrating most of the time. But politics is government, and we are a government entity. We can have a strong unified voice, but we all have to contribute. I hope this article provided a different perspective on public safety politics for you. Most importantly, I hope you will pay a little more attention to the politics that affect our abilities as a fire department and the customers we serve.

"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 September 29th, we have sent 69 letters to our personnel. The following people received "You've Been Caught" letters since our last newsletter:

We received a thank you email from the Mayor. He had a need to call EMS for a friend and he wanted to thank everyone for their efforts and "very capable hands". ([A413 Christensen & Clear - L425 Birkett & Wilson](#))

We received a thank you note and \$20 donation from a group that participated in a tour of the station (Mom's Club of West Des Moines) ([B. Burke, J. Erie, and C. Jensen](#))

We received a \$100 donation for a fire extinguisher class that was conducted at Compressor Controls Corporation. ([FM Rech, Lt. Gentosi and Cory Macumber](#))

We received a thank you note from a patient we transported. She wanted to send a special "thank you" to the paramedics that transported her for being so efficient and caring. ([Patrick Comstock, Jamie Erie in A413, B. Burke in 417](#))

Thanks to all of you for providing outstanding service!!

Safety Tip—Ways to Delay Flashover

From <http://www.firerescue1.com> by Vincent Dunn - retired FDNY Deputy Chief

There are three ways you can delay flashover. First, by venting the windows of a burning room, you release the build up of heat in there. This slows down flashover in addition to improving visibility in smoke-filled conditions.

Second, by not venting and instead closing the door to the burning room, you can also delay flashover. By not venting, you starve the fire of oxygen, which slows down the combustion rate, which in turn slows down the build up of heat in the room. This may be done when there is a delay in stretching a hose-line and all persons are out of the burning room.

Third, the discharge of a portable extinguisher can cool the heat down in a burning room temporarily and also delay flashover.



ON THE LINE

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

Training Report: 609 hours of training were completed in September.

Fire Training: 442 hours

EMS Training: 167 hours

Prevention & Inspection Activities:

- Completed 20 Inspections
- Conducted 1 Home Safety Check
- Completed 13 re-inspections
- Conducted public education for 489 people
- Completed 5 preplans
- Conducted 11 plan reviews
- Conducted 2 Car Seat check

			# Children	# Adults		
9/7/2009	8601 Douglas	MDA Event	75	125		
9/8/2009	7305 Aurora	BP checks	0	20		
9/9/2009	St.41	Station tour	20	3		
9/9/2009	2727 82nd Pl.	Fire drill	0	60		
9/15/2009	4725 121st	Extinguisher Training	0	28		
9/16/2009	St.42	Station tour	3	2		
9/18/2009	2727 82nd Pl.	Extinguisher Training	0	10		
9/19/2009	68th & Townsend	Truck Request	10	20		
9/21/2009	3802 92nd	Safety Talk	15	6		
9/22/2009	St.42	Station tour	12	5		
9/23/2009	St.42	Station tour	15	5		
9/25/2009	10000 Meredith	Safety Talk	30	5		
9/29/2009	St.41	Station tour	10	5		
9/30/2009	St.42	Station tour	4	1	Totals	
			194	295	489	



Thanks to the efforts of FM Rech, Rod Silvers, John Ouverson and Patrick Comstock, E411 is now fitted with reflective striping!

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.

PEPP: Saturday, October 3rd. This is the full 8-hour program

Fire Officer II: Thur/Fri/Sat October 29-31st

Fri/Sat November 6-7th

You must already be certified as Fire Officer I to participate)

IEMSA Conference: Nov 12 – 14, DSM Convention Center

Beyond Hoses and Helmets (IAFC/VCOS Class): This is a class that focuses on leadership skills beyond tactics: leadership, personal management, etc. Saturday November 21st

Sick or Distressed: Please keep Cody Thorne in your thoughts and prayers as he recovers from surgery to repair a torn ACL...The College Scouts in the stands were very disappointed to see him go out in the first quarter with an injury...ending speculations that Cody was being recruited by Iowa, Iowa State and two professional teams.

Member Profile...

Member Profile: Dave Wyner

Length of time with UFD: 8months

Level: EMT-B/FF II

Why I became interested in the UFD: I enjoy helping people and this gives me a chance to help people in my community.

Previous EMS experience: Johnston F.D as and EMT-B since December 2008

Previous Fire experience: Casey F.D. Iowa "rural" firefighting for 2yrs. Closest EMS service was 15 miles away. Johnston F.D. since July 2008.

Family life: Married to Jessica for 6 years. We have a 4 year old daughter named Rebecca Lynn. Plus we have a 3-month-old Beagle named Daisy.

Current Profession: I owned an international kennel "German Short-hairs" for several years and sold it last fall. I trained and competed my dogs all over the world. I also owned a photography website that specialized in nature photos. I still have the business.

Activities or hobbies I enjoy: Hunting, fishing, camping, shooting, weight lifting, metal detecting, and coin collecting.

Most memorable moment: Helping in the delivery of my daughter and watching her take her first breath.

Favorite TV programs: Rescue Me, History Channel, Discovery Channel, Extreme Logging

Favorite movies: Top Gun, Stand by Me, Full Metal Jacket, The Game, Lonesome Dove, National Lampoons Vacation

Last book that I read: My EMT Basic book

Personal goals: To be a paramedic next year. To be a full time firefighter. To be the best father and husband I can possibly be.

What I enjoy about the Urbandale Fire Dept: I enjoy the classroom trainings, which opens up great conversations.



Chief's thanks...

- A thank you to everyone who participated in FD versus PD flag football game for Make-A-Wish. We raised \$10,020...and while we didn't surpass last year's amount, we made enough to have a very positive impact on someone's life! Rather you volunteered to help serve food in the concession stand, played or coached football or showed up just to watch...THANK YOU!
- **A very special thank you goes to Rod Silvers.** Rod has been instrumental in setting up the event and doing tons of work behind the scenes to make the event a success. Most people do not realize the long hours and tremendous effort that goes into pulling the game off...Rod is outstanding at taking care of the details and putting out "fires" that occur at the last minute. Rod is to be commended for all of his work in organizing the game and all of the behind the scenes efforts.
- And while we didn't win this year—we allowed the Police Department to maintain the trophy—we were winners. I am proud of the sportsmanship that was displayed by everyone that played. We enjoyed the game and while we all wanted to win, the purpose of the game was never far from anyone's mind. We demonstrated a great effort while demonstrating our core values for all to see...The score board might not have reflected it, but everyone that participated was a winner!
- **Thanks to Lt. Routson, Jamie Erie** who have headed the efforts to re-organize a Fire Explorer post at the FD. This is a great program and has the potential to impact future careers and involvement with our department. Others helping with the Explorer efforts are Cody Thorne, Tom Hyde, Capt. Mitchell, A/C Cardwell, Rod Silvers and Eric Ennen. Thanks for all of your efforts!



Congratulations!

- To Craig and Jennifer Pope. Chayten was born on Thursday, Sept 10 at 15:27. He weighed in at 9 lbs and 3 oz, and was 19 ½ inches long. We wish you the best with the new addition to your family. And, it's going to keep Craig busy playing with 3 young boys.



All pictures courtesy of Dr. McClanahan

Picture this...



ON THE LINE

Picture this...



All pictures courtesy of Dr. McClanahan



ON THE LINE

All pictures courtesy of Dr. McClanahan

Picture this...



ON THE LINE

Coming soon...realistic and safe training in a modern training facility!

