



On the Line



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

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Upcoming Events

February 26th

Annual Awards Banquet

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

Types of Fire Calls

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

<u>Fire / Explosion:</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>Hazardous Condition:</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>Service Calls:</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>Good Intent Calls:</u>	<u>7</u>
<u>False Calls:</u>	<u>23</u>



Prevention and mitigation (sprinklers) remain the most efficient and cost effective response to fire...Since 1997, we have had more than \$20 million in fire loss in our community!

UFD statistics for January

Calls for service: 215

Average response Time – All incidents: **7 minutes and 21 seconds**

Average response Time – **Emergency** incidents: **6 minutes and 52 seconds**

Emergency Medical Service calls: 167

Average Response Time EMS: 7 minutes and 17 seconds

Emergency: 6 minutes and 43 seconds

Non-Emergency: 7 minutes and 50 seconds

Fire related calls: 48

Average Response Time Fire: 7 minutes and 38 seconds

Average turnout per fire incident: 6 people

We **received mutual aid nine times**—seven times for EMS calls and twice for fire calls.

We **provided mutual aid one time**—for an EMS call.

Birthdays:

Cory Macumber	Feb 10
Rob Zahnd	Feb 11
Bryce Landers	Feb 19
Julie Stuckle	Feb 22

HAPPY BIRTHDAY
FROM ALL OF US





Several years ago I attended the FireHouse Expo in Baltimore. It was a great conference with some great classes. That experience is the basis for this article on leadership. Not “safety” leadership but a much more basic aspect of leadership, but none the less—leadership as a basic courtesy.

During the Firehouse Expo like most of the outside training I attend, I was recharged! The opportunity to share fellowship with fire service personnel from all over the country was refreshing. Seeing the mix of veterans, new people and old friends was renewing. Hearing others talk about their love for the fire service has a way of recharging the batteries; it is contagious and can improve one’s attitude. The sense of brotherhood/sisterhood and commitment to one another is infectious. However, some of the most basic courtesies were not observed by some in attendance and that makes me wonder just how committed some of our brothers and sisters really are to doing “what’s right”.

In more than one of these outstanding educational sessions, cell phones interrupted the presenter. This is not entirely unexpected. In today’s society, cell phones are as prevalent as ballpoint pens. In fact, I am sure more people carry cell phones than they do ballpoint pens. I understand that we are all busy, and I understand that emergencies occur and people in our department or our families may need to contact us. Business demands that we stay “connected” and thanks to cell phones, we are connected as never before. What is unexpected is what occurred after the phone rang and disturbed the class. On more than one occasion, the person actually answered the phone and carried on a conversation! In the middle of class with little to no effort to lower his voice! I was even more shocked when the phone rang a second time only minutes later and again, the recipient took the call. This is not an indictment of the fire service. We have all seen this issue at weddings, funerals, and I have even heard stories where job applicants have taken calls during an interview!

Many departments have policies on cell phones and training – we do. Phones are turned off or turned to vibrate during training sessions. This is a basic courtesy to the Instructor. Back to the Golden Rule – treat others, as you would have them treat you. No one making a presentation wants to have the class interrupted by a phone call. It is challenging enough to compete with the demands of time management of our personnel while trying to deliver timely and meaningful training opportunities without having to deal with ringing cell phones and not so private conversations. At the very least, phones should be switched to vibrate or silent and personnel should excuse themselves from the room if a call absolutely must be taken. Even when stepping out of the room, lower your voice so as not to distract those around you and to keep your private conversation private. If you have forgotten to turn the phone to vibrate and it does ring during a training session, immediately switch it off. There are not many things more annoying than hearing your latest SpongeBob SquarePants

ring tone as it disrupts the class with a rousing version of the popular theme song. Just because it is your favorite song does not mean that everyone else wants to hear it. As much as I enjoy those 70’s hits, *Sweet Home Alabama* as a ring tone just isn’t the same as the original. Okay, well maybe *Sweet Home Alabama* is okay.

When attending outside training and representing our department, please turn off your cell phone or at least silence the ringer. I have seen some instructors who ask at the beginning of a presentation for just that – turn your phones off or turn them to the vibrate mode. Violators who have their phone ring during the presentation have their phones answered by the instructor...who gets to tell the unsuspecting caller that the intended recipient has not returned from the bar! It is good for a laugh in class but I am not always sure that when the intended recipient gets home that the explanation is as humorous!

In addition to cell phone etiquette, participants in class should consider their level of alertness. Students who are dozing off and snoring can be equally disrupting. Again, I do understand how busy we all are. Being at up all night responding to calls before a training session may be an excuse; however, sleeping during a presentation that others paid for and disturbing those around you as you snore should not be the norm. We have all attended those classes where it is a challenge to remain alert and interested. If you attend enough training, you are certain to attend that one class that could be the classic treatment case study for the Treatment Center of Insomnia, but if the class is keeping the interest of those around you, perhaps the problem is with **your** preparation to hear the message. Participants should arrive at classes with the proper mind-set. Rested and alert, ready to hear the message that may well save the lives of our brothers and sisters, or better

yet, your own life. All classes cannot be the interest generating, hanging on every word, Goldfeder classes. Some are less engaging than others but participants should beware that just because a class does not capture your interest does not mean that the person next to you might not find the class especially valuable.

Simply being courteous can make the training and educational experiences more valuable to you and those around you. A few simple courteous rules can improve the educational experience for everyone. Be sure to turn off your cell phone, tune in to the presenter and pay attention. If you absolutely must take a call, make sure that your phone is on vibrate or silent, excuse yourself from the room and take the call. While on the phone, speak in a

lowered voice and keep your conversation private. Demonstrate leadership, come to training with an open and alert mind. Listen for new ways to do things or simply justification for why you do the things you do. When we come to classes prepared to learn, free from distractions, then, and only then can we all start to work on the most critical aspect of our job and make sure that everyone goes home!



Never, But Never – Lt. Michael Gentosi

There is a wooden ornament-type object on my grandfather's mantle. It's a fire helmet and axe with an oval block between them. The oval block says, "Never, but never question the Chief's judgment". It always just makes me chuckle when I see it because it describes my grandpa so very well. It also says a lot about what it is to follow orders on the emergency scene.

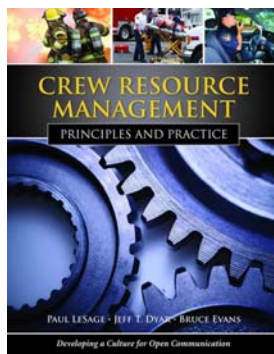
I just finished the book *Crew Resource Management for the Fire Service* by Randy Okray and Thomas Lubnau II. Thanks Rowdy for sending that to me!! I am embarrassed I haven't read this book previously. Nonetheless, it is a good read for **everyone**. I highly recommend it. In a way, it contradicts the above statement that hangs on my grandfather's mantle.

The book says a lot about ensuring firefighters and lower level officers are expressing their concerns regarding conditions, safety, and recommendations regarding operations. We have all heard the saying over and over again that everyone on the fire ground is a safety officer. There is no doubt this is painstakingly true. But, what about when orders are given that makes a person feel unsafe? What about insubordination? These can be tricky areas when confronted with clear orders that may appear contradictory to fire ground safety.

It is a tough spot to be found in when you are told to do something you feel is counter-productive or even crazy. I would fully expect someone to bring to my attention a critical tidbit of information that would significantly alter a course of action I was putting into place. I know those above me would feel the same way. Everyone has their acceptable level of risk. Mine may be more than yours, or yours may be more than mine. It is truly person dependent. Chief may order me into a building that I feel isn't worth the risk, but to someone else, it will appear a justifiable situation. It is very subjective, to a degree.

The point of interest rears itself when a situation warrants someone speaking up and presenting information that may result in corrective action. I don't believe any officer or leader in their right mind would set aside such information. If so, they have no business being in that role. You may see something the commander is blind to. There may be something else captivating the attention of the commander that will hinder a global view. This information **must** be pushed up the chain to ensure a proper picture can be painted and decisions can be made.

Now, it will happen at some point in your career that you will see something or push information along that, in your mind, should change the direction of operations. It will also definitely happen that command will not decide in your favor. This is where it gets rocky. Nobody should have to do something they feel is unsafe. Then again, is any-



thing we do ever going to be truly safe? You have to be honest with that question to find the answer to be "no". Everyone is fully aware of the danger of situations we may find ourselves in and voluntarily signs the line for service.

As I said previously, it is critical to push up such information so command can make a proper decision. But, once the decision is made, the follow through must be ensured. Command may be seeing other things that are going on while also receiving additional reports from other crews. This is where I disagree with the ornament on my grandfather's mantle. It is imperative to question and critique the judgment to ensure proper decisions are being made. It is also imperative for me to understand my position when I may question the judgment, but the order is still expected to be executed.

I am not suggesting a disrespectful, continual questioning of command officer's or crew leader's judgments. I hope you understand my point here. What is expected is that everyone knows their role in ensuring information is pushed up that is critical to the situation, and if orders may seem to contradict that, you must say something about it.

Everyone on the emergency scene plays an integral role in ensuring the scenes are safe and productive. That cannot happen if the flow of information and ideas is compromised. It is **your** job to fill that role and execute as necessary.

I'm out!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!



Last Safety Incident:
As of February 1st
25 days without a safety incident
126 days without a lost time injury
 Last incident: R428 struck the mailbox at Sta. 42

Change - Lt. Stu Wilson

As we begin a new year the word **change** is always in the front of my mind. Especially this year with being newly promoted. The word **change** can be a noun or verb. Here at the Urbandale Fire Department the word **change** is a verb. Webster's Dictionary defines **change** as 1. To make different in some particular way. 2. To make radically different. This word is certainly the one to describe our department.

Let's take a look at some of the **changes** that have happened in the past. This is not an all inclusive list. First let's start with the schedule and staffing. When I was hired the schedule for career staff was 5a-2p, 8a-5p and 2p-11p at that time there was talk of going to 24hr shifts but no one knew when that might happen. Then it happens we moved to 24 hr shifts with 2 people per shift and the primary station is 42 not 41. Then we add another person and we have someone working 8a-5p. Now in some aspects we **change** our response during the day. Low and behold these **changes** work in some areas and in others we see no **change**. During this time we have members come and go, more go than anything. Once again **change** is happening not always good but also not always bad. As we add more staff the word **change** becomes more appropriate to our department.

Now let's look at apparatus. When I stated we had 3 ambulances one which was good and the other 2 were pretty much not worth the paint on the outside of them. These however where what we had to work with. We tried to rotate them but that **change** didn't work. We survived with what we had until we got 2 new ones. This was a big **change** because we actually designed the ambulances to be functional. Then we add a new ladder truck which is a quint which replaces an engine. Now comes a **change** in what is first out. Now we have just added another new ladder which is smaller than what it replaces. Not only does this **change** first out apparatus but also how we function on the fireground to some degree. Once again **change** is becoming more apparent.

Here are some of the **changes** that are coming down the pipe. The remodel of station 41 which will **change** which is our primary station. A new staffing and response plan, which will totally **change** how we operate.

This is just a very and I mean very brief review of some of the **changes** that have happened or are going to happen. **Change** can be very stressful to some people. Does **change** always happen as quickly as we like or even in the direction we want? No, but in our department it is inevitable. I think it is something that we should embrace. Not only is this why I got into this line of work but it is also what keeps me excited about coming to work every third day. I hope that this might provoke some thought or just



some discussion among the veterans of this department with all the new people. Not only to let them know where we have been but also to let them know that **change** is going to be a part of career here at the Urbandale Fire Department.

Safety Tip – Using Power Saws

From www.firerescue1.com

In January we introduced our new power saw for R428. Despite this is usually used



for vehicle extrication, please keep in mind the following safety tips for using power saws on the fireground: from www.firerescue1.com:

The proper use, care and maintenance of power saws are critical to the success of safe forcible entry operations. Power saws are our "go to" tools in many operations on the fireground. From venting to forcible entry, these tools get the job done fast. They are rapid and efficient and have the ability to cut through various different types of materials at once. They also afford firefighters the energy saved by not having to manually smash or cut through a building's exterior or interior finishes. There are several key dangers relating to their use:

- Do not push a saw beyond the limits of its design or purpose. Never use a saw in a flammable atmosphere. The saw's motor or operation may ignite flammable liquids or gases.
- Always operate with full protection and protect your eyes.
- Never carry a power tool, raise, or lower a tool that is running.



The rotary saw is one of the most popular gasoline-powered saws. These are often called partner or k12 saws. The saws can be equipped with multiple blade types for cutting through different materials. Make sure the blade you select is the proper blade for the job. Blades should not be stored in any compartment where gasoline fumes accumulate because hydrocarbons will attack the bonding material in the blades and make them subject to sudden disintegration during use.

And be aware of hidden hazards such as charged electrical wires, gas and water lines. Familiarize yourself with the manufacturer's recommendations and your department's operating procedures. Always protect yourself with full PPE and eye protection, and make sure you have someone backing you up.

Pharming Parties – Lt. Kyle Bissell

As EMS providers we need to be aware of prescription medication abuse that is infecting our city and destroying the lives of those that take them and the families they far too often leave behind.

In an effort to promote our knowledge of these drugs and their effects I will discuss several popular prescription medications that are being commonly abused. Often times groups get together and hold pharming parties where individuals bring several common prescribed medications, dump the medications into a bowl and everyone at the party grabs a handful of the medications and washes them down often with alcohol.

The three most common medication groups abused at these parties include but are not limited to pain killers, stimulants and depressants.

Oxycodone (OxyContin) is one of the most commonly abused prescription medications available and is twice as strong as Morphine. There are many variations of Oxycodone products on the market but of those OxyContin, Percocet, and Percoden are used and abused most frequently. For street use the medication is typically crushed, which tends to break down the timed release component, and is then snorted or injected. Abusers of the medication find that it will relieve pain, alleviate withdrawal symptoms and or give them euphoric effects. Some of the most common signs of Oxycodone use are nausea, drowsiness, impaired coordination, confusion, small pupils, and clammy skin. Some common street names associated with this medication include 40, 80, Blue, Kicker, Hillbilly, Heroin (because it is a cheap persons version of Heroin), Oxy and OC's.

Ritalin and Adderall are the two most commonly abused stimulants. These ADD and ADHD medications are so frequently prescribed that obtaining them is extremely easy. High school and college students often abuse the medication in an effort to stay up late as they cram for a next day exam. When abused the effects of both are similar to that of cocaine or methamphetamine. The medication is taken either orally or crushed and snorted or dissolved in water then injected. Signs of abuse can include dilated pupils, sweaty, dry mouth, flushed skin, increased heart rate, temperature and energy. Common street names for Ritalin include: kibbles and bits, kiddy-cocaine, pineapple, vitamin R, skippy, and smarties. Adderall can be named: beans, Christmas trees, pep pills, bennies, dexies, speed, black beauties and uppers.

Prescription depressants have effects that are similar to the effects of alcohol, but can have more or less potent effects depending on

the dose and type taken. The two most common benzodiazepines abused are Alprazolam (Xanax) and Diazepam (Valium). These medications are abused in an

effort to gain a sedative and euphoric effect as well as to enhance the intoxication of alcohol. They can be used to modulate the euphoric effects of opioids, and to modulate the adverse consequences of stimulant abuse. The most common medical emergency we will see is a patient in some state of an altered level of consciousness from sleepy to unresponsive. Common street names for Xanax include

Z-bars, school bus, footballs, handlebars, bicycle parts. Valium can be found on the street under the names candy, downers, sleeping pills and tanks.

Another popular medication abuse that has been around for years but is becoming more popular is the ingestion of DXM (dextromethorphan) or cough syrup/ tablets. There are over 120 products on the market today that contain DXM so it is easy for children to purchase over the counter. The effects sought include those that replicate that of PCP and ketamine euphoria and hallucinations that can last, dose dependant, up to six hours. Abusers simply drink or swallow large quantities of DXM and sometimes will mix in another

medication in hopes of reaching a new level of euphoria. Some of the common signs that we will see as EMS providers include vomiting, loss of muscle control, slurred speech, diarrhea, abdominal pain, sweating, hypertension, and loss of consciousness. Street monikers for DXM are Triple C, C-C-C, red devils, skittles, DM and robo-velvet.

As EMS providers we will be faced with patients that exhibit the above signs and symptoms and some of them will be due to the ingestion or injection of prescribed medications. We need to put on our detective hats and try to uncover the reason for their ailment. It is not easy because the patient may not be forthcoming with information concerning their situation so we must dig in and ask questions.

Information for this article supplied in part by *Street Drugs: A drug identification guide*. An annual publication created with the help from NDIC and NIDA.



Chief's thanks...

- A special thanks to **Rod Silvers** for his help in re-numbering our apparatus. Rod worked to change the placards on our apparatus so that the relocation of apparatus would match the station assignment. This included swapping E411 and E421 and updating R418 so that the number matches the station assignment. E411 became E421 at Station 42, E421 was re-numbered as E411 and relocated to Station 41. R418 was updated to R428. Thanks Rod
- Thanks to everyone that has offered to help by serving on one of the several committees that are currently active. We have people working on updating our TEAMS cards, our SOGs as well as assisting Lt. Routson with a NFA project assignment and working on the Awards Banquet. There are many volunteers that are taking advantage of the opportunities to be involved...thanks for giving of your time and talents to help us become a better organization.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND THE DEPARTMENT...

- Work continues on the renovation of Station 41. Obviously we are behind schedule on the project and I am reluctant to provide a predicted date of completion. The project is being monitored and we are pushing to expedite the completion of this project.
- The project to improve energy efficiency is in full swing. This project included updating light switches to motion sensor switches that turn on/off automatically. This should help us significantly as we have had an issue regarding lights left on for a long time. Another part of this project is updating the lighting and heating in the apparatus bay. The heating has been updated at Station 41 and the work continues on the lighting in the bays.
- The replacement of our existing MDCs is underway. The new computers have been received and are in the process of being programmed with all of our programs. Once that is complete, we will begin the process of updating apparatus with mounting brackets so that the new MDCs can be deployed. The timeframe for this process is not clear but I am hoping that we will have all of these operational by March.
- The CIP was approved in December by the City Council. We haven't heard regarding our AFG request for SCBA however we anticipate that we will be going out to bid in 2011 for the replacement of all of our SCBA. The CIP will fund the project if the grant request is unsuccessful.
- Our Fire Codes were amended in January to increase the allowable size of self-storage before fire sprinklers are required. The third and final vote will occur in February making this change final.
- Budget hearings are set for the first week in February. As it stands, this year's budget will be a status quo with no new initiatives except for a pay adjustment for PT/POC. If the budget is approved, PT/POC will receive a .54 pay increase in the base rate this year and next year.

Congratulations!

Michael Roe and **Bradley Crookshank**
for passing their National Paramedic
testing! Michael and Bradley are up
and running as a paramedics!



ON THE LINE

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

Training Report: 1,310 hours of training were completed in January.

Fire Training: 800 hours

EMS Training: 510 hours

Prevention & Inspection Activities:

- Completed 6 Inspections
- Completed 15 re-inspections
- Completed 2 preplans
- Conducted 9 plan reviews
- Conducted 2 preliminary walk-thru/meetings



Date	Location	Activity Type	# of Children	# of Adults	
1/1/2011	7620 Wilden	Smoke detector installation	0	1	
1/10/2011	3326 59th	Smoke detector check	0	2	
1/16/2011	St.42	Station tour	5	4	Total
			5	7	12

Saying good by to Chief Hunter...RIP



“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 Jan. 31, 2011, we have sent 20 letters to our personnel. The following people received “You’ve Been Caught” letters since our last newsletter:

(423 - Crookshank/Ouerson, 425 – Wilson, Gilchrist and Ramic).

We received a thank you note for a call back in December. The customer sent a thank you note thanking everyone for their prompt help saying “You guys are the Best!”.

(413 – Merfeld/Young, 415- Birkett/Ouerson).

We received a thank you for your involvement in an EMS call involving a kidney stone. The customer sent a thank you email “The pain I experienced was some of the most severe pain I have ever felt, to the point of causing me to vomit. The crew experienced some issues trying to get an I.V. started on me due to me being dehydrated and my veins collapsing on them. The crew persisted and eventually were able to get one started, getting needed pain medication in me. Upon arrival at Methodist Hospital, Paula Merfeld kept checking on me and asked me if I needed anything from her. I feel that the rescue crew actions, and especially Paula’s, go above and beyond what is expected and needed from medics in the performance of their duties. It also shows what a close knit “family” we have within our employee pool. Please pass on to them my deep appreciation for their services, not only to me, but to our community as a whole.”

(424–Boyle/Jackson, 425-Routson/Palazzolo/Roe/Silvers).

We received an email from our Chaplain on the care and compassion provided: “...Rodney and the crew were very professional and, from what I noticed, utilized the training they've received to an outstanding degree...They were compassionate with the husband who sounded the alarm when he was unable to awaken his wife. They patiently and thoroughly answered his questions, and did so in a way that he could understand in the midst of his shock, panic, and initial stages of grief. They cleaned up the area where they were working on the patient and arranged her in a very presentable way as we waited on the arrival of the person from the Medical Examiner's office and ultimately the funeral director...The anguish of the husband and the two sons was painful to experience. They were attended to with appropriate concern and EMS attention in their own right as they began the struggle to comprehend what they were encountering...I've experienced many circumstances when there is genuine cause to be appreciative of the fire/rescue service that stands ready to serve Urbandale. This morning was truly another such moment to be duly proud of persons you lead as Urbandale's Fire Department Chief!”

(413–Jackson/Stiles, 415-Landers/Manser/Thorne).

We received an email from the customer’s son who is a former member of our department: I wanted to take this time to extend a thank you to the squad who responded to my parent's home on 70th street last week, to care for my mom. It will be a long road for my family, and an uphill battle but with dedicated service from professionals like the Urbandale Fire Department, hopefully we can all get through this. Once again, thank you for your guidance, and shaping my former department into a well trained, extremely professional organization. Mom and Dad both only had pleasant things to say about the medics. People often ask me who the best service around is, and I still with pride tell them its Urbandale.

Thanks to all of you for providing outstanding service!!

Member Profile...

Member Profile: Demir Miljkovic

Length of time with UFD: 3.5 years...with a little break in between

Level: FT, FF/EMT-B

Committees: Organizational Structure Committee and Appreciation Dinner Committee

Why I became interested in the UFD: I got interested in UFD in 2nd Grade when Eric Ennen's father came to a public education event for our class. So next time you go to present to a classroom remember that little kid could be working next to you in 10 years.

Previous EMS/Fire experience: Worked in Auburn Alabama as a fire-fighter/EMT for about 13 months.

Family life: Single but have a girlfriend. Children - If I do, I do not know about them. I have a weird looking dog named Probie. His father was a black lab and mother was a pit-bull boxer.

Current Profession: Full time-Student and also like to frame on the side.

Activities or hobbies I enjoy: Reading books, watching movies, long walks on the beach if its warm, watching the sunset, star gazing, smelling good smelling flowers, taking care of wild animals, building things, and keeping myself busy with other miscellaneous things.

Most memorable moment with UFD: Getting a call from Chief Holt for the final interview.

Most memorable moment outside of UFD: Coming to America. I was kind of freaked out.

Favorite TV programs: Watch ESPN, Primarily Hawk games. Enjoy an occasional COPS episode.

Favorite movies: Law Abiding Citizen, Wedding Crashers, Gran Torino.

Last book that I read: Currently trying to finish 2400 pages of Paramedic Practice of Today (they couldn't even fit it all in one volume).

Personal goals: My goal for this year is to finish Paramedic School. For the next 10 years I want to finish my fire science degree and receive my masters. I also hope to finish at least an associate's degree in EMS since I'll be only a couple classes short after medic school. Hopefully have the opportunity to take many fire related training courses to enhance my knowledge and hopefully some NFA courses too. I also hope that I can get a chance to go ice skating with Chief Light sometime this winter.

Words of advice for someone new getting into EMS or Fire: "Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity" Always keep learning and preparing so when that opportunity does come you got what you need. This profession is too dynamic to stop learning.



Picture of Demir in 2nd grade

What I enjoy about the Urbandale Fire Dept: I enjoy many aspects of Urbandale Fire but most importantly being a safety conscious department. Also really like that a lot of us are so close and hang out off shift too.



Picture this...

Swearing-In and Promotional Ceremony,
January 13, 2011



Lori Holt, Katie and Amy Rech volunteered to serve refreshments for our event...