



# On the Line



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

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## Upcoming Events

### February 16th

Annual City Safety Committee Pancake Breakfast—Senior Center

### February 27th

Annual Fire Department Banquet  
Urbandale Golf & Country Club

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



## GROUNDHOG DAY

### UFD statistics for January

Calls for service: 226

Average response Time – All incidents: **7 minutes and 46 seconds**

Average response Time – **Emergency** incidents: **7 minutes and 48 seconds**

**Emergency Medical Service calls: 149**

Average Response Time EMS: 7 minutes and 23 seconds

Emergency: 7 minutes and 31 seconds

Non-Emergency: 7 minutes and 13 seconds

**Fire related calls: 77**

Average Response Time Fire: 8 minutes and 30 seconds

Average turnout per fire incident: 5 people

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

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

### Types of Fire Calls

The 77 fire calls we had in January fall into the following categories:

<b>Fire / Explosion:</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Hazardous Condition:</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Service Calls:</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Good Intent Calls:</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>False Calls:</b>	<b>43</b>



### Birthdays:

Cory Macumber	Feb. 10th
Julie Stuckle	Feb. 22nd
Ross Frank	March 2nd
Laura Lyon	March 5th
Brennan Burke	March 8th





## Chief's Corner—Chief Jerry Holt



The public debate rages on...residential sprinklers or not? The case studies are there, the data from years of experience with residential sprinkler is in – residential sprinklers save lives and reduce property damage. The facts are irrefutable.

I am amazed how certain groups can look at the data and come up with completely different conclusions. I am even more taken back with the embellishment of facts to the point that they become outright false claims by many sprinkler opponents. I am passionate about fire safety especially residential fire sprinklers and I struggle to understand how anyone that has ever seen a family lose all their possessions or worse yet, lose a loved one would feel any other way when it comes to fire safety. As much as I believe that residential sprinklers are the right thing to do, I am not willing to compromise my integrity by creating false information to attempt to sway those who do not share my views. The fact is simple; there will be loss of life in homes built after the date the fire sprinklers were supposed to be required. That loss of life could be prevented and after it happens, there is no turning back the hands of time for another chance, no matter how much money you have or what your social status might be.

Residential sprinkler issues aside, I am still shocked at the educated people who are unwilling to see another side of an issue. I have to ask myself have I ever been guilty of the same thing? I know I have – perhaps it was a strongly held opinion by my father that became my belief or an idea of someone else I looked up to that became my way of thinking. Perhaps it was just me being hard-headed and not being willing to look at an issue from someone else's point of view. I know it has happened. But I like to think that as I have grown, I try to look at both sides of an issue and come to the best decision based on my understanding of the facts. We should practice one of Steven Covey's "7 Habits" and seek first to understand and then be understood"...sometimes it is much harder than it sounds. The true difficulty comes in when "they" look at the facts and reach a different conclusion than you did! Two people or groups with strongly held opinions that are totally opposite can be a very challenging and a frustrating situation.

I guess it would be a boring world if we all saw everything in black and white and agreed on everything. That's not possible and that's not what I am advocating. There is and always will be differing opinions on most things – that's healthy. The issue I have is the blurring of the truth, embellishment of the facts, or whatever you want to call it to present one's side in a more positive light. As city employees we are prevented from taking such an approach. It is called ethics...and integrity. Our ethics policy states that city officials "should be forthright in their dealings with the public". We don't embellish the facts to make our points; we don't lie or cheat to win an argument. We fight the good fight with facts and we are data driven and the chips fall where they may. We have won a few arguments over the years and we certainly have lost our share but rest assured, they have all been won or lost with the truth. Wouldn't it be nice if everyone played that way?



### Chief's thanks...

- Thanks to everyone who participated in the Ice rescue training in January. While the weather was cold, that's what it takes to have those situations where someone or someone's pet falls through the ice. The training went well and everyone participated by getting their hands on the equipment. A special thanks to Lt. Birkett, Cory Macumber and Kyle Bissell who handled the training...and I have to mention John Ouverson who spent that Tuesday night in the cold water so that everyone could work through the scenarios. It is great when everyone attends training, participates and gets to use the equipment so that they are familiar with it when the need arises. In this case, it is not if but rather when it happens...we are all now better prepared to handle the call!
- Thanks to everyone who has participated as an instructor for our training. When instructors do Tuesday night training, they follow-up with Thursday and Saturday morning. It is no small commitment and the department appreciates your efforts to share your expertise so that we are all better prepared to deliver the high level of services that our customer expect.
- Thanks to Cody Thorn, Fire Marshal Jon Rech, and Tom Hyde for taking part in the interviews for the Architect Firms who had submitted proposals for the Station 41 renovation project. Five hours of interviews resulted in picking a firm that was a unanimous selection. Everyone involved is excited about the possibilities!

Memories—Assistant Chief Denny Danford

As I was trying to decide what to write about for this newsletter, I got to thinking about my many memories of my time at UFD. So, I decided, why not write about some of them. I soon realized how unmemorable my life would have been without the fire department. Of course, there are a few things that rank above my UFD memories in importance such as: marriage (more than one for some of us), the birth of my daughter, the birth of my son, and then his death at age 19.

The UFD experience started almost 33 years ago for me. I know, many of our newer members weren't even born yet. My first main memory is the Younkers Department Store (Merle Hay Mall) fire. This was my first big fire. Ten people died in that terrible fire. I had never seen that much death before. Some of the body discovery tasks were very difficult to deal with. All the training in the world can't prepare you for these types of situations. These are not the kind of memories that anyone would want to have to deal with, but it helped me handle many other calls in the future, I hope better, because of some of the experiences from that day.

The first baby I delivered. Wow, what a feeling. It was a very smooth delivery. I was floating (mentally) for weeks after that call. The next day I called the police to share my concerns about the call. The couple acted strange to me. They didn't want to go to the hospital after the delivery and the house had very little furniture, etc. UPD started to investigate. After some great police work, it was discovered they were fugitives. They had taken her two kids and fled the State of California. A few days after their arrest they got bailed out of jail and disappeared again with the children.

Nine years after the delivery, arrest, etc. the T.V. show *Unsolved Mysteries* came to Urbandale to recreate the delivery and arrest story. It was a fun and interesting experience for me and many UFD members. They filmed for a week to come up with a 12 minute segment. I could write an entire article about that



week (I won't in this writing). After the show aired they were caught in Arizona. The father of the two boys called me a few days later. He thanked me for what I did and told me how happy his boys were to be reunited after nine years. That was one of the best phone calls I ever received. As I think back on this incident, it never would have happened (to me) had I not been a UFD member.

My second baby delivery was not as easy as the first. It was a breech delivery, in an old school bus, in the Hy-Vee parking lot. Boy, was I nervous when that little butt popped out. Fortunately, the training paid off. It was a challenging delivery but it ended successfully. As the parents discussed what to name this adorable little girl they asked me the name of the street and the grocery store (they were traveling from Michigan to California). I told them Douglas Ave. (but it's a girl), and Hy-Vee. Well, no good ideas there. They asked me if I had any ideas. I said I really liked the name Amanda and would call her Mandy. They both liked it and that was it. Wow, not only did I deliver the baby I got to name it. What a great experience and memory to this day.

I could go into the "child not breathing" call that we went to nearly a dozen times (same patient) and the NBC *Date-line* story, falling into the basement and breaking my leg in three places (which by the way was due to my own stupidity-some of you would no doubt enjoy those details), but this is getting a little long.

The bottom line-without UFD I would not have all these memories, and many more. All these years of experiences, accumulating these memories have enriched my life. Some of the memories are bad, some are good, some are funny, most you learn from, but they are all part of being a member of this great fire department. I encourage you to live these experiences, learn from them, and put them

in your personal 'memory bank' for the future!

Chief's thanks...

- Thanks to John Ouverson for his efforts in finding an alternative for SharePoint. We will be migrating to a new system for reporting damaged or out of service equipment or facilities issues. John spent a great deal of time to develop a program that is free and closely resembles SharePoint. Users will have to sign up for the service and it allows users to enter items like they could with SharePoint but we will be better able to track who is reporting the item. The new system also allows users to register to be notified anytime equipment or facilities problems are listed on the site so that you can receive an email notification anytime an item is entered, deleted or updated. This will allow everyone to stay up on all of the maintenance issues with the department. Thank you John for taking on this project and developing such a workable alternative!

## 10 Tips To A Better MVC-Lt Dan Birkett

In the past month, obviously due to weather, we have had more than an average number of MVC with injury type incidents. Many of these resulted in minor injuries or did not have the potential for serious trauma. Others have amounted to serious vehicle damage and injury to occupants. In one of these cases it did involve vehicle extrication to remove the driver. We also can't forget all those accidents that had so much potential. These we typically walked away in awe of the damage to the vehicle, wondering how did someone not get injured or killed? In any case, all of these incidents have brought our Fire/EMS personnel out onto the roadways. We should all know that we have an S.O.G. for roadways that pertain to how we should block and where we should park our apparatus. I would like to discuss some things that I feel are important tips when responding to any MVC with injury type incident.

1. Know what the weather has been doing and is expected to do today. There are many different ways to know what to expect for weather when you come to work. Examples are: internet, TV, cell phone, look outside and etc. Your preparation for the shift day should begin before arriving to work. Consider how the weather will affect your response times and how it may change our route of travel.

2. When you arrive at work make sure your safety equipment is ready. Check that your safety vest, glasses and turnout gear are ready. Also, don't forget to have whatever additional cold weather gear available if it is needed.

3. Consider what your staffing is for the day. This includes keeping track of units that are already busy. Anyone that is assigned to A413 at 41 could have the responsibility of requesting additional staff. This requires you to pay attention to the initial page and updates from Westcom, these can tell you a lot about what to expect.

4. Respond to the scene safely. Just because we are in a big truck, with lots of lights, does not allow us to stop quicker or have any better handling on ice and snow. Make sure you drive appropriate to weather conditions and add space to your cushion of safety. We must also make sure we allow other drivers more time to react to us. Many drivers are already at higher stress levels due to the weather conditions. Don't forget if we do not make it to the scene we are unable to provide the needed services.

5. Once you arrive at the scene take a few extra seconds to look at the entire scene and provide a good scene size-up. It is important to know how many vehicles are involved and how many occupants are trapped or injured. You have to consider other hazards, such as heavy snow, steep inclines, water, other traffic and etc. Consider the potential for injury to the occupants and all emergency personnel responding to the scene.

6. Establish command. As we should all know this is critical! The first arriving unit has to establish command and take control of the incident. Remember, command can be mobile and it can be passed to the next arriving unit once

they are within a minute from the emergency scene. Command is critical in maintaining a safe operating scene and managing all resources. Command can evaluate the need for more resources and develop an incident action plan. Command must also maintain good communication with all branches of law enforcement on scene.

7. Work quickly, efficiently and effectively. The longer we have traffic congested the higher percentage for additional



collisions and the higher percentage for injury to personnel. There are many ways to become more efficient and effective. The number one example is through adequate training. But, I think sometimes it is the small things that can be very effective. Examples are: Leaving the truck with a tool, cribbing or equipment. Become task oriented by completing one job before moving on to the next (such as stabilize the vehicle before grabbing the cutting tools). Predict what tools or equipment may be needed next. Don't be too proud to take a break or switch positions if you become exhausted while performing a task or negatively affected by environmental conditions. Work smarter not harder (such as using low angle equipment to carry the victim up a steep incline). Work together as a team and make sure you maintain good communication between all team members. Don't be afraid to have an opinion when developing an IAP, but once a decision is made get to work and get the job done.

8. Work safely. Whether you are operating tools, carrying equipment, packaging a pt. or just walking from one place to another it has to be done in a safe manner. We need you! We do not want anyone out on injury for an accident that could have been prevented. This also includes making sure that others are working safely and bringing it to their attention when they are not. If we are not looking out for each other, then who is??

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## 10 Tips To A Better MVC-Lt Dan Birkett –*continued*

9. Get off the roadway. Our goal is to provide the needed services in a timely manner and get off the roadway. There are many distractions at the scene once our patients have been removed. Things such as chatting with each other about what we just did, chatting with the cops, watching all of the other crazy drivers, seeing how the tow truck is actually going to move the vehicle and etc. These distractions should be limited and prevented if at all possible. There is nothing wrong with chatting on the way back from the call or once we get back to the station, but getting off the roadway as quick as possible is our goal. Obviously, this can be dependent on the situation and at times law enforcement will need our assistance controlling traffic. As I said earlier the longer we are on the roadway the higher the percentage for another accident to occur.

10. Be professional and courteous. Most people have an expectation of the type of personnel and skill that will arrive on scene. I feel this is a great opportunity to give the customer what they expect. Even though they may have been at fault for ending up in the ditch or causing a major MVC, they are now having a bad day! If we solve their problem in a professional manner and are courteous while we do it, we can leave nothing but a positive image of the Urbandale Fire Dept. If we take it one step farther and exceed their expectations we can leave an everlasting positive image about our community. Remember, that even though someone is having a bad day and they had to call us because of it, we can still enjoy what we do.

Thanks—Dan

## WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND THE DEPARTMENT...

- Captain Mitchell and Chief Cardwell attended a post construction meeting on our new ladder truck in Pennsylvania during the last week of January. The trip is part of the inspection process and intended to assure that everything is working and constructed as promised. The truck will be sent to Nebraska where all of the equipment will be mounted and we are hoping for delivery in February.



- The 2009 Annual report will be completed in early February. It provides a snap-shot of the stats for 2009 including a review of the types of calls, response times, and call hour history for the year. A copy will be located at each station and if you would like a PDF copy, notify the Chief and he will email one to you.
- We have selected an architect firm for the Station 41 renovation project. Invision Architects was selected from the nine firms that submitted proposals for the project. Invision brings a vision while maintaining an open mind for the possible configurations at the station. Those on the committee are; Tom Hyde, Cody Thorne, Stu Wilson, Jon Rech, Julie Stuckle, Paula Merfeld and Mike Cardwell. There will be some meetings where department members will have the opportunity to speak with the planning team from Invision but as always, if you have ideas, please feel free to share them with anyone on the committee. The project is focused on living quarters/kitchen/office space/workout room/day room/bathrooms/locker facilities.
- We continue to ready the training building for the upcoming "training season". Some minor practice burns were conducted in January with the assistance of Clive FD to determine the size of fires needed, the amount of fuel required, etc. Everything went well and we anticipate getting great use out of this building!
- We have acquired a house scheduled for demolition and will do training at that location on February. The final "burn down" will be on Saturday February 27th. We are allowed to use the building as long as we complete demolition by the end of February. We have had several training sessions planned but we have had to adjust those plans based on the weather. We anticipate the final burn down (Feb 27th) being a short day where the only objective is final burn down.
- Planning is moving forward with the Fire Department Banquet. The Banquet will be held at the Urbandale Golf and Country Club on February 27th. Look for the announcement soon and be sure to sign up to attend. We look forward to having everyone there for an evening of fun and recognition.

## ON THE LINE

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

Training Report: 492 hours of training were completed in January.

Fire Training: 202 hours

EMS Training: 290 hours

### Prevention & Inspection Activities:

- Completed 17 Inspections
- Completed 2 re-inspections
- Completed 2 preplans
- Conducted 13 plan reviews
- Conducted 2 Car Seat checks
- Conducted public education / tours for 42 people - 24 adults, 18 children



### Congratulations

To Chief Cardwell who has been selected to be a presenter at this year's FDIC in Indianapolis!



# *Picture this...*

## *Ice rescue training...*



Trivia Question: On which two apparatus and specifically where are the oxygen mask for pets located that were donated last year?