



On the Line



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

In This Issue...

Chief's Corner.....	2
Milestones—Lt. Gentosi.....	3
Safety Tips.....	3
Chief's Thanks.....	4
Around the Department.....	4
Congratulations.....	4
You've Been Caught Letters.....	5
Prevention/Training Efforts.....	5



Upcoming Events

October 6-12

Fire Prevention Week

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

In remembrance of the loss of 19 Prescott FD "HotShot" wildland firefighters who lost their lives June 30, 2013. Their families and those left behind will be in our thoughts and prayers. RIP.



UFD statistics for July

Calls for service: 233 YTD: 1,329

Average response Time – All incidents: **6 minutes and 28 seconds**

Average response Time – **Emergency** incidents: **7 minutes and 4 seconds**

Emergency Medical Service calls: 170

Average Response Time EMS: 6 minutes and 11 seconds

Emergency: 6 minutes and 11 seconds

Non-Emergency: 6 minutes and 11 seconds

Fire related calls: 63

Average Response Time Fire: 7 minutes and 4 seconds

Average turnout per fire incident: 7 people

We **received mutual aid six times**— two times for fire calls and four times for EMS calls.

We **provide mutual aid three times**— twice for fire calls and once for an EMS call.

Types of Fire Calls

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

Fire / Explosion:	3
Hazardous Condition:	2
Service Calls:	6
Good Intent Calls:	11
False Calls:	38
Over Press/Heat:	3



Birthdays:

Jeff Gilchrist July 26





Performance Evaluations: Be better, not bitter

It is that time again...we've just completed our performance evaluations! By the time the newsletter is distributed you will have already received and reviewed your evaluation. Many people look at evaluations with about as much excitement as a root canal but a few people actually look forward to the feedback process. Noted leadership author Stephen Covey (1995) states, "It takes humility to seek feedback. It takes wisdom to understand it, analyze it, and appropriately act on it." (pg. 251).

I agree...it is the person who truly wants to do a better job that seeks feedback on his/her performance. Feedback is often the missing link in the communication process – a message is sent and received but how do you know that the message that was received was the message you intended? Feedback – in this case, feedback takes the form of a performance evaluation. It is your opportunity to see if the work you are doing is being received as you intended. It is tough when your perception of your efforts is not the same as your supervisor's perception of your work...but how do you know if you don't ask? Don't we all want to be the very best?

Who doesn't want to know, "How am I doing?" The evaluation process is just that – an opportunity to discuss how you are doing...what you are doing well and what you can do to improve. What better way to improve than to identify areas that your supervisor feels you can improve your performance and work on those areas? Not just acknowledge weak areas but truly work on them...finding ways to improve, looking for opportunities to try out newly learned skills and theories.

How do you react when the perception of the supervisor doesn't match your perception? Some people get angry, some people go into denial, and others decide that they just can't please "the boss" but what you do with that negative feedback is more valuable than the feedback itself. No one is giving negative feedback just to hurt people's feelings. In fact, most supervisors often rate their subordinates higher than the subordinates would rate themselves. Many times you are actually harder on yourself than your supervisor would be. Negative feedback can be difficult...sometime so difficult that supervisors do not pass along opportunities for improvement because they do not want to hurt people's feelings or diminish people's efforts. That is why when you get negative feedback, take it for what it is...a gift...**an honest effort to help you be the best you can be.**



Ironically, a lack of feedback is as problematic as negative feedback. Often times employees will complain because they don't receive any feedback. Remember, as it is the responsibility of the supervisors to offer feedback, both positive and negative, it is a two-way street. There is nothing standing in the way of an employee who wants to know how he/she is doing simply asking the supervisor "How am I doing?". There is no need to wait until your evaluation...if you want to know, ask!

The evaluation process belongs to you...if you really want to improve your performance and be the best that you can be, do not wait until the annual performance evaluation to have your questions answered. You should be talking with your supervisor all year long and asking him/her just that – how am I doing? Do it monthly! By taking this approach, there are no surprises during the annual evaluation and many of the identified problems can be improved before the annual evaluation.

Reference

Covey, S. R. (1995). *First things first*. United States of America: Simon & Schuster. (Original work published 1994)

Have an idea on how we can improve things at UFD? Speak up! All too often we hear feedback in our exit interviews that indicates "this" or "that" could be better. The problem with learning about that after someone leaves the organization is that any changes made have no effect on those who have left the organization. We want to have the best department that we can have!! ***If you have ideas on how we can make things "better" - how we can improve communications, how we can improve safety, add to the fun factor, I WANT to hear from you.*** I always want to hear your ideas-I genuinely want to hear your thoughts and ideas. It's such an old cliché but together, we are so much stronger than we can be as individuals. ***Don't complain—campaign for a change.*** Do that by taking your ideas through the chain of command so that we can be the very best! If it is worth complaining about it, it is worth doing something to address the issue and that starts with you...***you can make a difference.***

**DON'T COMPLAIN
ABOUT IT - DO
SOMETHING ABOUT IT**

Milestones – Lt. Mike Gentosi

TIG and TIS are definitive terms in the military. They refer to milestones in your career. It stands for time in grade and time in service. It seems that most everyone likes to throw around TIG and TIS when anyone gets promoted or when Joes are trying to pump their chests to their competition: other Joes. I always find it laughable to see how this dynamic works itself out. In the end, it has a lot to do with rank and when you can get promoted. Each rank has TIG and TIS requirements to make it to the next level along with other items such as evaluations, physical test scores, weapons qualifications, etc.

I just passed my 15 year mark in the fire service and 13 years as a paramedic. I signed and swore in on June 6th, 1998 on the Grimes Fire and Rescue Department. I had a great time there finishing up with 8 total years of service. I am also approaching my 6 year mark as a Lieutenant here at UFD with 11 years total here. I am pretty excited as I start accruing another week's worth of vacation. Quite a milestone!!

What does all this really mean? Absolutely NOTHING!!! I still find it quite odd how many dumb little mistakes I can make after this long in my job. I could go on and on with all these little details, but I won't bore you. I am sure any of the A Shifters would thoroughly enjoy explaining some of these situations.

The fact of the matter is I am still learning. I learn things all the time from the guys that I feel, "how in the world did I not know that?!" Anyone who thinks they are not still learning has got some serious issues going on. This is the attitude that it takes to keep things going in the station. I cannot, at any time, act or even entertain a thought of knowing it all. Why? The moment I do I will make the same mistake or some other mistake that will prove my posture wrong.

I find it especially disheartening for those out there that will react toward someone in a manner that says, "Well, someday when you have as many years as me you will understand or know what to do." What's crazy is there is always going to be someone that has more experience than the next, so the person who portrays that attitude will soon find himself in the reverse situation. I know I still have a ton to learn about EMS and fire. I find it better to try my best and issue grace to others in learning opportunities and not portray an attitude that puts me on a pedestal or doesn't allow me to learn from others as well. Hopefully, I am doing okay with this.

Nonetheless, I hope this makes a little bit of sense. We should never be pompous with our TIG and TIS and should always exude some humility to learn and grace when others need assistance. I'm out!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!



Last Safety Incident As of June 1st:

6 days without a safety incident

252 days without a lost time injury

Last incidents:

- **Lost time:** Fractured ankle stepping off apparatus
- Last incidents: 6/24: damaged the light on L-425 while turning the truck around in a limit clearance space
- 4/22: Dropped hose from drying rig on to the hood of 427
- 3/27: L415 struck the building covering the gas pumps at PW

Safety Tip

Is All the Equipment Moved?

When vehicles are taken out of service, some equipment may need to be moved between vehicles so responses can be covered. Remember to ask yourself "did you also move the garage door opener?" We recently had a close call when U419 was moved to another spot in the station for response, but the garage door opener wasn't moved. Upon pressing it, the opposite door started closing, just about hitting another unit. Please make sure that all equipment is moved for the vehicle – especially if the placement of the vehicle has also been changed.



ON THE LINE

WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND THE DEPARTMENT...

- The committee working on the Station 42 renovation project will be selecting firms to come and make presentations in early July. Vendors were asked to present their qualification in an RFQ sent out by the city and three to five will be invited to make the presentation. The members of that committee are Lt. Macumber, Lt. Birkett or Lt. Wilson, Drew Stiles, Eric Ennen and Chief Holt/Cardwell. Everyone's input is welcome and we ask that you work through the committee members to share your thoughts. The real work begins once a firm is selected. That's when design and the space needs study are completed in preparation for letting bids for the construction phase. That phase should begin in Spring of 2014.
- There are numerous ramp closures occurring on I35/80 in our response area. The Iowa DOT did not notify us of these closings until the day of the first closure. The closures are taking place at night to minimize the congestion. It is important that you check with your supervisor each day so that you are aware when ramps are going to be closed. Some of the closures will greatly impact our responses and in some cases, it may make sense to utilize the services of another fire department. It doesn't make sense to travel to University to access the north bound lanes when Clive or West Des Moines could access that area quicker than we could. Stay informed.
- Work continues on the station lighting retrofits for more efficient lighting. The new flag pole has been placed at station 41 and lighting for that is coming! The retro fit for 42 includes changing the walkway lighting and building lighting. The two trees outside of the training room will be removed as part of that project and additional landscaping will be added including a new lighted bench for the Monte Burr Memorial Garden. This will begin in earnest this month.
- There are numerous road construction projects underway in our community. Be sure to keep up with detours and have a solid situational awareness of delays and alternate routes.
- The Emergency Preparedness Specialist interviews have been completed and a job offer has been made. We hope to have the newest member of our team on board very soon!
- July 1 begins the new fiscal year. We start the new budget with several initiatives planned for this FY:
 - Upgrading our 12-leads
 - Replacing U419
 - Replacing the copy machine at Station 42
 - Beginning the process to obtain a direct capture exhaust system for both stations (see last month's newsletter for more on this)

Congratulations!

- **Paula Merfeld**...Paula was recognized with an EMS provider award during EMS Week activities at Mercy during the month of May. This is a special award as it comes from outside of the department where the ER staff nominated Paula—recognizing Paula's efforts of providing great care and positive service to both her patients and those she interacts with at the hospital. Nice job Paula!!
- Chief and Mindy Cross on the birth of their newest member of their "company". Jack Alexander Cross was born on 6/25/13...congratulations to the Cross family!!



Chief's thanks...

- Thank you to **Chief Cardwell** for working with HR to develop the "Chillin' and Grillin'" event. This event was in an effort to bring all city employees together to meet, mingle and to learn some safety tips while enjoying a lunch. Chief Cardwell was heavily involved in orchestrating the effort. In addition to Chief Cardwell's efforts, **Lt. Gentosi, Lt. Bissell and Michael Kaduce** also volunteered their time to come in and assist with the project. Everyone seemed to have a good time while they enjoyed a great lunch and learned a little about our department, first aid, and the use of an AED. Future "Grillin and Chillin" events will take place in other city departments. **Nice job Chief Cardwell, Lt. Bissell, Lt. Gentosi and Michael Kaduce!**
- Thank you to **Lt. Bissell and Drew Stiles** for their work on the new booklet that covers who we are, what we do, how we do it and where we've come from. The book contains information on our core values, our patch, Crew Resource Management, expectations of our staff and details about our culture. The book represents the "Urbandale Way" and will be a great tool for new staff as well as a great source of information for seasoned members. Thanks to **Lt. Bissell and Drew** for all of their hard work to make the book a reality!
- Chief Danford (Ret) for researching old pictures, books and articles on the history of our dept. as we work on a history project to preserve the past.

ON THE LINE

Other programs/training/projects completed by UFD in July

Training Report: **545.5 hours** of training were completed in June.

Fire Training: 385.5 hours

EMS Training: 160 hours



Prevention & Inspection Activities:

- ◆ Completed 27 inspections
- ◆ Completed 26 re-inspections
- ◆ Completed 24 preplans
- ◆ Conducted 8 plan reviews
- ◆ Conducted 1 Car Seat check
- ◆ Conducted 2 CPR classes for 11 people
- ◆ Conducted public education for 230 people



“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 1st, we have sent 93 letters to our personnel. The following people received “You’ve Been Caught” letters since our last newsletter:

Brennan Burke, Bryce Landers, Michael Morlan, Lt. Wilson and Cory Young

We received a thank you in with a payment thanking us for our services. The note reads “We wish to thank the Paramedics for their services this past year. They are a remarkable team, so kind and caring. We appreciate their coming to help us when we were in dire need. Thank you again – Vince & Teresa Morris”.

Lt. Birkett, Lt. Bissell, Josh Boyle, Brennan Burke, Brad Crookshank, Jamie Erie, Nick Heuer, A/C Light, Paula Merfeld, A/C Mitchell, Michael Morlan, Ed Palizzolo, Fire Marshal Rech and Lt. Routson

The Chief received an email regarding the EMS Open House. The writer, Kate Kanne our HR Staff member, wrote to tell us how good of a time she and her daughter had at the open house. She wanted to “send a quick note to remind you of what you already know -- you have a great team!!!”

Lt. Bissell, Derek Manser and Kyle Clark

We received a \$25 donation after our crews installed eight smoke detectors for an Urbandale resident.



Thanks to all of you for providing outstanding service!!