



# On the Line



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

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## Upcoming Events

### Harley and Hoses



**Pancake  
Breakfast**



**March 21  
9am—1 PM**

**American Legion Riders Post 663**

**To benefit the Urbandale Fire Dept & the American  
Legion**

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

### UUFDF statistics for February

Calls for service: 191 YTD: 417

Average response Time – All incidents: **7 minutes and 30 seconds**

Average response Time – **Emergency** incidents: **7 minutes and 31 seconds**

**Emergency Medical Service calls: 144**

Average Response Time EMS: 7 minutes and 12 seconds

Emergency: 7 minutes and 11 seconds

Non-Emergency: 7 minutes and 13 seconds

**Fire related calls: 47**

Average Response Time Fire: 8 minutes and 25 seconds

Average turnout per fire incident: 6 people

We **received mutual aid three times** – two times for fire calls and once for an EMS call

We **provided mutual aid two times**—both for fire calls

### Types of Fire Calls

The 47 fire calls we had in February fall into the following categories:

**Fire / Explosion: 7**

**Hazardous Condition: 3**

**Service Calls: 6**

**Good Intent Calls: 12**

**False Calls: 18**

**Citizen Complaint: 1**

**Overpressure, Overheat, no fire: 1**



### Birthdays:

Craig Jensen	March 10
Rodney Silvers	March 19
Paula Merfeld	March 26
Jesse Christensen	April 1





Chief's Corner—Chief Jerry Holt



If you missed the Banquet, you missed Lt. Birkett being named the Firefighter of the Year. This is the second year that this award has been presented and Dan is a very deserving recipient of this award. Dan's hard work around the station is very apparent and he often takes on "extra" task and gets them done – with much attention to the details. When Lt. Birkett is working on it, you can count on it being completed right...and "close enough" is not good enough for him. Dan's projects are done right with all of the aspects of the project being completed with complete accuracy. Lt. Birkett and his crew often work after normal hours to make sure that the project is completed.

His efforts are not limited to station tasks; he also excels at delivering outstanding customer service. Lt. Birkett received more "thank you" letters in 2009 than anyone. That speaks volumes. As you think about it, for every person that actually takes the time to write us and let us know that our service met or exceeded their expectations, there must be several more that were equally impressed but just didn't take the time to express that. Lt. Birkett and his crew are often mentioned in the thank you notes received from our customers. Of the 94 "You've Been Caught" letters that I sent out in 2009, Dan personally received 10% of those letters.

Lt. Birkett is well deserving of this award and received a standing ovation when he received the award showing that the feeling is held by his co-workers and supervisors alike.

John Ouverson was recognized for his efforts and received an "on the spot" check for \$50 for his efforts in creating a new web site for reporting out of service equipment. This site will take the place of the SharePoint and will save some funds.

Other awards presented at the Banquet:

**Certificate of Appreciation** for their efforts in working on the truck replacement committee for L415: Lt. Dan Birkett, Eric Ennen, Capt. Jim Mitchell, Rodney Silvers, Cody Thorne, Fire Marshal Jon Rech and Assistant Chief Cardwell

**Certificate of Appreciation** for their efforts in working on the new training facility:

Lt. Dan Birkett, Capt. Jim Mitchell, Fire Marshal Jon Rech and Assistant Chief Mike Cardwell

**Certificate of Achievement - "Top Responder" for Fire Calls** – This responder responded to the most Fire Calls in 2009: Assistant Chief Danford

**Certificate of Achievement - "Top Responder" for EMS Calls** – This responder responded to the most EMS Calls in 2009: Julie Stuckle

2009 "**POC Responder of the Year**" – The award was presented to the POC responder that responded to most calls in 2009: Tom Hyde

2009 "**FTE Provider of the Year**" – The award presented to the staff person who worked the most FTE shifts: Paula Merfeld

2009 "**EMS Provider of the Year**" – The award was presented to the responder who received the most thank you letters during 2009: Cory Macumber

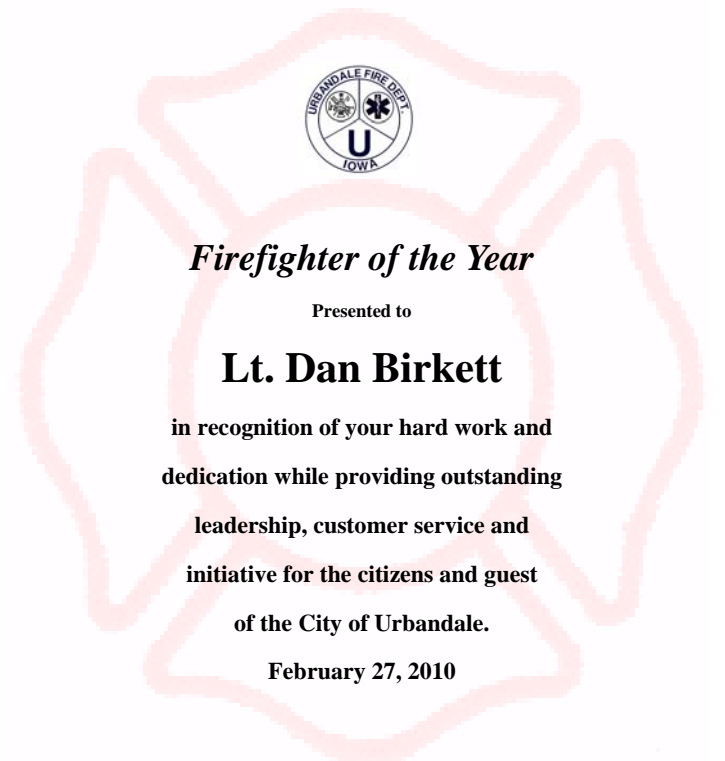
"**Instructor of the Year**" – The Instructor that provided the most classes in 2009: Kyle Bissell

A new award this year was the "Monte Burr Memorial Training Award". Monte Burr was consistently recognized as attending 100% of the training offerings throughout his career. In recognition of Monte's outstanding dedication, the award in his name was presented to the people who attended the most training in 2009:

POC/PT "**Monte Burr Memorial Training Award**": Captain Jim Mitchell

Career "**Monte Burr Memorial Training Award**": Lt. Lance Routson

Congratulations to all of the recipients...and to all of the team the supported them in their efforts. It truly is a team sport and no one can excel without the help of many others.



The other awards can be seen on the last page of this newsletter.

## Employee Retention: What are the Real Issues? - Fire Marshal Jon Rech

I have begun the Executive Fire Officer (EFO) Program at the National Fire Academy (NFA). For those that are not familiar with the program, it is a 4-year journey that requires a lot of research papers and a lot of learning about yourself, your department, and how to improve your abilities as a fire executive and community member. One of the best parts about attending classes at the NFA is getting to meet other fire service personnel from around the country. You quickly learn that a lot of departments have the same types of problems as us, and some have a lot more.

What sets the EFO program apart is that it makes you take things to the next level. I realized the difficulty this can present as I tried to figure out what my first research topic would be. There are a ton of things that could be researched for our department. But I was drawn to a continuous problem we have – staffing. Over the last 18 months we have had a significant turnover in our PT & POC ranks. But why? The common answer we often hear is that people don't have the time. But what does that really mean? Is the turnover at UFD consistent with what other non-fire organizations see who employ PT and/or volunteer employees?

These are a couple of the questions I plan to explore with my research in the coming weeks. The hope is that at the conclusion of my research I will be able to better identify the reasons PT & POC leave UFD, and make some recommendations on how to improve the problem. This will involve contacting past UFD employees, having current PT & POC employees complete a questionnaire about why they remain at UFD, and compare our retention experience against other combination departments in Iowa.

As Chief Holt has stated numerous times, PT & POC employees are not going away. Even with the increase in FT staffing there is still an overwhelming need for personnel to staff trucks. We are a business. If we want to be a successful business we need to find ways to retain employees while dealing with an ever-changing business environment. Our department has a lot to offer. Good people, good equipment, good call volume, just to name a few. What can we do to help people stay longer on our department? I hope to find out some more definitive answers in the coming weeks. I will need your help to make this a meaningful research project for the Urbandale Fire Department.



### Safety Incidents As of March 1st:

96 days without a safety incident ~ 313 days without a lost time injury

## CPR Classes – Julie Stuckle

We have had lots of interest in CPR classes recently, and just thought I would provide you with a reminder. If you have immediate family members that would like to take a CPR class, their cost would only be the cost of supplies. In fact, if you know anyone that might be interested now, we have a public class in Heartsaver CPR on Thursday, March 18 at 18:00. If a person needs a CPR class to meet a job requirement, this is a great class to take. Any questions or interest in the above class, please let me know.



## ON THE LINE

### 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Greater Des Moines National Fallen Firefighters Foundation Memorial Golf Tournament – Lt. Lance Routson

Even though there is snow everywhere, I like to keep my attention focused on the warmer weather (and melting) that is just weeks away. Ideas come into my head of what I'll be able to do OUTSIDE....camping, socializing, driving with the windows down....and of course, golfing!!!!

A lot of you know that I have spent some time working with the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation and I am a big supporter of their programs. I have had the opportunity to meet some very talented and well respected fire service leaders and I consider them all to be friends. I have met some of the highest ranking fire officials from Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, New York City, suburban Baltimore, and many other places. You all can meet them too; it's all a matter of how bad you want to do it.

Anyway, I have decided to take on a new project...I have decided to arrange for the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Greater Des Moines National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF) Memorial Golf Tournament to be held



right here in Iowa! The NFFF has taken what was once one tournament in Pennsylvania, to now having several tournaments held across the nation. The tournament I have been working on will be the first in Iowa! All proceeds from the tournament will go to the NFFF. It will be a great day of fun, golf, drinks, fellowship, and much more. The tournament will be open to anyone who wants to play: firefighters, doctors, nurses, business people, civilians, doesn't matter! The point is that we want to have a fun day that will raise money for a great cause.

So get those golf games ready and come on out! The tournament will be held on Tuesday, June 29, 2010 at The Legacy Golf Club in Norwalk, Iowa. You can also check out the NFFF golf website (where you will soon be able to also register for the tournament) at <http://golf.firehero.org>. Any questions can be sent my way.

Thanks for reading!

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

- After several years...the new L415 is here! The truck was delivered on March 1st. We hope to have the radios and equipment installed, everyone trained and the truck in service in the near future. Orientation training is scheduled for March 7, 8 & 9.
- We were able to negotiate a deal with Motorola and our portable radios with screen issues are being repaired. We have already received 17 of them back with repairs completed. Unfortunately, this will be an on going issue as Motorola will no longer service those radios after July 2010. We hope a new radio system will result in new radios in the next few years.
- We are working on renumbering portable radios to provide for better accountability. The new process will require the radios to be assigned to individuals on a daily basis so that we can better track issues with the radios. The details have not been completed yet so look for more on this coming soon.
- We have conducted "instructor" training for live fire training in the training building. Two classes have been conducted and several instructors for all three departments have attended. We hope with the weather warming up, we will be able to take advantage of this great facility more.
- A change is being made in the weather alert criteria for sounding storm sirens. This is a county-wide change and the new warning will result in the storm sirens being activated anytime the National Weather Service issues a storm warning for a tornado or for a severe thunder storm having winds in excess of 70 MPH.
- We hope to be updating our TEAMS cards in the next three months. We will be evaluating our needs with the resources that our neighbors can provide.
- We hope to get the strategic planning process up and moving in the next couple of months. The dates of the meetings will be published and everyone is invited to attend and participate as we shape the future of our department.
- We are continuing with monthly staff meetings. Meetings will be held the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of the month at 11:00 am (unless noted otherwise). Topics for discussion need to be presented to the facilitator by the first Wednesday of the month. Agendas for the meeting will be distributed the Friday prior to the meeting. This is your chance to "stay in the loop" - our next meeting will be March 10th.

## ON THE LINE

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

Training Report: **815 hours** of training were completed in February.

Fire Training: 670 hours

EMS Training: 145 hours

### Prevention & Inspection Activities:

Completed 9 Inspections

Completed 5 re-inspections

Completed 3 preplans

Conducted 6 plan reviews

Conducted public educations for 355 people – 234 children and 121 adults



Date	Location		Children	Adults	
2/2/2010	St.42	Station Tour	12	6	
2/13/2010	3946 NW Urbandale Dr.	Truck Request	12	10	
2/27/2010	12955 Aurora	Truck Request	175	80	
2/28/2010	3600 75th	Kids Event	35	25	Total
			234	121	355

### “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 March 1st we have sent 6 letters to our personnel. The following people received “You’ve Been Caught” letters since our last newsletter:

**(413 = Jensen/Silvers, 417 = Mitchell and 418 = Erie/Lyons/Routson)**

*We received a thank you letter when the writer wanted to thank us for being there and “patiently” serving her and her granddaughters during an accident in Nov. ’09. She wanted to thank us for the “care, the timeliness and the extreme sensitivity you provided to my granddaughters and myself”.*

*Thanks to all of you for providing outstanding service!!*

Member Profile...

Member Profile: Edward C Palizzolo

Length of time with UFD: 2 1/2 Months

Level: Full Time FF/PS

Committees: Not at the moment. I was on the new ambulance committee in Clive.

Why I became interested in the UFD: Becoming a Firefighter has always been a dream of mine. I moved to Iowa from Boston and was fortunate to get a pt job with Clive FD. I learned about Urbandale by training and working together on the job with Clive. I felt the people of the UFD and the work environment would be a perfect fit for the career I want to fulfill. I couldn't have asked for anything more.

Previous EMS experience: I have been in EMS for 5 years. I worked for AMR back home in Massachusetts and spent a little time running with the city of New Bedford EMS

Previous Fire experience: No fire experience before moving to Iowa. I went through the academy with Clive Fire.

Family life: I will be married to Jacie 2 years in August. We have a son Gavin, he is 14 weeks old.

Current Profession: FT with UFD

Activities or hobbies I enjoy: I love baseball. I played up until a couple years ago. I love working on houses, landscaping. My father and I used to flip houses.

Most memorable moment with UFD: My most memorable moment was on Thursday Nov. 5th 2009. I just brought my son home for the first time and was holding him in my living room when my phone rang. It was Chief Holt offering me the job at UFD. All my hard work had finally paid off.

Most memorable moment outside of UFD: The birth of my son Gavin and getting married to my lovely wife Jacie.

Favorite TV programs: Modern Family, Sportscenter, King of Queens, The Office

Favorite movies: The Sandlot, Braveheart, Fever Pitch

Last book that I read: Pride and Ownership

Personal goals: To obtain a college degree, fulfill a safe and exciting career at UFD and advance to the highest level possible.

Words of advice for someone new getting into EMS or Fire: Keep working hard. I grew up with a motto my father told me. "The hard way is the easy way and the easy way is the hard way". Even though it sometimes seems impossible just keep doing your best and good things will happen.

What I enjoy about the Urbandale Fire Dept: I love working with everyone at the Urbandale Fire Dept, I enjoy the call volume, the training, the new tower. This department has a very bright future and it's one of the reasons why I wanted to have a career here.



There have been numerous cases where fire and EMS personnel around the country have taken pictures or video and on occasions, that media has been shared or released inappropriately causing embarrassment and pain to the people involved. Two of our core values are respect and compassion. I believe that our customer's dignity is part of those core values and it is our intent to develop SOGs that will deal with this issue and protect the dignity of our customers and others who might be recorded.

The easy thing to do is to be very restrictive on the use of recording media on duty and any use of media that includes references to the department. We do not want to go down the path of eliminating the taking of pictures in some situations or preventing staff from using media in an approved manner on social networking sites. To that end, we have worked with all of the Officers and Cory Macumber to draft SOGs that deal with the issue while retaining some flexibility in your use of those items. Before implementation, I would like for you to have an opportunity to review these SOGs and have an opportunity for input.

Please let the Chief know if you would like to review the draft documents and I will send them to you. If you are interested in commenting, I would like to have your comments (in writing) to me by the 18th so that the SOGs can be finalized and disseminated for implementation.





**FTE Provider  
of the Year**

Presented to

***Paula Merfeld***

February 27<sup>th</sup>  
2010



**POC Responder  
of the Year**

Presented to

***Tom Hyde***

February 27<sup>th</sup>  
2010



**EMS Provider  
of the Year**

Presented to

***Cory Macumber***

February 27<sup>th</sup>  
2010



**Instructor  
of the Year**

Presented to

***Kyle Bissell***

February 27<sup>th</sup>  
2010



**Monte Burr  
Memorial  
Training Award**

Presented to

***Capt. Jim Mitchell***

**February 27<sup>th</sup>  
2010**



**Monte Burr  
Memorial  
Training Award**

Presented to

***Lt. Lance Routson***

**February 27<sup>th</sup>  
2010**