



On the Line



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

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Upcoming Events

December 21st

Christmas Party! 1830 hrs—dinner at 1900ish...

January 13th

Badge pinning ceremony

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

UFD statistics for November

Calls for service: 196 YTD: 2,247

Average response Time – All incidents: **6 minutes and 50 seconds**

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

Emergency Medical Service calls: 152

Average Response Time EMS: 6 minutes and 18 seconds

Emergency: 6 minutes and 2 seconds

Non-Emergency: 6 minutes and 33 seconds

Fire related calls: 44

Average Response Time Fire: 8 minutes and 35 seconds

Average turnout per fire incident: 6 people

We **received mutual aid two times**—both times for EMS calls.

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

Types of Fire Calls

The 44 fire calls we had in November fall into the following categories:

- Fire / Explosion:** 8
- Hazardous Condition:** 1
- Special Type:** 3
- Good Intent Calls:** 4
- False Calls:** 24
- Overpressure:** 1
- Service Calls:** 3



Birthdays:

- Josh Boyle Dec 8
- Dr. Healy Dec. 11





Chief's Corner—Fully Involved? Chief Jerry Holt



Fully involved. Conjures up a vision of a structure fire with flames coming from every opening, front to back, top to bottom, and side to side. While it is usually a easy fire to work from the standpoint that there isn't a great deal of risk because there is very little to save, it is often seen as a "good" fire. (We've debated "good" fires before so we won't rehash that here) At any rate, it is an opportunity to go to work and apply the skills that we constantly train on—and that's usually perceived as a good thing. In this article, fully involved has nothing to do with a structure fire. It is about you and your interaction with our department.

Are you fully involved in your job? In our department? No, not on fire in the sense of flame, light and heat but are you fully involved with the growth and development of our department? I hope so. We are a young department that is developing and now is the time to be a part of shaping the direction of our operations and development. Based on a recent research project, many of the employees who have left our department didn't feel that they had the opportunity to be involved. That is especially distressing to me. I recall as a firefighter how I desired to have a voice in the direction of the department. In fact, I can recall feeling that I had "all the answers" if they would just listen to me. The problem was that "they" weren't interested in listening. Pretty frustrating to want to be involved but not having the opportunity.

That's why it was especially concerning to me to review the responses to a survey used in Fire Marshal Rech's EFO research paper. Not only were the majority of the respondents not "fully involved", they didn't feel they had the opportunity to be involved. I asked myself how could they feel that way? I've worked hard to solicit input on almost everything we do. How could they feel they had no opportunity for involvement? And what's worse yet, how could they make a decision to leave based on a feeling that they couldn't be involved? The answer I came up with is simple; it doesn't matter. Regardless of the "why", they felt that they didn't have the opportunity for involvement and that's what I need to work on.

I could go on and on regarding the opportunities for input that I have tried to provide our staff but that doesn't address those who are the most important; those who are still here. So I wanted to take the opportunity to share with those who are here my philosophy on opportunities to be "fully-involved".

I want your involvement...and I want you to be fully involved! In fact, I yearn for the day that staff brings new

ideas to our department. I think you will find there are many examples of changes that were made that came from staff. Got an idea on a new way of doing something? I want to hear it. Seen a new policy/SOG that you think would benefit our customers (internal or external)? I want to know about it. Seen a way to improve safety? We NEED to know! We WANT to know.

If it is a change that requires a change in policy, we will likely form a committee to explore the idea...and you ***will be involved***. If it is a change regarding SOGs, well, we do have a policy on how ANYONE in our organization can initiate that process. Two great examples of opportunities to be involved are the recent change to our patch...that started with an idea by one person who worked through a committee to develop a new patch. Another example is the recent revision to our policies and procedures. A committee approach was used to review the existing P&P and recommend changes. Not every recommended change was made—not everyone got their way but every voice that participated was heard and valued.

Other requests for people to be involved haven't gone so well. There have been many requests for volunteers for committees that went unanswered. Request for "input" went without responses. Perhaps a project someone wanted to work on never even made it to the exploration stage as the person who had the desire to make a change didn't follow-through and start the ball rolling?

My point is this...if you want to be involved, ***then be involved***. There are many opportunities to shape the direction of our department and we embrace the search for better, safer and more efficient ways of doing things. If you have a project in mind, approach your officer and start the ball rolling. Run in to a roadblock? Then lets talk. Lets find ways to explore ideas with open minds and improve our services. I cannot promise you that every change you want to make will be implemented...but I can promise you that you will be heard and your idea will receive the consideration that you deserve.

Lets get fully-involved and make our department the best it can be! I promise you that there are plenty of opportunities for involvement...you just have to seek out those opportunities and you can only do that when you take the first step—and are involved. And it works best when you are fully-involved!

Fully Involved?

The Season of Giving - AC Rob Light

Once again, it's that time of year. The wonderful fall season has come and gone, the leaves are off the trees, Christmas decorations are out and Dan is singing Christmas carols. For many people though, it doesn't seem like a very festive time of year. The economy still stinks, unemployment is way too high, and prices are rising due to a shrinking dollar. In any event, it is still the season of giving whether it feels like it or not.



I know most of you, if not all, are generous people and I feel we should do a little "extra" this year seeing how the economy is and the many people adversely affected by it. There are many things a person can give to help someone else. I know monetary donations are always helpful and I am always open to those if any of you are looking to donate. Seriously though, a simple donation of a little time to someone in need or donating some of your old stuff to charity can do more for that person than you will ever know.

Most of you know by now that I am not the type of person who seeks attention or a pat on the back for anything. This article is not me bragging, it is just an effort for each of you to look and see how you can help make

someone's life a little better. While watching the news and seeing things that different people are doing to help the less fortunate, I decided to do my little part by donating my die cast NASCAR cars and old clothes to the Salvation Army. While I am not promoting one organization over any other, I felt the donation to them would do the most good in this situation. There are many kids who won't be getting much of anything for Christmas, especially this year, and people always need clothes. When is the last time you cleaned out your closet and got rid of things you haven't worn for years? What about the old toys your kids don't play with any more? C'mon ladies...how many pairs of shoes do you really need? I know the things I got rid of were not worth much to me, but they could make a huge difference in the life of someone who doesn't have anything. Most of these items are tax-deductable also which makes it a "win-win" situation for all parties involved.

Besides getting more space for new stuff, I feel good knowing I have made a difference for at least one person or family during this "Season of Giving". Have you?

Are You Prepared? - Lt. Lance Routson

Are you prepared? Are you constantly thinking ahead? I know that in our line of work, there are so many things that can get into our minds and affect our decision making. I have often, and still do, suffer from "tunnel vision", where I lose a bit of situational awareness. I think these are the times where we might stop thinking ahead, and it is when we all need to work together to meet a common goal.

What were you thinking when the patient you were transporting went into cardiac arrest? Or when they went into respiratory arrest? Hopefully, you were thinking ahead and you prepared yourself. You were taking into account the fact that the patient was suffering a decrease in respirations/pulse rate, and you noticed their lengthy and troubled medical history. So when that patient does suffer the arrest, you had a BVM ready. You had intubation equipment ready and out of the Thomas Pack. You had ACLS algorithms running through your head. You were thinking "if they do this, I will do that".

What were you thinking when the pediatric patient you were called to seize again? AND, it is right in front of the patient's parents? Did you lose self control? Or were you thinking ahead? Did you already have a phar-

maceutical intervention in mind? Did you already consider the unique IV access challenges presented by pediatric patients? What route of drug administration will you utilize? What dose of drug? Keep in mind that the parents, who want you to DO SOMETHING are watching your every move, and they will know if you are thinking ahead.

What were you thinking when you turned the corner out of the fire station and you could see the plume of smoke from miles away? Did you remain calm and request additional resources? Were you thinking ahead to apparatus placement, water supply, and command post locations? Did you utilize the pre-plan?



In all of these situations, it is imperative that we are thinking ahead. Try and anticipate what will happen next. The minute we become complacent and comfortable is when bad things can happen. What will you do the next time you are relaxing at the station and an assignment comes in? Do you know where you are going? Do you know what truck you are on? Do you know what your job is? Don't wait until you are forced to make a decision in a rushed fashion. Think ahead....

AND BE PREPARED!

From Afghanistan—Lieutenant Mike Gentosi

Green Grass

It is the 14th of November, and I am sitting on my bunk having just finished FM Rech's ARP he wrote on retention. Yes, even in a combat zone there is lots of down time which drives me nuts. Being in a combat zone is much like the fire department – brief periods of excitement sandwiched between long periods of boredom. Even after being at our COP (combat outpost) for a mere nine days, we have had our brief moments of excitement, but those aren't for the newsletter. Nonetheless, I hope everyone took the time to read the ARP not only out of respect for the time commitment involved in an ARP but also because of its relevance to our organization. In reflection, I thought I would share some thoughts on why I love UFD.

First, I must say that I have had my periods of wondering if the grass would be greener at some other department. I have done my applying for other jobs in the fire service. The last time was in 2006, and I must say I am so thankful it never worked out. In retrospect, having the opportunity to obtain a job here and retain it has been the best for me. I must also say that my recent involvement in the military has no bearing on this feeling. That is a completely separate situation not to be confused with what I write here. I also am writing this from a professional development standpoint not from the deep emotional tie I have to the members of UFD which is definitely felt.

Serving with a department the size of UFD affords the typical firefighter/EMT with opportunities not normally experienced in larger organizations. The experience of starting out as one of three of the first line personnel hired and growing with organizational change alone is one that can't be topped elsewhere. Experiencing the bumps along the road of an organization that is in continual change is great. Typical lieutenants in larger or more established departments will never experience what is experienced at Urbandale.

I could go on and on about these types of experiences: being a fire inspector, public educator, company officer, shift commander, etc. In most other organizations, you fit into one category or another. It is not typical to have the opportunity to be rounded in all areas. I greatly appreciate the fact that as a fire medic we were also fire inspectors, report auditors, public educators, acting officers on fire calls from time to time, etc. I relish the experience of doing what most front line chiefs do in larger organizations, and your lieutenants do that on a regular basis. The experience at UFD affords each one of us something that other departments can never offer.

The high value on training that UFD holds is another

area. I have only but twice been turned down to attend a training course, and the reason wasn't because the training wasn't valued or desired. It was because there were other things in the works to get me that training. It was just patience on my part for that training. UFD is probably one of most generous agencies to ensure its troops are getting the needed and desired training. This is an area that may not be experienced elsewhere.

The next area will probably feel as if I am beating a dead horse. That area is education. Remember, there is a vast difference between training and education. They complement each other. From the day I started, I was encouraged to pursue higher levels of education and training opportunities. I also saw an example being shown to me by the career officers above me. I have done my best to pass that along to those that serve underneath me. There is nothing better than to see those below you seeking opportunities to better themselves. Education is pivotal to that. You can see how UFD values that by sending people to training opportunities and paying for levels of education (associate's and bachelor's).

My favorite piece of FM Rech's paper was "organizations that truly believe in career development invest in training their managers to grow their people, and they train their employees to grow themselves." I take that as it is the responsibility of those above me to mold me in the direction the department wants to grow. It is my responsibility to help embolden those below me to grow as well. The key to this is being responsive to that.

There are a lot of opportunities at UFD for all employee categories: POC, PT, or FT. Take those opportunities and bring those to the table. Don't be an employee that when you leave no impact is felt. Frankly, we have lost some in the past where it wasn't even noticed when they left or it was better when they did. Don't be an employee who isn't ready for that next level unless you really don't want it. Always prepare for both now and years ahead of you. Utilize the periods of boredom that sandwich those exciting experiences in the fire service by continuing to better yourself and seeking readily available opportunities to better yourself and UFD.

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



ON THE LINE

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

Training Report: **904 hours** of training were completed in November.

Fire Training: 190 hours

EMS Training: 714 hours

Prevention & Inspection Activities:

Completed 17 Inspections

Completed 4 re-inspections

Completed 1 preplans

Conducted 9 plan reviews

Conducted 2 Home Safety Checks

Conducted CPR classes for 15 people

Conducted public education for 240 people



			Children	Adults	
11/5/2010	3500 74th	Safety talk	40	3	
11/9/2010	7305 Aurora	BP Checks	0	21	
11/13/2010	11201 Aurora	CPR class	0	9	
11/19/2010	2727 82nd Pl.	Fire Drill	0	150	
11/22/2010	5915 Sutton Pl	CPR class	0	6	
11/30/2010	St.42	Station Tour	0	11	Total
			40	200	240

“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 Dec. 2nd, **we have sent 89 letters** to our personnel. The following people received “You’ve Been Caught” letters since our last newsletter:

417-Lt. Birkett, 413-Paula Merfeld & John Ouverson

We received a thank you note and a \$100 donation from a customer whom we treated back in July. The note was very complimentary of the care provided and included that the paramedics were “...very professional, very compassionate and also very competent. They are excellent representatives of your department. The citizens of this community are very fortunate to have such qualified individuals serving them”.

Craig Pope, Ed Palizzolo and Michael Roe

We received a phone call thanking us for the great service Sunday night for an EMS call. (The report for this call was incomplete)

Thanks to all of you for providing outstanding service!!

Member Profile...

Member Profile: Drew Stiles

Length of time with UFD: 5 months

Level: FT FF/EMT-P/S

Why I became interested in the UFD: Urbandale is a busy, growing department and they were hiring full time firefighters.

Previous EMS experience: Grimes Fire and Rescue 3.5 years

Previous Fire experience: Grimes Fire and Rescue 3.5 years and Humeston VFD 4 years

Family life: Married to Samantha for 5 years. They don't have any children yet but he says "we are trying". They also have 2 cats, Boo and Jinx.

Activities or hobbies I enjoy: Golf, playing video games, listening to music, going to movies and reading the occasional book.

Most memorable moment with UFD: The day I became a certified paramedic specialist and the blue helmet Cody and Kyle requested I wear around the station for a few hours that day.

Most memorable moment outside of UFD: Getting married to my wonderful wife Samantha 5 years ago

Favorite TV programs: Rescue Me, The Office, Big Bang Theory, East Bound and Down (Kenny Powers is my hero)

Favorite movies: Bull Durham, The Hangover, A-team, Black Hawk Down, Field of Dreams, The Natural

Last book that I read: Currently reading Working Fire by Zac Unger

Personal goals: To continue to improve myself everyday as a firefighter and a medic.

Words of advice for someone new getting into EMS or Fire: Don't give up. If you are looking at doing this for a career, it is a tough field to get into. Keep applying and keep testing for jobs when they come open. Perseverance is the key to getting your foot in the door.

What I enjoy about the Urbandale Fire Dept: I love coming to work every third day. I enjoy working with the guys on C-shift. I love the fact that every day holds something new and different. There is never a dull day at the Urbandale Fire Dept.



Safety Tips from firefighterclosecalls.com: The following is a continuation from the website of their list of suggested resolutions for safety tips:

Resolution No.2: Combine Aggressiveness with Discipline.

In the words of Andrew Fredericks, "Good engine companies are aggressive but also disciplined. Disciplined engine companies 'take the

time to make the time.' They take an extra 30 seconds to properly position the rig and estimate the handline stretch. They chock doors. They chase kinks. They see the big picture. Disciplined engine companies are deliberate, patient and professional. Is your engine company disciplined?"

The patch colors: The color Red - symbolizes the life and continued growth of our FD. Gold trim - symbolizes that Firefighters, like gold, will withstand trial by fire and still remain. Black background - represent the foundation built by our past members and we will never forget all they have given in the line of duty.



Picture this...



Pictured are the winners of the city's "Chili Cook-Off" to benefit United Way. **Eric Ennen** and **Cory Young** took top honors with their chili. **Paula Merfeld** took top honors in the desert class!

The FD is hosting the City's campaign next year...so some lucky FD employee will be heading up that effort and working to get the message out to all city employees as well as coordinating the fund raising effort. We will offer a **special incentive** to the person who takes on the project including a **special incentive bonus** if we are able to double the total number of employees next year who make a contribution...from 33 employees to 66...it is very doable!!

Last Safety Incident:

51 days without a safety incident

70 days without a lost time injury

Last incident: L415 ladder control housing struck air vac system

Congratulations!

Andrew Stiles and **Josh Boyle**, for passing their EMT-PS exams. They are both already up and running as paramedics.



WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND THE DEPARTMENT...

- Construction continues at Sat. 41. The completion date has been pushed back and it now appears that the project should be completed sometime in January/Feb.
- The CIP included funding for a new simulations lab and that project is moving forward. The project includes seven computers and the ability to conduct simulation train with multiple participants. This project should be completed in the first quarter of 2011.
- The budget has been submitted and it is expected that we will have discussions on the budget in Dec./Jan.
- Hearing for next year's CIP are in early December. The biggest items for consideration are the SCBA replacement project and the addition of a new ambulance. The new ambulance was approved last year but like all CIP items, it is reviewed annually.
- The monthly general "staff" meetings have been discontinued. There was no agenda submitted for the last two months and it was felt that the meetings were not needed on a regular basis. The Chief is happy to meet on an "as needed" basis to keep everyone informed of what's going on around the department.

THANK YOU
THANK YOU VERY MUCH
VERY MUCH!
THANK YOU VERY MUCH

Thank You Card from Alana Gentosi



• For all of you who helped set up Red Shirt Friday, Thank you! I continue to wear my shirt w/ pride. Everyone asks me about my shirt and I'm able to tell them about the support you give!

• Thank you Dan, Lance, Rodney, Cory, Jamie, and John for helping out at the FRG trunk or Treat event. The kids loved it! Thanks for giving up an entire afternoon! The FRG is amazed by all you do!

• Kyle, Cory, Cody, & Dan my yard & gutters are great because of your hard work! A big time thank you for taking care of me!

~ Alana Gentosi
 ☺

Dear Urbandale Fire Dept,
 Words can't express how thankful I am for all of you! You have gone above and beyond the call of duty. I appreciate your kindness, support, and encouragement more than you'll ever know. When Michael decided to enlist, I was apprehensive about many things. Mainly his safety but also how I would tend to everything he takes care of for us. You all have stepped in and lifted the burden! Thank You! Michael and I are blessed to know you and be a part of a great department. Thank you for supporting him in this endeavor. Red Shirt Friday, the messages, letters, packages, and everything else you send him are definitely appreciated. Thank you for being a part of our family. Love Alana G.

