

THE KLAXON

THE NEWPORT NEWS FIRE DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

April 2009

Fire Chief K. L. Jones

CHIEF'S

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The number one topic on every agenda concerns the impact of a weak economy on all aspects of society. The City is feeling the effects of declining revenue and has made adjustments in the FY09 and proposed FY10 budgets that will enable essential services to continue to function, but with a constriction on available resources. In order for the City to maintain a balanced budget for the current fiscal year, all agencies were required to run back funding to insure budget equilibrium would be maintained. The Fire Department has turned back to the City approximately \$600,000 from the FY09 current budget as its share of the budget balancing requirement. This recall of funding has enabled the City to avoid drastic reductions in City services including layoffs through June 30, 2009. The City Manager unveiled his recommended FY10 budget on March 24, 2009. The Fire Department is projected to reduce end personnel strength by a total of five positions. The vacant PIO position along with two civilian administrative and two civilian Emergency Management position are proposed for elimination. There are no projections to eliminate any occupied uniform positions in either the FY09 or projected FY10 budget. The budget process will now move into the public hearing phase before it is scheduled for adoption in early May. Once the budget has been finalized, a Budget Status Update Report, similar to the March 3, 2009 document, will be sent out to all employees regarding any changes in operations that will be required due to the adopted budget document.

Inside this issue:

Chief's Corner

1

Following close in line with the development of the FY10 budget has been the discussion regarding the proposed changes in the City Pension and Other Post Retirement Benefits (OPED) that the City Manager has submitted to City Council for consideration. All City employees were provided with information on the proposed changes. The department will provide timely updates as information becomes available on the many decisions that City Council will have to make in order to continue to provide a fiscally sound retirement and competitive OPED benefit package.

Hazmat

3

Pub Ed Update

4

Injury Stats &
Costs

7

Despite the above two major issues that seem to dominate the news, the Fire Department continues to respond to an increasing number of calls for emergency services from the public. During the first week of March, the Fire Department experienced two major fires during some of the most inclement weather on record for the City. One Tuesday, March 2, in the early morning hours, apparatus responded to 6116 Jefferson Avenue for a working fire at the Loan Smart office building. First arriving units found a one-story former restaurant with fire showing on the D side of the structure. There was a strong and record cold westerly wind blowing that contributed greatly to the difficulty in dealing with the fire. The fire went to a second alarm and then a defensive strategy was employed to extinguish the fire. The temperature was so cold that hose lines froze and were subsequently removed by the Logistics Bureau in their panel

truck and taken to Fire Station 7 to be thawed out and reloaded on the apparatus.

On Thursday March 4, 2009, C – Shift units again were involved in a major fire. The Wickham Market fire came in as a reported fire alarm. The first in units did not detect any signs of a fire and while waiting for the key holder to arrive, the hidden fire became visible and swiftly grew in intensity. This fire quickly spread through the common attic of the shopping center and escalated to a two alarm incident. The large volume of fire was threatening the Triumph Pentecostal Church of Deliverance at the B side of the building. Apparatus and personnel were redeployed to protect the church and were successful in stopping the rapidly advancing fire. Despite having only a small walk way separating the church from the shopping center, there was no fire, water, or smoke damage to the church. On both fire incidents, I witnessed department personnel performing their tasks under very trying climatic and operating conditions. Everyone worked together to extinguish both fires without any injuries to civilians or firefighters and no collateral damage to adjacent structures.

Personnel safety is the number one mission for all members of the department. Make sure you have good situational awareness regardless of the type of call you have been dispatched on. There have been recent reports of department personnel experiencing physical attacks by patients who became violent. When you complete your scene size-up prior to and during the emergency, be aware of the condition of the person to which you are rendering medical assistance. If there is any doubt regarding scene safety, notify Central immediately for police assistance and take appropriate actions to protect you and your co-workers from a potentially confrontational situation.

On January 7, 2009, the department welcomed 15 new members into its ranks when the Tidewater Regional Fire Academy (TRFA) Class 121 graduated. The ceremony was held at the Jefferson Laboratory auditorium and was well attended by family and friends. This was also **Assistant Chief Pat Dent's** last class to preside over as the department's Chief Training Officer. Congratulations are in order to newly promoted Deputy Chief Pat Dent of the Williamsburg Fire Department. To fill the Chief Training Officer position, **Battalion Chief Robert Craft** was assigned to the Training Bureau and **Captain Jay Culpepper** was promoted to fill the vacant field position.

The department was able to place in service Medic 601 in early 2009. This unit will help fill a critical need for additional medical response assets due to the continuing escalation of emergency calls from the public. This unit is slated to move to Fire Station 11, which is currently under construction at the Newport News/Williamsburg Airport, once the station becomes operational. Fire Station 11 is currently framed out and the contractor is moving forward with closing in the structure. The projected July operational opening for the station is still on track.

Due to the projected vacancies, the department will open up the recruiting process in the near future. It is anticipated that, with a depressed economy, there will be a heightened interest in a career in the fire service. Department personnel are encouraged to assist in the recruitment process by passing the word regarding the application date. The Training Bureau will provide this information in a timely manner to assist in this important component.

Haz-Mat is where it's at!

Can you guess what the leading cause of accidental poisonings are in the United States? I'll give you a hint. It's an invisible gas, tasteless and odorless and is produced when there is incomplete combustion. Did you say CO, carbon monoxide? Good job!

There are very few days in Newport News when one of our trucks doesn't roll out on a CO monitor activation. This article is going to be a quick review of the gas, CO monitors and NNFD directive 2.525.

CO, when inhaled, binds quickly to red blood cells, forming carboxyhemoglobin (HbCO), limiting the amount of oxygen your body can carry. The symptoms include headache, nausea, shortness of breath, flu like aches and pains, dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness, and death. These symptoms mimic so many other common chief complaints that we need to be highly suspicious and obtain a detailed patient history. Definitive treatment includes high flow oxygen and possible hyperbaric chamber.

Until recently the only positive way to determine the amount of carboxyhemoglobin in the human body was to perform blood analysis. Recent developments in sensor technology are allowing manufacturers to use a variation in pulse oximetry technology to determine blood CO levels in the field. It will not be very long before we will see this technology being utilized in our city and at local hospitals.

All our fire apparatus carry some form of CO monitor on them, be it the ToxiRae 3 or the QRae 2 four gas monitor. These monitors should be turned on and allowed to go through their warm up cycle in fresh air prior to entering a potential hazardous atmosphere.

Remember!!!

We wear full PPE and SCBA when entering these zones because you never know!!!

The action levels for CO are:

9 ppm or less	No hazard
10 ppm through 35 ppm	Investigate cause
36 ppm or more	Evacuate civilians, Investigate cause

If a natural gas appliance is suspected, notify VNG. Be safe out there!

FF/Medic Stephan Southard 6/B



Pub Ed Update

CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL OF FRIENDS

On **Saturday, May 2nd** at the Children's Festival of Friends in Newport News Park, your children and their friends will enjoy crawling under theater smoke to escape a simulated house fire in the NNF's SAFE House. Rock climbing, rides, activities, crafts, and critters will abound at the event as well. We hope to see many of your families there!

ALARM HOTLINE:

Please continue referring homeowners to our Smoke Alarm Hotline, **926-8009**. Callers may leave a message 24/7. **REMEMBER TO TEST YOUR OWN SMOKE ALARMS EACH MONTH!**

1st GRADE SAFE HOUSE:

From April 16th through May 14th, Battalion 2 firefighter/medics will once again astound first graders with their awesome interactive presentations about their interesting jobs and vehicles. Inside the SAFE House, the educators, **Dan Nolan** and **Diane Ford**, will show the 1st graders a lively safety film and discuss such skills as rolling on the ground if clothing is on fire, telling adults when they spot lighters or matches, and crawling under "smoke". Children eagerly volunteer to demonstrate each new skill for their classmates, and their teachers evaluations filled with many laudable comments.

PRESCHOOL AND 4TH GRADE:

Other weeks find the educators teaching preschoolers and 4th graders. We visit all of the city's Head Start centers, numerous private preschools, and almost every public 4th grade classroom three times. TRFA recruits have helped us tremendously by teaching the large Early Childhood Centers, Watkins and Denbigh. Almost all of the 4th graders have now participated in this year's "Get SAFE Smart" program in which they learn first aid, storm dangers, and fire safety. Students take tests before and after the program; their test scores increased from an average of 59% on the pretests to 90% on the post-tests.

SPEAKER EVENTS:

Recent special educational presentations have included various civic, church, and school groups. The special program presented with the assistance of **AFM Carroll** and **AFM Powell** and **Lt. Howes' Engine 8 crew** was a big success. Many thank thanks also go to **Chief Jones** and **Captain Pincus** and to **Engine and Medic 8/B crews** for their superb assistance in a Fire Safety presentation to a group of very interested adults at the Community Bible Church. Other special presentations this spring include NNP's *Safe and Secure Community Day*, the Neighborhood Watch Conference, and Mothers of Multiples. In addition, Public Education was present at the Hilton Elementary School Safety Night. As you are all aware, our citizens frequently request apparatus displays, station tours, and career talks from our firefighter/medics and express on the phone and on their written evaluations how thrilled they are with your professionalism and enthusiasm at these events. Our citizens frequently express a lot of pride in their Fire Department.

YOUR FAMILY'S PREPARATIONS

All of us in the department teach school children to practice fire safety and to remind their parents to prepare their families for the unexpected. We hope YOUR own family has an escape plan from each room, an outside meeting place, a designated "safe room" in case of a tornado, a hurricane evacuation plan, and frequent home fire drills both day and night. Do your youngsters know how to effectively call 9-1-1 and how to perform some basic first aid? Do your family members habitually practice safe cooking skills, use flashlights during electrical outages in windy storms, avoid smoking when sleepy or near bedding, and test your smoke and CO alarms each month? Wishing you all a safe and joyful Spring!

Diane Ford, Public Educator

We've Got Mail!

Dear Chief Jones:

I wish to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to you for the service of **Captain Benedict Burbic** who served as an assessor in the recent performance-based assessment center process for the rank of Lieutenant for the Chattanooga Fire Department.

Due to their function as a promotional instrument, assessment centers are often conducted under potentially litigious circumstances. Captain Burbic was conscientious and diligent, and gave generously of his time. He represents your Department in a most positive and professional manner. Captain Burbic performed admirably as an assessor and due to his efforts and the efforts of other assessors; a valid and defensible list was produced for the Chattanooga Fire Department.

I appreciate the excellent work of Captain Burbic and sincerely thank you for allowing him to attend as an assessor. Your spirit of cooperation in assisting the Chattanooga Fire Department is greatly appreciated. Please call me if I can ever assist you or your department.

Sincerely,

David M. Morris, Ph.D., J.D.

Memo to: Chief Kenneth Jones, NNFD

From: Mayor Frank

Subject: City Government Day

I very much appreciate the courtesy you extended to Boy Scouts Sean Preston, Zachary Fullen, and Brandon Land on Tuesday, January 27, 2009 during *City Government Day*. The opportunities you and **Assistant Chief Hanline** coordinated to expose them to the different facets of fire prevention and suppression which included a tour of Fire Station 1 and a short ride in Fireboat 1 were exciting and outstanding.

Thank you for a successful tour. I am grateful to you that Sean, Zachary, and Brandon were witnesses to and the recipients of the type of professional conduct and dedication the city has come to expect from our employees.

Dear Chief Ken Jones,

On January 30, 2009, **Lt. Simonsen** stationed at firehouse #1 was invited to my class at First United Methodist Pre-school in Hilton.

The week's theme was "Community Helpers". Jimmy spoke to the class at their eye level wearing street clothes. He stressed the fact that he's just a "regular person" in the clothes he had on and the same person when he put his firefighter gear on. He let the children touch his helmet. The children asked many questions and were very impressed. I would like you to know Lt. Simonsen did an awesome job representing the Newport News Fire Department.

Sincerely,

M. Waller

Dear Chief Jones,

I am writing this letter to make you aware of the sincere appreciation I have for the assistance provided to me by members of your department. Due to some unusual circumstances, I was not able to complete my Fire Investigator 1033 certification with my department. My former Deputy Chief corresponded with members of the Newport News Fire Department and Fire Marshal's Bureau readily welcomed the opportunity to train a neighboring firefighter. The Fire Marshal's Bureau was extremely generous in offering their members' time and expertise in educating me on the procedures involving investigations and helping me complete my field time for my certification.

Lieutenant Rice, Lieutenant Marr and Captain Minga were particularly helpful and accepted me as if I were an employee of the Newport News Fire Department. I felt that you should know about the outstanding professionalism and true stewardship with which these officers assisted me in my endeavors. In conclusion, I am grateful to you for the support of your division.

Sincerely,

D. Scalse

HFD



***Wickham Avenue Fire - Photos by
SFM William Diggs.***

Reminder

The NNFD Annual Recognition Ceremony will be held on **April 16, 2009** at the Downing-Gross Cultural Arts Center at 2:00pm. We will honor the past years' recipients for retirements, promotions, and awards. Please mark your calendars, and plan on attending this special event.



A Proud Partner in Your Community EMS Week 2009 - May 17-23

National Emergency Medical Services Week brings together local communities and medical personnel to publicize safety and honor the dedication of those who provide the day-to-day lifesaving services of medicine's "front line." This information can be used throughout the year for public education and safety programs. For additional information, contact us at www.emsweek.org.



Cool websites to visit:

Home Safety Council: www.homesafetycouncil.org

NNFD Hazard House www.hazardhouse.com/newportnews

Everyone Goes Home www.everyonegoeshome.com

*Right click to
open*

Injury Statistics & Cost

In the City of Newport News Fire Department (NNFD) there has always been a chance that an employee would suffer an on duty injury due to the nature of the job of fire fighting. Statistics for the NNFD has shown that these injuries may occur at different times of the day. The most common times that these injuries occur are between 8:00am and 9:00am, as well as, from 5:00pm and 6:00pm. The correlation shows that during the early part of the day, when rush hour is going on or while the fire fighter is inspecting the equipment, there is a great possibility that an on duty injury to a particular part of the body may occur. During the evening hours, injuries may have been due to a relaxed setting and sudden jolts due to an unexpected emergency call, which may cause a strain or unexpected motion. Below you will read some statistics from the calendar year of 2008 and it will enlighten you on how important it is to stay in good shape physically and mentally in order to be effective on the job as a fire fighter.

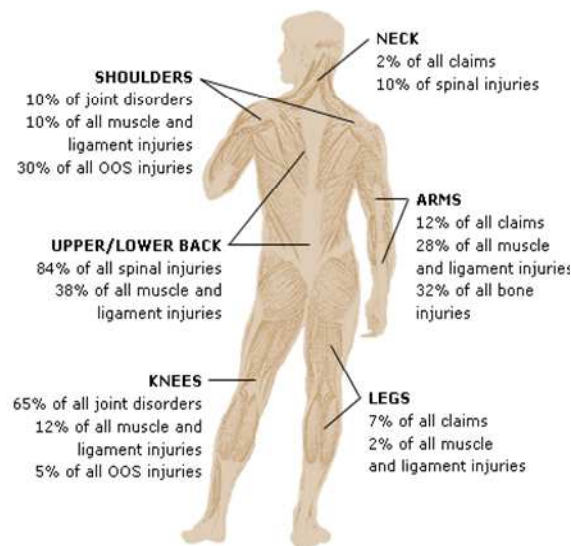
Within the Fire Service injuries can occur at any age, but within the NNFD the most common ages where these injuries occurred are between 30 years of age and 50 years of age. In 2008, the highest "incident" rates were due to finger injuries, which incurred an expense of \$6,000. The months with the highest claims for on duty injuries were February and September, \$75,365.74 incurred due to the months. The correlation with the and summer. Winter may put cold weather. September, because the warm weather and may be tak-granted.

Burns, Contagious Dis-Lacerations were prominent, but incurred were due to Muscular cases in 2008 with Muscular \$113,426.17. This is the reason and exercise to maintain flexibil-

When we list the cost and that the Fire Fighter/Medics had \$40,649.07, which has an average the Fire Fighter/Medics comes the 12 claims which totaled \$4,076.65, \$339.72 per case. This also goes to show how experience can play a major role in injury prevention. The Fire Academy also had 11 total cases with injuries during 2008.

It is ever so important to make sure that you take part in some form of exercise whether at work or at home. The results will save money in the long run. Here is a list of things that you can do to prevent some injuries while on duty.

- Avoid exercising or playing sports when tired or in pain.
- Maintain a healthy, well-balanced diet to keep muscles strong.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Practice safety measures to help prevent falls (for example, keep stairways, walkways, yards, and driveways free of clutter; anchor scatter rugs; and salt or sand icy patches in the winter).
- Wear shoes that fit properly.
- Replace athletic shoes as soon as the tread wears out or the heel wears down on one side.
- Do stretching exercises daily.



with a combined total of multiple injuries during those months is the seasons of winter more strain due to snow and most people are still enjoying their physical abilities for

eases (Exposures, etc...) and the ultimate injuries that NNFD Strains or Tears. There were 19 Strains, which cost why it is so important to stretch ity.

occurrence by job title, it shows 15 claims which totaled of \$2,709.94 per case. After Fire Fighter/Recruits which had which has an average of

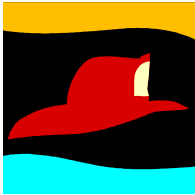
- Be in proper physical condition to play a sport.
- Warm up and stretch before participating in any sports or exercise.
- Wear protective equipment when playing.

Run on even surfaces to avoid any twisting of the ankle or knee.

In the event that you inquire an on the duty injury, please report it immediately to your station officer or to the OSHO Office. Your safety and health are extremely important to the well being of each and every employee who serves within the City of Newport News Fire Department.

Dionne Williams, OSHO

***Congratulations to Battalion Chief Jay Culpepper
on his recent promotion.***



Congratulations the following for completing their EMS Preceptor Program and becoming released AIC's:

David Gourley

Dan Perry

Eric Parker

John Pearson
