

HOT SPOTS

Independence Fire Department • 950 North Spring Street • Independence • MO • 64050

April 2008



Safety Matters

Message From The Chief

Recently my son and my family lost a young man we knew very well in a motor vehicle accident. He was not wearing a seat belt. The story going around his school and other places is that a seat belt would not have made a difference. Knowing Garrett the way I did I can't believe that this is true. While a seat belt would not have saved anyone from the force of the impact that killed Garrett, everything that led up to it might have changed if he had taken the time to buckle up. Taking time to be safe, to do the things that put safety first sets the thought pattern and the atmosphere after which everything, every decision, every action will follow. After my children and their friends reached driving age I would many times walk them out to their cars and remind them to drive safe and buckle up. Knowing what I did for a living they would "humor" the "mom" and would promise . . . as Garrett did more than once.

Just a few months ago an in-house training class, with a pledge, was sent around to all the stations. Most of you, if not all, by now have completed and turned in a training report. Few if any have turned in the pledge. I wonder if Garrett Clark had read that

lesson would he have taken the pledge? Would he have been wearing a seat belt?

Motor vehicle accidents account for approximately twenty-five percent of firefighter line of duty deaths and many injuries per year.

This Department has in its Code of Conduct many references to safety. Seatbelts are required before any vehicle can begin response per Standard Operating Procedure 503.

Just to reiterate what is expected and to ensure compliance: **All personnel must be seated and belted whenever the vehicle (either department or personal) is in motion for department business. The driver and/or officer must assure by voice and personnel reply that seatbelts are properly fastened. The driver will only proceed when it can be confirmed that all members are seated and belted.**

No parent can always be present to remind young people to "buckle up and drive safe." No fire chief, chief officer, company officer, driver or firefighter can, with or without policies or disciplinary repercussions, be sure they can catch every slip. But we can try! If we can promote and model the right mind set, we can place safety first in everyone's actions. I believe making SAFETY a priority really can MATTER!

Chief Schiess

Tornado Season: Are You Ready?

Tornadoes are nature's most violent storms.

Spawned from powerful thunderstorms, tornadoes can cause fatalities and devastate a neighborhood in seconds. A tornado appears as a rotating, funnel-shaped cloud that extends from a thunderstorm to the ground with whirling winds that can reach 300 miles per hour. Damage paths can be in excess of one mile wide and 50 miles long. Some tornadoes are clearly visible, while rain or nearby low-hanging clouds obscure others. Occasionally, tornadoes

develop so rapidly that little, if any, advance warning is possible. Before a tornado hits, the wind may die down and the air may become very still. A cloud of debris can mark the location of a tornado even if a funnel is not visible. Tornadoes generally occur near the trailing edge of a thunderstorm. It is not uncommon to see clear, sunlit skies behind a tornado.

Tornado facts: Tornado season in Missouri typically occurs between the months of March and June. On average, May is the busiest tornado month followed by April and then June. The average tornado moves Southwest to Northeast, but tornadoes have

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What's Happening?

TRAINING

The following four firefighters successfully passed their State of Missouri Certified Fire Investigator Course testing on March 4, 2008: Lake Crookham, Mike Ditamore, Dave Hacker and Brad Waterworth. They will obtain a Certified Fire Investigator (CFI) Designation when their additional paperwork is filed which allows them to perform fire scene investigations.

The following fire personnel attended Winter Fire School in Columbia: Rick Andrews, Mike Ditamore, Mykael Ann McGinley, David A. Sellars and Justin Selsor.

The new recruits passed from the orientation phase of training to on-the-job training. They now have badges and have been assigned to shifts.

OPERATIONS/ADMINISTRATION

Pumper 1 which was damaged in a hit and run accident on December 23, has been repaired and returned to service.

In order to facilitate work on certain projects and provide insight into the duties and issues of various positions, the following reassignments were made: Chief Greene assumed the position of Acting Deputy of Chief of Operations effective April 1. Chief Krickle assumed the Shift Commander position on A-Shift effective April 2. The position of Battalion Chief of Services has been posted. Until that vacancy is filled (projecting first week of May), Chief Jones will handle all service issues as well as his administrative duties. Chief Lay returned to an office schedule as the Assistant Chief of EMS. His last day on B-Shift was March 31. Chief Bailey assumed the Shift Commander position on B Shift effective April 3. The training schedule and class logistics will remain the responsibility of Chief Bailey. All chief officers will be working to ensure that training priorities are maintained.

EMS

Firefighter Justin Selsor passed the National Registry Written Exam for Paramedic in March. Great job Justin and congratulations on completing paramedic school.

170 Fire Dept personnel completed our annual CPR/AED Recertification in February.

FIRE PREVENTION

The 2007 Annual Report is complete and ready for distribution. During the first quarter of 2008

536 commercial inspections were received from suppression; 402 reinspections were conducted by inspectors; 79 plans were reviewed (sprinkler, fire alarm, etc.); and Fire Prevention participated in the City Expo on March 13.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

In February the office of Emergency Preparedness participated in Safety City along with C.E.R.T. and R.A.C.E.S. volunteers. Safety City was held at the Metropolitan Lawn & Garden show at the American Royal. Safety City plays an important role in continuing efforts to make sure the community is prepared for floods, fires, tornadoes and other natural or man-made hazards and terrorist events.

In March C.E.R.T. volunteers assisted first responders with a grid search for a missing person. Although the person was not found, the volunteers' efforts materially aided in the ongoing investigation. The search was especially beneficial to our volunteers as it provided a good orientation into grid search requirements and allowed participants to gain additional experience with Incident Command System.

Congratulations Captain Mark Watkins Firefighter of the Year



Chief Schiess, Captain Watkins and Mayor Reimal

On Thursday February 28, 2008 the Harry S Truman Association of Insurance and Financial Advisors held it's Annual Fire Fighter of the Year Banquet at the Hilton Garden Inn. Chief Schiess recognized Captain Mark Watkins as Independence's Firefighter of the Year. Captain Watkins was selected after being nominated by his peers and a review process by the Fire Department's Command staff. Captain Watkins was chosen to be Independence's Firefighter of the Year for the life he saved on November 18, 2007; for forming a team that can be counted on when needed most; and for the trust we have in him to start our next generation out with the tools and pride to be there to do the right things when the community calls.

Getting to Know You... New Recruits

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Kyle Bowlin

Prior to joining the Independence Fire Department, Kyle worked for Fort Osage for 4 years and for an ambulance company in Phoenix for 1 year. Kyle is married and his hobbies include working out and golfing.

Matt Bulloc

Prior to joining the Independence Fire Department, Matt was with the Sugar Creek Fire Department for 5 years. Matt is engaged to be married in August. He enjoys camping and fishing and is currently in paramedic school.



Chris Fairbank

Chris completed the fire academy at Blue River last year. Prior to joining the Independence Fire Department he was volunteering with Lake Lotawana and Smithville Fire Departments. Chris is married with 2 children, Gavin 7 and Hailey 18 months.

Outside of work, Chris enjoys snowboarding and spending time with family. Chris is currently attending paramedic school.



Chad Sappenfield

Chad graduated from the fire academy at Blue River last year. Prior to joining the Independence Fire Department he was volunteering with Lake Lotawana and Smithville Fire Departments. Chad's hobbies include playing baseball for an amateur baseball team. Chad is currently attending paramedic school.



been known to travel in any direction. Tornadoes are most likely to occur between 3 p.m. and 9 p.m., but can occur at any time. They may strike quickly, with little or no warning. They may appear nearly transparent until dust and debris are picked up or a cloud forms in the funnel.

Know the terms: **Tornado Watch** means tornadoes are possible. Remain alert for approaching storms. Watch the sky and stay tuned to NOAA Weather Radio, commercial radio, or television for information. **Tornado Warning** means a tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar. Take shelter immediately. Danger signs of an approaching tornado may include a dark, often greenish sky; large hail; a large, dark low-lying cloud (particularly if rotating); loud roar, similar to a freight train. Become familiar with your community's severe weather warning system and make certain every adult and teenager in your family knows what to do when a tornado watch or warning sounds.

If you see approaching storms or any of the danger signs, be prepared to take shelter immediately. If you are under a tornado warning, seek shelter immediately. If you are at home go to a pre-designated shelter area such as a safe room, basement, storm cellar, or the lowest building level. If there is no basement, go to the center of an interior room on the lowest level (closet, interior hallway) away from corners, windows, doors, and outside walls. Put as many walls as possible between you and the outside. Get under a sturdy table and use your arms to protect your head and neck. Do not open windows. If you are in a vehicle, trailer or mobile home get out immediately and go to the lowest floor of a sturdy, nearby building or a storm shelter. Mobile homes, even if tied down, offer little protection from tornadoes. If you are outside with no shelter lie flat in a nearby ditch or a depression and cover your head with your hands. Be aware of the potential for flooding. Do not get under an overpass or bridge. You are safer in a low, flat location. Never try to outrun a tornado in urban or congested areas in a car or truck. Instead, leave the vehicle immediately for safe shelter. Watch out for flying debris. Flying debris from tornadoes causes most fatalities.

Additionally, you may want to review your homeowner's insurance policy periodically with your insurance agent to make sure you have sufficient coverage to rebuild your life and home after a tornado.

Please visit www.fema.gov for additional information on tornadoes and disaster preparedness.

*Facts and information provided by
<http://www.fema.gov/areyouready/tornadoes/shtm> and
<http://extension.missouri.edu/tornado.htm>.*

Firefighter Appreciation

From a thank you card to Station 1: The Tiger Cub den of Cub Pack 203 expresses its thanks and appreciation to "C" Shift Station 1 for the outstanding hospitality and tour of Station 1 on Monday, January 14, 2008. Please express our thanks to Matt Klick, Tony Champagne, Mark Watkins, Jason Blystone, Neil Mitchell, Brian Beissenherz, Justin Selsor and Roger Roark.

From a thank you card to "the people at the fire dept.": I just had to say thank you for your many trips to our house to get my husband up from the floor. I love every one of you for your kindness. From Thada E. Worledge

From a thank you card for Jason Blystone, Mark Watkins, Justin Selsor and Tony Champagne: Thank you very much for your caring professional attitude that you gave me for my 911 call on Feb. 4, 2008. From Kathy J. Ellis

From a thank you card for Tom Wade: Thank you for taking the time to come talk to us. We enjoyed it! From Proctor Elementary Kindergarten.

Promotions

Congratulations to Jeff Keogh who was promoted to Fire Captain on February 19, 2008.

Congratulations to Michael Ditamore who was promoted to Fire Equipment Operator on February 20, 2008.

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Hot Spots welcomes your comments, suggestions and contributions.

Congratulations

Belated Congratulations



Angie Robbins, an Administrative Specialist II for the Office of Emergency Preparedness at Fire Station No. 1, husband Jason and daughter Sydney welcomed newborn twins, Cooper Michael and Caitlyn Michelle into the world on December 6, 2007, at Centerpoint Medical Center in Independence. Cooper was born at 5:46 p.m. weighing 4 lbs. 7 oz. and Caitlyn was born at 5:47 p.m. weighing 4 lbs. 5 oz. Both babies were 15 ½ inches long. Sydney loves being a "big sister". They are all extremely happy and healthy.



Congratulations to Assistant Chief John Greene on the marriage of his daughter Tiffany to Ryan Morris. The happy couple was married on March 21, 2008.



Congratulations to Georgie Waldrop Administrative Specialist II in Training, on the marriage of her daughter Andrea to Lee Gillespie. The happy couple was married on March 21, 2008.

