



# HOT TOPICS

## CHIEF'S CORNER



This month, the department is very excited to put the newest addition to our fleet in service. The Oshkosh Fire Department is now a proud owner of a platform aerial apparatus. The new Truck 15 will enhance our operational capabilities and enable us another option to perform life-saving maneuvers to rescue people from a burning building.

Several members of the department received specialized training from the manufacturer so that they could train their colleagues on the new apparatus and its operation. For the past month the members of the department have braved the cold elements to diligently train and prepare for Truck 15 to go into service.

Starting this month, you will see this beautiful new firetruck rolling through the streets of Oshkosh. Please know that inside it are your well-trained firefighters who stand ready to respond to the dangers our community faces. We appreciate our community and City Council's support, who recognize the importance of having the best equipment available.

A special thanks goes out to everyone on the Truck Committee who helped to custom design this apparatus and to the trainers. Both groups went above and beyond!

Stay safe and well. Happy New Year!

--Chief Mike Stanley

## WINTER DRIVING SAFETY

by John Holland

In December, we responded to 28 traffic crashes. Navigating the icy roads and snowy conditions of Wisconsin's winter requires caution and preparation. Whether you're commuting in town or planning a longer trip, here's what you need to know to stay safe on the road.

### Prepare Your Vehicle

- **Winter Ready Tires:** Ensure your tires are appropriate for winter driving. Check tread depth and make sure they are properly inflated.
- **Fluid Levels:** Keep your gas tank at least half full in case you do get stuck for an extended period of time. Fill up on windshield washer fluid designed for winter to make sure you're able to keep your windshield clean in order to see clearly.
- **Battery Health:** Cold weather reduces battery power, so have your battery tested and replace if necessary.
- **Emergency Kit:** Always carry an emergency kit, including blankets, a flashlight, food, water, jumper cables, first-aid kit and fully charged cell phone.

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# DRIVING SAFETY TIPS Continued from Page 1

## On the Road

- Plan Ahead: Check weather forecasts and road conditions before setting out. Adjust your plans accordingly.
- Drive Slowly: Ice and snow reduce traction, so allow for increased stopping distance. Drive below the speed limit to maintain control.
- Keep Distance: Increase following distance from the vehicle ahead of you, giving you plenty of time to slow down or stop in case of sudden changes.
- Use Signals: Signal early to alert other drivers of your intentions.

## Stay in Control

- Avoid Sudden Movements: Steer, accelerate, and brake gently to reduce your risk of skidding.
- Know How to Skid: If your car starts to skid, stay calm. Steer into the direction you want to go and take your foot off of the accelerator.

## When Stranded

- Remain in Your Vehicle: If you become stranded, stay in your vehicle. It's your best protection against the elements.
- Signal for Help: Turn on your hazard lights, and if it's safe to do so, tie a brightly colored cloth or ribbon to your antenna or side-view mirror.

Winter conditions challenge even the most experienced drivers. By preparing your vehicle, adjusting your driving habits, and knowing how to respond to emergencies, you can help keep yourself and others safe throughout the season. Safe travels!





# Winnebago County Public Health Vending Machines

## What are Public Health Vending Machines?

The Public Health Vending machines are a free community resource. Prevention kits such as gun locks, Narcan, Fentanyl testing strips, DETERRA drug deactivation, menstrual products, basic needs kits, and more are individually stocked in discreet brown boxes.

## Who will use Public Health Vending Machines?

This resource is meant to give people access to items that will help create a stronger and healthier community for all. Everyone is encouraged to use these machines, including:

- Individuals who use substances
- Friends and Family of those who use substances
- Community members that want to be empowered to intervene in an emergency to prevent unnecessary deaths
- Community members that need access to basic needs items such as safe drug disposal bags or menstrual products

## Hours & Locations:

The Winnebago County Public Health Vending Machines are available 24/7 at two convenient outdoor locations:

**David W. Albrecht  
Administration Building**  
112 Otter Ave  
Oshkosh WI

**Winnebago County  
Human Services**  
211 N Commercial St.  
Neenah WI



## How do I access the machines?



**Step 1:** Call the confidential Public Health Vending Machine Hotline to receive a PIN Code:  
**(920) 232-3313**



**Step 2:** Use your unique PIN code to access up to 3 items from the Public Health Vending Machine.



**Step 3:** Use the items to help make our community a safer place for everyone. Contact the hotline again for a new PIN code if needed.



For More Information: Call 920-232-3000 or visit <https://wchd.pub/PHVM>



# NEW LADDER TRUCK DEPLOYED TO STATION 15

by Greg Stelter, Assistant Chief



Truck 15 is the Oshkosh Fire Department's first aerial platform apparatus. The platform, or "bucket," at the end of the ladder allows crew members to be lifted from the ground to the working elevation. Crews do not become exhausted carrying equipment up a ladder, and they no longer need to risk climbing an icy ladder in winter.



The platform also allow for easier rescue. This new Pierce Midmount truck employs many innovative technologies that allow for faster and safer deployment of the platform, which can reach heights of 100'.



The platform is piped for large master streams, and it can act as an elevated standpipe. This highly capable apparatus will improve the safety and efficiency of our crews as they serve our community.

*Assistant Chief Greg Stelter, Division Training Chief, Tim Heiman and Captain Michael Bryan discuss deployment strategies.*

## NEW AROUND THE FIRE HOUSE

We are so excited to have several new hires at the firehouse. Please join us in welcoming Jeremy Pethke and Sawyer Shikoski.

Jeremy graduated with honors from Mid-State Technical College as an EMT-Paramedic and completed the required fire courses at Fox Valley Technical College. He has prior experience as a paramedic with Ripon Guardian Ambulance, and the Manawa Ambulance Service. In addition to that, Jeremy worked as a firefighter/EMT with the Iola and Rural Fire and Ambulance.

Sawyer is a graduate of North East Technical College in Green Bay. He received his Associate Degree as a Fire Medic. In addition to his fulltime position with OFD, Sawyer volunteers with the New Franken Fire Department.



Jeremy Pethke



Sawyer Shikoski

# CONGRATULATIONS

At the December Police and Fire Commission (PFC) meeting, Steve Gawaresky was promoted to Equipment Officer effective December 29, 2024.

At the January 7 PFC meeting, the following individuals were promoted effective January 26, 2025:

Ryan Koplin promoted to Captain  
Casey Wangard promoted to Lieutenant  
Eric Mayer and Seth Meier promoted to Equipment Officer

Captain  
Ryan Koplin



Lieutenant  
Casey Wangard



Equipment  
Operator  
Steve  
Gawaresky



Equipment  
Operator  
Seth Meier

Equipment Operator  
Eric Mayer

*Photos by John Holland*

# RETIREMENTS

On December 22 Equipment Operator Steve Kraus worked his final shift. He retired after serving the citizens of Oshkosh for 24 years. He also served in the United States Air Force.

Back in Steve's earlier years, he invented the "Kraus Loop" and acted as an alarm clock in the morning for the members working at Station 15. He became a legend at the OFD for a certain maneuver when playing five card poker at shift change.

Steve, you will be greatly missed! Thank you for all your years of service and enjoy a well deserved retirement!



Steve Kraus



Matt Herbst

Equipment Operator Matthew Herbst retired December 30 after 28 years of service. He started his employment as a firefighter in February of 1996 and promoted to Equipment Officer in May of 2007.

Matt also served our Country as an Army Ranger. This picture pretty much sums up Matt. You would regularly see him walking on his hands, closing upper cabinet doors with his feet and performing the splits when the opportunity presented itself.

We will miss your humor Matt. We hope you enjoy a long and warm retirement

# DECEMBER MONTHLY METRICS

by MJ VanGompel, Management Analyst

## Emergency Medical Services



818

## Motor Vehicle Crashes



28

## Structure Fires



16

## Falls



191

## Inspections



86

## Fire Alarms



52