



HOT TOPICS

CHIEF'S CORNER



On Pearl Harbor Day, December 7, 2022 the Oshkosh Fire Department dedicated its Veterans Honor Wall at Fire Station 15. The Honor Wall is an amazing tribute to the three members of the Oshkosh Fire Department that made the supreme sacrifice and died in the line of duty.

It also recognizes the 343 members of the New York Fire Department who lost their lives while displaying incredible courage in the face of extreme danger on September 11, 2001. The Veterans Honor Wall also tells the story of the men and women of the Oshkosh Fire Department who have served in the United States Armed Forces in the past, currently, and who will be added in the future. The nearly 150 department veterans have been catalogued all the way back to the Civil War.

This could not have been accomplished without the hard work and commitment of the Honor Wall committee that was created by several members of the department. Also special thanks go out to retired Equipment Operator Gary Ross who spent countless hours doing the research identifying the veteran firefighters. Thank you to the many area veterans groups and local businesses who donated funds and resources to turn this into a reality. The dedication was a very touching and memorable ceremony. We are very proud to have such an outstanding testament to so many who served at our Fire Station 15.

As 2022 draws to a close, we wish you and yours happy holidays and a Happy New Year!

--Chief Mike Stanley



PUT A FREEZE ON WINTER HOLIDAY FIRES

by John Holland, PubEd Specialist

The holidays are upon us. It's a great time to celebrate with family and friends but it does bring with it its own set of hazards.

Trees

Christmas tree fires are rare, however when they do occur they are extremely fast and dangerous. First and foremost, if you have a real tree make sure you keep it watered. Also it should not be set up near any air or heating vents. This dries the tree out much faster. Once the holidays are over get rid of the tree before it dries out and becomes more of a fire hazard. Artificial trees are safer however you need to remember to not place any tree (or other decoration) in a spot where it blocks an exit out of the home

Lights

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) holiday lights are responsible for an average of 770 fire each year. To avoid becoming part of this statistic don't use any lights with worn or cracked cords.

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HOLIDAY SAFETY (Continued from page 1)

Don't connect more than three sets together and use power strips instead of extension cords. Use only UL listed lights and make sure if you're using them outside they are rated for outside use. Always turn off the lights when you leave the house or go to sleep. Newer LED lights are safer than the older type of lights because they stay cooler, but you still have to use care not to overdo it with connecting sets of lights and using extension cords

Candles

Avoid using real candles if at all possible. Newer battery operated candles have very realistic flames and some are even scented. If you must use real candles keep them away from decorations and anything else that can burn. Also, keep a close eye on children and pets if you must have candles burning. Finally, never leave a lit candle unattended. Blow them out when you leave the room, leave the house, or "settle down for your long winter's nap".

Parties

It's easy to become distracted when hosting or attending a holiday party. Make sure if anything is being cooked on the stove that there is someone watching it. Unattended cooking accounts for a large number of fires every year.

If you have guests that smoke, have them smoke outside, provide them with non-combustible ashtrays, and dispose of the ashes properly.

If alcohol is being served make sure there is someone who is not drinking who can keep an eye on things. Once alcohol is involved good judgement could go out the window and unnecessary accidents and injuries can occur.

Make sure you invite common sense and safe practices to any of your holiday festivities.

As always, make sure you have working smoke alarms on every level your home to stay safe and comfy during this season and all year long.

Put a FREEZE on Winter Holiday Fires

Did you know? More than 1/3 of home decoration fires are started by candles.

As you deck the halls this season, be fire smart. Keep candles at least 12 inches away from anything that burns.

Think about using battery-operated flameless candles.

Logos: U.S. Fire Administration, Fire is Everyone's Fight, NFPA

COMMUNITY PARTNER: REBUILDING TOGETHER

by MJ VanGompel, Management Analyst



It takes many hands to build something strong.

The Oshkosh Fire Department has been partnering with Rebuilding Together Fox Valley (RTFV) with the goal of reducing falls in our community. When our paramedics arrive on scene of a patient who has fallen, we offer to connect them to services that may help keep them living safely in their own homes.

RTFV is one of our very important partners. They serve home owners in Winnebago and Outagamie Counties. Their team of talented volunteers make critical home modifications and repairs at no cost to the homeowner thanks to generous funding provided by the Oshkosh Area Community Foundation and the Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region.

RTFV cannot serve apartments, duplexes or mobile homes.

For the last year, RTFV has been installing:

- grab bars
- non-slip tread in baths
- handheld showerheads
- shower chair or tub transfer benches
- night lights or stick-up lights for areas with no light fixtures
- toilet seat riser
- interior handrails
- bathtub cutout



One of the many people helped by RTFV is Barbara.



BEFORE

The memories of three generations fill Barbara Goyke's home in Oshkosh. "My mom grew up in this house, and I did too. Grandma died when I was a freshman in high school. Grandpa passed away when he was 87." Barbara paused to let her emotions subside. "I'm real sentimental. That's when I decided to buy the house." It's an older house in an older neighborhood, a block away from the west bank of the Fox River, which bisects the city.

A health condition has made her bones more vulnerable to breaking. After she broke her upper back in a fall, doctors put a surgical screw in her spine and cautioned that another fall could be paralyzing.

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PREVENTING FALLS IN OUR COMMUNITY

Barbara lives alone, sleeping in her grandparents' old bedroom. Her daughter, who has her own home, keeps an eye on her mother. Caregivers come by three times a week, and Barbara has a Lifeline medical alert system at the ready. Despite all those precautions, Barbara knew the condition of her home was a problem. The wooden steps at the front of the house were rotted. She couldn't get in and out of the bathtub. Flooring issues throughout the house put her at risk of falling. With a fixed income and disability, she couldn't get the repairs done without help. "When you're alone and don't have anybody to fix things, it's a bad situation," Barbara said.



A team of Rebuilding Together volunteers pitched in on the extensive repairs. The team put in a comfort height toilet that makes it easier to sit down and stand up. They did a cutout to convert the existing bathtub into a step-in shower. They tacked down loose carpeting, replaced the kitchen floor, fitted the basement stairs with railings, rebuilt the front steps, installed smoke and radon detectors, provided fire extinguishers, and more.

Barbara's enthusiasm during the project was abundant. She showed volunteers her photo albums, shared stories about her family, and was thoroughly entertained by the whole process. The volunteers were so kind. But I think I made them nervous by watching them work," she teased.

Because of Rebuilding Together's home repair projects, 68% of people who were worried about falling at home felt more confident. The repairs to Barbara's home have instilled her with similar positivity. "I don't feel like a fall is going to happen here now. If it wasn't for Rebuilding Together, I would have had to move to a nursing home. Rebuilding Together has kept me in my home with my good memories."

"I'm hoping I can be here until I die. I wouldn't wanna die anywhere else."

If you know someone who needs help or if you would like to help Rebuilding Together Fox Valley through a donation or time, please click on the pictures below or Call 920-730-2156, email: contact@rtfv.org or visit their website www.rtfv.org



A special thank you to RTFV Homeowner Coordinator Jamie Malesevich for her generous contribution to this story.

WALL OF HONOR DEDICATION

For many, December 7 was a day to remember. Not only was it the day that many gave their lives at the bombing of Pearl Harbor, but it was a day of tribute to veterans as the OFD dedicated its Wall of Honor. The wall recognizes both past and active members of the department who were or are veterans. The wall honors members of the OFD who died in the line of duty and the 343 firefighters who perished in the 9/11 attacks. The ceremony, MC'd by Battalion Chief Drew Jaeger, himself a Coast Guard veteran, recognized the committee who developed the idea, sponsors and the veteran groups who supported the plan and members from Station 15 who helped prepare the wall.



Committee Members: Craig Downs, Paul Friday, Tony Montag, Chris Clark, Ken Keifer, Drew Jaeger and retired OFD member Gary Ross.

Sponsors: Art City Signs, Bella's Custom Design, Muza Metal Products, IFF Local 316 and Twin City Monument Work



Please watch this Youtube video created by our friends at Oshkosh Media.

LET'S CONNECT

