



# HOT TOPICS

## CHIEF'S CORNER



In previous issues we have been keeping you updated on the playground project at Read Elementary School. Well, on June 25, 2024 it was time to celebrate with the Grand Opening of the playground. Rather than have a ribbon cutting, the playground was officially opened with an “uncoupling” of a fire hose.

That night marked the completion of an incredible project that started out with one engaged parent having an idea and resulted in what is in my opinion, the coolest playground on earth.

The Oshkosh Fire Department was very grateful to have had a supporting role in making this happen. The partnership between the school and the department is something that is already reaping many benefits. We see this as an outstanding recruitment tool to develop a talent pipeline for the future. Each year, hundreds of schoolchildren in our community will have the opportunity to imagine themselves being firefighters when they grow up.

Most importantly, the playground creates a safe place for children to play, use their imaginations, explore, and have fun. The playground should be a point of pride for Oshkosh. It is a testimony of what can happen when we innovate, collaborate, and turn a vision into a reality. It shows what is possible. It shows what we can do when we work together.

If you haven't had a chance to see the playground yet, stop by. Bring your family, friends, and neighbors. It is a great place to play for children young and old!

--Chief Mike Stanley



## “GRATE” TIME FOR GRILLING

by John Holland, Public Information Officer

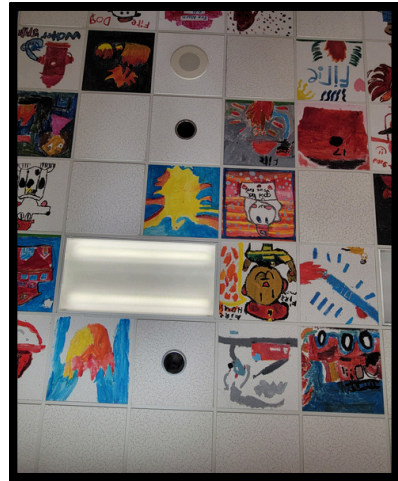
It’s summertime. The time when people fire up their grills and enjoy a juicy burger, flaky filet of fish, or delicious grilled vegetables. While you’re enjoying a cookout with family and friends, we want to make sure you’re being safe. Whether you’re using a propane or charcoal grill (which everyone knows is better) there are some definite safety rules to keep in mind.

Surprisingly, according to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), 84% of the over 10,500 average annual grill fires that U.S. fire departments respond to are caused by gas-fueled grills. The NFPA lists several factors that lead to gas grill fires: leaky, dirty, or broken equipment along with the grills being used too close to things that can easily catch fire.

To avoid becoming a statistic, check your grill before you use it. Check the gas tank and lines for leaks or breaks. Keep your grill clean by removing grease and fat build-up on the rack and in the trays underneath the grill. Always make sure the lid is open before lighting.

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# READ ELEMENTARY & OFD PARTNERSHIP



# GRILLING

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Finally, keep your grill well away from your home, garage, deck, railing, and out from eaves and overhanging tree branches.

Obviously, a charcoal grill has its own set of safety rules. First of all, use only charcoal lighter fluid to light the grill and never add it, or any other flammable liquid, to the fire. Make sure you store lighter fluid safely; out of children's reach and away from any heat source. Just like with a gas grill, keep the grill safely away from anything that can burn. The biggest danger when using charcoal is the proper disposal of the ashes. Never empty the hot coals directly into a trash can (or under a wooden deck—true story). If you're going to leave the area or go to bed, douse the coals with water and leave them over night. Never dispose of them until they are cool to the touch.

No matter which grill you use there are some safety rules that apply to both. This should go without saying, but never use a grill inside (and that includes a garage). Not only is there a huge risk of fire, you're also in danger of carbon monoxide poisoning. Use long handled utensils to avoid burns from flames or heat. Never leave a grill that is burning unattended. And finally, limit your alcohol consumption when using a grill.

By following these basic rules, you can make sure to stay safe and enjoy cooking in the great outdoors. I'd "steak" my reputation on it.

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## EXPLORER POST 9424 GRADUATION



Congratulations to our graduating class of Fire Explorers. There were 7 members in this class but not everyone could make it to the graduation. The graduates are bracketed by Firefighter/Paramedics Hunter Resop and Megan Klansky.

If you, or someone you know is interested in being in our next explorer class click here:  
<https://www.oshkoshwi.gov/fire/ExplorerProgram.aspx>

# AROUND THE FIREHOUSE

## Welcome New Hires

Please join us in welcoming two new Firefighter/Paramedics to the Oshkosh Fire Department.



Donovan Harper    Kelsie Smith

Donovan graduated from Concordia University with a Bachelor Degree in Business. He went on to take courses to earn his Fire Fighting and EMT-Paramedic certifications. He most recently worked with Southern Ozaukee Fire Department.

Kelsie graduated with a Bachelor Degree in Communication from the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh and went on to take courses to earn her Fire Fighting and EMT-Paramedic certifications. She most recently worked with Fox Crossing Fire Department in addition to volunteering at Nekimi and Utica Volunteer Fire Departments.

Donovan and Kelsie will be starting in their new roles Monday, July 8.

## Police & Fire Commission

Thank you and congratulations to Bob Vajgrt for his many years of service. Chief Vajgrt spent 32 years at the OFD and 26 years on the Police and Fire Commission. Bob retired from his position on the Police and Fire Commission in May. We greatly appreciate his decades of service to our department and community.

David Jones was elected Chair at the July 2 meeting. Joining the Commission this month is former Oshkosh Police Officer Todd Wrage.



Bob Vajgrt (L) and Assistant City Manager/Director of Administrative Services John Fitzpatrick (R) at May 21 PFC meeting

# FOX VALLEY SUMMER CAMP

Fox Valley Technical College offers a number of camps during the summer months. This year, children ages 11 to 16 participated in "Basic Fire Camp." The Fire Camp introduced different facets of the fire service with hands on participation of firefighting skills. The participants toured multiple fire departments in the Fox Valley and talked with current firefighters.



On June 26 students visited Station 14 at the Oshkosh Wittman Regional Airfield and were given the opportunity to learn about Aircraft and Rescue Fire Fighting (ARFF). Airport fire trucks carry a larger water tank, capable of holding thousands of gallons. This is because they don't have access to water supplies when locations of emergencies vary and are uncertain. They also have to carry various firefighting agents, such as firefighting foam, dry chemicals, and clean agents, for situations which may stem from aircraft oil spills and electrical fires. Most ARFF vehicles feature a slanted body with a front bumper designed for moving through ditches and rough terrain. ARFF vehicles are often larger than other fire trucks because ARFF vehicles do not need to navigate the confines of a city street.

# JUNE MONTHLY METRICS

by MJ VanGompel, Management Analyst

Emergency Medical Services



696

Motor Vehicle Crashes



42

Structure Fires



11

Falls



127

Fire Alarms



56

Inspections



320

LET'S CONNECT

