



HOT TOPICS

CHIEF'S CORNER



The Oshkosh Fire Department (OFD) continuously searches for ways to improve its services and become more organizationally efficient. With this in mind, the department joined with Appleton, Grand Chute, Kaukauna & Neenah-Menasha Fire Departments

to have the Wisconsin Policy Forum conduct a study on how through sharing services, resources, and collaboration, common challenges could be better addressed. The study looked at five specific areas; Training, Special Operations, Community Risk Reduction, Fleet Maintenance, and EMS Quality Control.

The outcomes of the "Better Together" study from the Wisconsin Policy Forum were very encouraging. They suggested many sensible and practical ways that our existing strong spirit of cooperation could be furthered in the five areas. The involved departments will take a measured, strategic, and pragmatic approach to evaluating and implementing the suggestions that have the greatest benefit to our firefighters and the communities we serve.

With the help of Short, Elliot, and Hendrickson Inc. we have also recently completed a comprehensive study of our current needs for fire stations and other facilities. The findings from the study have been presented to the City Council, City Manager, and the Finance Director. They now have the challenge of integrating these needs into our overall long-term facility & budget planning. We look forward to being able to implement these recommendations to update and improve our firehouses.

--Chief Mike Stanley



ASSISTANT CHIEF JOHN ZIEMER RETIRES

The hours have been counting down since Assistant Chief John Ziemer announced his retirement last year. Last week was his last monthly video. Monday was his last Command Staff meeting. The boxes are piling up in his home office as he empties his work office.

After 32 years with the OFD, Assistant Chief John Ziemer is hanging up his helmet on his birthday July 15. Known as the "other JZ", he is best known for his love of Diet Mt. Dew and 'butter bombs'. Someone said, "you might get yelled at, but you never doubted he cared."

JZ loves to teach and he's good at it. Over his career he frequently could be heard talking about "a teachable moment".

JZ started with the OFD in 1990. He got his first promotion to Equipment Officer in 1996. He was promoted to Lieutenant in 2001 and then moved to training Instructor in 2003. In 2006 he moved up to Captain; Battalion Chief in 2013 and finally to Assistant Chief in 2017.

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JZ RETIRES *(Continued from page 1)*



Over the years, JZ has been on the scene of many fires. Too many to count. There are a few memorable fires though.

- At his first fire, he was climbing the stairs and an axe came through the roof and landed on the step right in front of him.
- Then there was the time when he slept through the dispatch and didn't wake up until he heard his colleagues donning their turnout gear. He saw everyone was going, figured it was a fire, jumped out of bed and onto the back of the truck. He knew they were going north, but still didn't know where they were going.

- Carrying guns out of the Public Museum fire in 1994
- Going to three fires in one shift

What does JZ plan to do in his retirement? Well we all have those home projects we want to work on and John plans to remodel his bathroom. But in between all those home projects, we hope John will be out there playing catch with his dog, cooking, and fishing from his new boat.

John will be remembered for his leadership, his sense of humor, his willingness to help, his teachable moments and his skills in the kitchen. John's expertise in the fire service and institutional knowledge of all things Oshkosh will be hard to replace.

Chief Mike Stanley said, "What can I say? 30 plus years with OFD. He's done it all and he did it very well! He's going to be missed but he's made his mark and will have a long-lasting legacy."

The phone rings in his office devoid of all the fire paraphernalia that he has collected over the years. The conversation wraps up, JZ signs off, "Alright, Very Good."

It has been a very good career. Congratulations John! We wish you the best in retirement!





CONGRATULATIONS!



At the June 15th PFC meeting Greg Stelter was promoted to Assistant Chief. Greg has been with the OFD since 1997. He moved up to Equipment Operator in 2008, Lieutenant in 2018 and Battalion Chief in 2021. Greg will be replacing Assistant Chief John Ziemer in the Operations Bureau.

Congratulations Greg!!



Congratulations also go out to Jason Shikoski. Jason was promoted to Battalion Chief at the June 15 PFC meeting. He will be replacing Greg Stelter as Battalion Chief of B Shift. Jason most recently was Captain Instructor in the Training Division.



At the July 12th PFC meeting Drew Jaeger was promoted to Battalion Chief, Administration Bureau. Drew has been with the OFD since 1999. He moved up to Equipment Operator in 2013, and Lieutenant in 2020. Drew has been a contributing writer to *Hot Topics* since its inception. He is a member of the Health & Safety Committee and will be assuming the role of Health Safety Officer.

Congratulations Drew!!

MORE PROMOTIONS!



At the May 26th PFC meeting Assistant Chief Fire Marshal Brian Bending (in white) recognized the following individuals for promotions:

Pictured left to right:

- Equipment Operator Keegan O'Hearn;
- Equipment Operator Matt Sommerfeldt;
- Lieutenant Bret Krajnik; and
- Lieutenant Mike Krajnik

Also promoted but not pictured were Lieutenant Andy Pinter and Equipment Operator Dave Neuber.

At the July PFC meeting the following individuals were promoted:



Captain CJ Wedell



Lieutenant Zach Beatty



Lieutenant Dave Koller

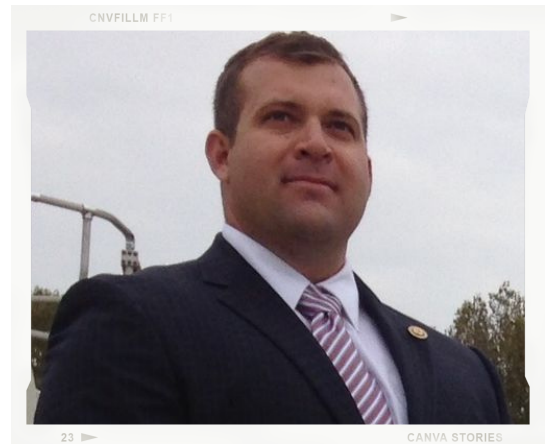


Equipment Operator Tim Reitz

2022 BRINGING SAFETY HOME AWARD

Congratulations to City of Oshkosh Fire Department Equipment Operator Mike Vos.

Mike was the recipient of the *2022 Bringing Safety Home Award* from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and the Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition (HFSC). He is the executive director of the Professional Fire Fighters of Wisconsin Charitable Foundation.



Mike was nominated by City of Madison Fire Department Fire Marshal Ed Ruckriegel, also an active member of the Wisconsin Fire Sprinkler Coalition. Mike chairs the Coalition and has been a champion for the lifesaving benefits of fire sprinklers for many years.

Specifically, he is recognized for his efforts educating state agencies responsible for the development of building codes and increasing agency personnel interest in learning more about fire sprinklers.

Vos has steered the Wisconsin Fire Sprinkler Coalition through educational and legislative activities in many communities. Among his advocacy work, he has included home fire sprinkler information in the Newspapers in Education program every year, reaching more than 500,000 readers, including students in 2,000 schools. He worked with coalition partners to build a 700-square foot educational structure with installed home fire sprinklers at the Metropolitan Builders Association Home Show. Vos has conducted live fire sprinkler demonstrations at the State Capitol and at Madison's Brat Fest, which is attended by more than 150,000 people.

As the Bringing Safety Home Award recipient, Mike was awarded a \$1,000 grant to further fire sprinkler advocacy and educational efforts throughout Wisconsin.



NOMINATIONS FOR 2023 RECOGNITION DINNER

If you are aware of an incident (on or off duty) where you feel a co-worker deserves recognition, please submit their name and a brief explanation as to what happened and when. You may also nominate a private citizen and/or first responder who went above and beyond. Please send an email to Scott Rasmussen at srasmussen@ci.oshkosh.wi.us.

FIRE EXPLORATION SUMMER PROGRAM

Challenge yourself, make new friends and learn about the firefighter life: Join us for this outstanding firefighting camp! Get hands-on experiences by performing tasks and training exercises alongside local firefighters and get a sneak peek behind the scenes at a local fire department. Students will be transported to local fire departments by college vans. More details to come regarding fieldtrips.

Ages: 13-18

Date: August 1-4

Time: 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

Location: FVTC Public Safety Training Center

Cost: \$50

[Register Now!](#)



STORK AWARD

June 6 was a busy day at Station 15. The Sanchez family stopped by to thank Firefighter/Paramedics Paul Friday and Hunter Resop for their help in November. Paul and Hunter helped mom Samantha deliver baby Elijah at their Oshkosh home. Chief Mike Stanley awarded them both with the Stork Award citation bar.

Pictured left to right: FF/PM Paul Friday, baby Elijah, dad Jered, big sister Emmalyn, mom Samantha, FF/PM Hunter Resop.

EVERYONE GOES HOME

by Battalion Chief Drew Jaeger

My brother-in-law works for a busy fire department in a nearby state. He often shares incredible stories of fires and rescues when I run into him at family holidays and events. The most recent adventure was dramatically different than any story he had to share in the past, and he has given me permission to share it with you.

The department responded to what was initially a fire alarm at an 8-unit 2-story apartment building. The alarm was upgraded to a full structure response while initial units were en route, with reports of smoke coming from the building. Initial companies noted fire in the basement during the early stages of their operations.

The building had stairways in the center; one each on the Alpha and Charlie side of the building. Crews accessing the basement had to force their way through both of these locked access doors on the basement level. The fire would eventually be upgraded through several waves of personnel and equipment, reaching a fourth alarm. A firefighter would fall down the basement stairs and have his mask come loose in the smoke, but he kept his wits, held his mask to his face, and backed out without any additional problems.

Once arriving on scene, my brother-in-law's engine company was initially assigned to RIT, but then were changed to fire attack in the basement as other crews were rotating out. The basement area was full of storage units constructed of wooden framing and chicken wire, with padlocked compartmentation. I am sure that you have likely seen this type of storage frequently on fire inspections, but now imagine it burnt and falling apart. The timeline of events was now right around the one hour mark since initial alarm.

While fighting fire in the basement, things escalated from challenging to dangerous quite quickly. Shortly after beginning their firefighting attack, another engine company came down the Charlie side stairs, and informed their coworkers of its general location prior to exiting for rehab. The basement electrical panel began arcing in a shower of sparks. The pipes and wires that ran along the ceiling began to fall as their hangers started to fail. Fire blasted out of the windows on the Charlie side of the building on the first floor. The basement team observed using the TIC that a hole had burned in the ceiling, allowing them to see the heavy fire conditions above them on the first floor. They shared this condition report to command, along with their intention to exit the structure. Two members of the crew began to have their low air alarm bell sound on their SCBA. They found that they were unable to locate either set of stairs due to the mounds of debris. These tangled piles made each step a nightmare, and they were frequently falling and getting their gear snagged. It also made following the hose line out of the building impossible.

My brother-in-law transmitted a MAYDAY message. And no one heard it. The other radio traffic directing operations did not allow the transmission to go through.



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EVERYONE GOES HOME (Continued from on page 9)

Take a minute and imagine yourself in that situation. The official after action report makes it sound simple and quickly resolved, but also makes note that the 2 minutes and 30 seconds between MAYDAY announcement and complete crew accountability felt much longer to all crews on scene. It doesn't capture the intensity of the mask to mask conversations of the disoriented crew, who began to prepare to buddy breath and share air supplies. Studies of over 12,000 MAYDAY events by Chief Don Abbott, have found that 60 percent of MAYDAY event radio transmissions are not heard by command.

He keyed the radio mic and tried again; this time it was heard by all on scene. The RIT was activated, and began entry down the Charlie side stairway. Another engine company began banging their axes and tools on the first floor at the top of the Alpha side stairs, which helped the endangered crew to orient themselves and escape using that stairwell, the one that they had originally come down. One of the crew members was down to 200 psi of air, and one firefighter's mask had begun to suck to his face, as he had a nearly empty air tank.



As part of his permission to share the story, my brother-in-law asked me to reinforce some key discussion points. First, the major reason for a positive outcome to this incident is that he called as soon as he recognized trouble. In their departmental discussions, members acknowledged a significant stigma factor as a potential source of delay, which they overcame in the moment.

Despite the fact that the entire American fire service is training to notify as soon as we think we might be in trouble, we still might have concerns about feeling foolish.

Second, although the crew members had between 11 and 24 years of service each, the other crew members shared that that they had experienced tunnel vision and had not considered calling the MAYDAY until he did. We try to create some artificial stress in training, such as our entanglement prop and scenarios. The intention of this is that all members will recognize and react to life threatening MAYDAY situations with as many correct actions as we can hopefully complete during a moment of intense physical and psychological strain. We realize that it will likely not be perfect, and that we can't eliminate all risk from our jobs.

We owe it to ourselves, our coworkers and our families to work, train and learn to ensure that *Everyone Goes Home*.

DON'T LOSE YOUR COOL

by Risk Reduction Coordinator, John Holland

Summer weather is finally here. Be aware that the heat and humidity bring its own set of dangers. There are a variety of heat-related illnesses; some are minor and some that can be deadly.

Heat Rash: Heat rash is more uncomfortable than anything else. It is caused by blocked sweat glands and results in a red, bumpy rash that feels itchy or prickly. While this is minor, you should pay attention. It is a sign of things to come if you don't get out of the heat and sun.

Heat Cramps: Heat cramps are involuntary muscle spasms. They can occur when performing physical labor in hot environments. The cramps usually occur in the calves, arms, abs, or back and are the first sign that things are starting to get serious.

Heat Exhaustion: Heat exhaustion is a sign that things are about to get very bad. It is caused by prolonged exposure to being out in the heat and sun—like, oh say, working out on the airport during EAA. The symptoms are:

- Headaches
- Dizziness
- Exhaustion
- Weak and faster heart rate
- Nausea
- Sweating
- Pale, cold, and clammy skin
- Extreme thirst

If any of the above starts happening to you get out of the sun/heat immediately. Drink a lot of **water or sports drinks and apply cool (not cold) compresses.**

Heatstroke: Heatstroke can be deadly. The symptoms are very similar to heat exhaustion, with a few important additions:

- Elevated body temperature (104° F or above).
- Hot, red, dry skin.
- Rapid and strong heart rate
- Loss of consciousness.

If any of the above starts happening, you need to **seek immediate medical attention!**

Prevention: The most obvious ways to prevent all of this is to limit your time and exertion while out in the sun and heat if possible. Also, water, water, and more water. **Stay hydrated.** You should have one cup (8 ounces) of water every 15-20 minutes when you're outside in the heat. This works out to about a quart every hour. However, drinking at shorter intervals is more effective than drinking larger amounts infrequently.

It's great to get outside and enjoy our all too short summer. But please make sure you are prepared by being dressed appropriately, planning limited time in the heat and direct sunlight, and, once again,—water, water, and more water.

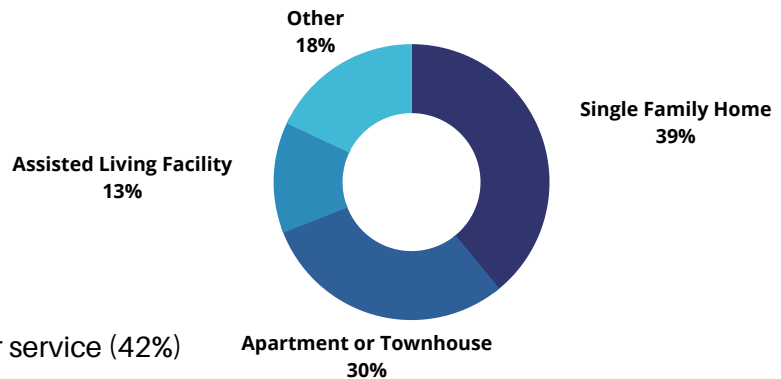
IT'S ALL ABOUT BALANCE

by Management Analyst MJ VanGompel

As part of our ongoing efforts to reduce falls in the City of Oshkosh, OFD purchased a Biodex Balance System SD to be used at the Oshkosh Seniors Center. This equipment provides an accurate Fall Risk Screening and Conditioning Program for older adults. According to the CDC *Preventing Falls*, falls are a major threat to the health and independence of older adults. "People who fall once, are 2 or 3 times more likely to fall again." (p2) Our data supports that statement.

Between January 1 and June 30, OFD responded to 970 calls for patients who had fallen. Many of these were repeat patients (fell multiple times). In that 6 month period we had:

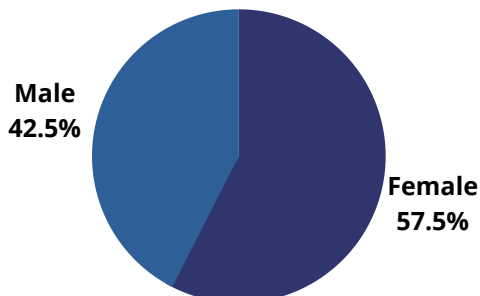
- 2 patients fell 11 times each
- 2 patients fell 7 times each
- 4 patients fell 6 times each
- 6 patients fell 5 times each
- 17 patients fell 4 times each
- 28 patients fell 3 times each
- 81 patients fell 2 times each



These 140 patients made up 404 calls for service (42%)

Month	# of Fall	# of patient	# Treated & Transported	Lift Assis	Average Age
January	173	155	99	58	71.3
February	163	148	93	55	68.3
March	160	135	87	60	72.2
April	130	120	82	37	74.9
May	161	131	92	51	71.3
June	183	154	101	69	72.7
TOTAL	970	843	554	330	71.7

- 57% were treated & transported to the hospital



Do you know someone that may benefit from this new tool?
Call the Oshkosh Senior Center
920-232-5300 to make an appointment!

LET'S CONNECT

