



THE SMOKE SIGNAL

Cobb County Fire & Emergency Services

Fall 2008

STATION 5 OPEN FOR BUSINESS

On September 13, Station 5 held an Open House to introduce the local community to their new facility.

There were several “firsts” with this station. Cobb County now has a 2-story fire station located on the same lot where the old Station 5 (constructed in 1961) was located. With the limited availability and high cost of property in the Vinings area, it became clear during the planning stages of the project that CCFES was faced with a rebuild, not a relocation. Additionally, it was the only county fire station situated on one side of the CSX railroad tracks. This necessitated the temporary housing of the Station 5 crew, equipment, and apparatus. This presented many logistical challenges to complete demolition and construction in unprecedented time.

After nearly a year in a nearby trailer with a shelter for the apparatus, CCFES moved into the new \$2.6 million facility at the end of August.

The new 9,688 square foot 2-bay station has 2 long bays to house an engine and rescue, and can accommodate a 7-member crew. A self-contained community room is



The traditional charging of the hose signaled the official opening of Station 5 to the public. Pictured here is Deputy Chief Bob Foran, Commissioner Joe Lee Thompson, Chief Sam Heaton, County Manager David Hankerson, Commission Chairman Sam Olens, and DPS Director Mickey Lloyd. (photo courtesy of Drew Logothetis)

located in the basement of the structure. The design blends in with the neighborhood architecture, and should serve the department and residents of Vinings well for many years to come.

Next on the grand opening agenda will be the opening of Station 28. Located on Kemp Ridge Road in Acworth, the open house is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, November 15.

COBB FIRE DEATH BENEFIT FUND NEWS

CCFES has always tried to take care of our own. There are a number of groups in the department administered by firefighters who seek to aid co-workers who have a need. The Department's Benevolent Fund assists firefighters who are experiencing financial hardships. The Critical Incident Stress Debriefing Team helps firefighters deal with the mental stress caused by some of the calls that we run. Finally, the Death Benefit Fund financially assists members and dependents with one of the hardest situations that we all must face at some point.

The Death Benefit Fund was started by firefighters to help fellow firefighters in a time of great need. As a contributing member of the DBF, you provide a real and tangible benefit to those you work with when it's needed the most. It's not only about the financial assistance you gain in the event of a death in your family, but also about helping your Fire Department family members when they are experiencing such difficult times.

The Fund is managed by elected personnel of all ranks (except Engineer – he was recently promoted), and is dedicated to helping people within the CCFES family. The Fund benefit is not intended to replace life insurance.

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Complimentary copies are distributed to all Cobb Fire and Public Safety facilities, and placed in the Fire Administration Common Files under "Smoke Signal".

This issue will also be uploaded to our website: www.cobbfire.org

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Chief Sam Heaton
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Cobb County...Expect the Best!

**COBB FIRE IS A DEPARTMENT OF
COBB COUNTY GOVERNMENT**

Samuel S. Olens, Commission Chairman
Helen Goreham, District 1 Commissioner
Joe L. Thompson, District 2 Commissioner
Tim Lee, District 3 Commissioner
Annette Kesting, District 4 Commissioner
David Hankerson, County Manager



CUSTOMER SERVICE NEWS

By Engineer James O'Shields
Station 2 C-Shift

We are trying to get Public Safety more involved in Customer Service nominations over the next year. The Distinguished Performance Award is for personnel who excel within their positions, but the Customer Service Award is for those who go above and beyond. It can be difficult for public safety members to define above and beyond service since our job descriptions involve protecting and saving lives, which is customer service at its best. Unfortunately, we have had very few nominations in the past, even though we have plenty of personnel who are more than deserving of these awards.

The first thing we want you to know is that anyone can nominate a fellow employee for a customer service award. The nominee's direct supervisor and Department Head must approve each nomination, but any employee can nominate someone they feel is deserving of the award. Simply go to the Cobb Web and search for "customer service" under the Search tab. The form can be downloaded, modified, and printed out. When completing the form, give a brief description of the employee's primary job responsibilities. You can find a list of job descriptions by going to the "employee" section of the Cobb Web and scroll down to the "compensation and classification" tabs. This will take you to a list of all the employee positions in the county and you can search to get the job description of the person you wish to nominate. Then, list five examples of how the employee goes above and beyond in service to the customers within the community. Once completed, send the form to your sub-committee representative who will forward it to me. If we see any problems, we will contact you. If not, we will send it to the Customer Service Council for consideration.

You will be contacted if the nomination is declined. You may choose to resubmit your nomination later in the year once you have additional examples of customer service that might help the council acknowledge what you see. You may nominate an employee at any time during the year. Examples of customer service do not have to be within the quarter, just in the current year. The council will then contact the supervisor to coordinate giving the award and savings bond to the recipient. If you win the quarterly award, this puts you in the running for the yearly customer service specialist, which is the top customer service award and an additional savings bond.

Please contact me or Council ex-officio member Denell Boyd at Fire Headquarters to see how we can help you successfully complete a nomination for those with whom you work, so they can get the recognition they deserve. The due dates are November 14, 2008, and February 20, 2009.

Stay safe, and we look forward to hearing from you!

BOB FORAN PROMOTED TO DEPUTY CHIEF

On July 13, Battalion Chief Bob Foran was promoted to Deputy Chief of Response.

Bob has been employed by CCFES since 1991, and served 3 years with the Douglas County Fire Department. He holds a Bachelors Degree in Anthropology from the University of West Georgia in Carrollton. Bob is a recent graduate of the Cobb County Management Development Program EXCEL, and has also completed Cobb County's Supervisory Development Program. He has served in numerous capacities during his CCFES tenure, including 2 years in the Training Division, and various committees and projects.

Bob is looking forward to working with "interesting and dedicated folks" in moving the Response Division forward with new initiatives, to include exploring new tactics and technologies.



OTHER PERSONNEL NEWS

Steve Tatum was promoted to Battalion Chief on August 24. Steve has been with CCFES since 1983, and was previously serving as Captain for nearly 9 years.

George Wayman Jordan, Jr. was promoted to Captain on August 24. Wayman has been with the Department since 1989, and had been a Lieutenant for 12 years.

UPCOMING EMPLOYEE FORUM

EMPLOYEE FORUMS are scheduled for the dates of September 29 and 30 at the DPS Training Center at 6:00 pm both evenings. Chief Heaton will answer questions and discuss the mission, values, and other issues facing the Department.

Feel free to forward questions or concerns you may have beforehand through your Battalion Chief. This can be anonymous if you prefer, and can be covered at the forum.

IN MEMORY

On July 9, the Cobb Fire family lost one of their own. Lt. Jared Carson lost his long, courageous battle with cancer. A touching memorial service was held at Grace Baptist Church in Powder Springs, followed by interment at Kennesaw Memorial Park in Marietta.

Jared worked for CCFES for over 14 years, and was most recently assigned as the Lieutenant at Station 27 "A" Shift. He was also a licensed real estate broker working for Coldwell Banker.

Jared was a gifted singer, and was also known for having a talent of imitating people and doing impressions.

He was a dedicated family man and is survived by his wife, Amy; daughter Marybeth; and son, Tanner. He was loved and will be missed by all of us.



JARED CARSON

June 7, 1970

to

July 9, 2008



JUVENILE FIRESETTERS: WHAT TO LOOK FOR

By Rod Sanders, Fire Investigations Unit

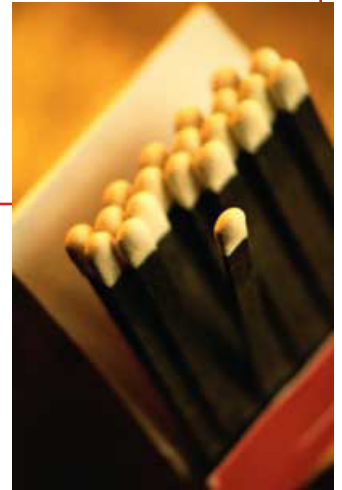
According to recent statistics from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), with the exception of running away from home and curfew/loitering violations, arson is the offense with the greatest proportion of juvenile arrests.

There are dangers associated with overlooking juvenile fire setting. When not dealt with, these apparent harmless fires can result in loss of life and extensive property damage. First responders need to be aware of certain common characteristics of juvenile fire setting in order to determine whether the fire is juvenile related.

First, determine if children live in the home or if there were children there at the time of the fire. Observe the contents of the home as you walk around looking for evidence of children. Ask the ages of persons living in the home. Look for evidence of candle usage or smoking. Children in these homes tend to have more access to matches and lighters. They also see these items used more frequently.

Candles also pose significant problems for obvious reasons. Children will often place items into the candle flame especially younger children. Older children may take the candle into closets or other areas not visible to others. Bedrooms are the most common rooms to find juvenile fire setting activity. Mattresses and bedding are the most ignited items in juvenile related fires.

We must learn to recognize and identify children who fire play. We have a great program in place to educate and teach families about the dangers of fire play.



CHANGES TO FLAG SALUTES

By Pete Swisher, Fire Headquarters

Recent changes to Section 9 of the U.S. Flag Code now give veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces the authority to salute the American flag, whether or not they are in uniform at the time. As a veteran, whether or not they are wearing some type of military or veteran apparel (such as pin, cap, T-shirt, etc.), the practice of saluting just as if in uniform is considered appropriate. Hats should be held in the right hand with that hand covering the heart for non-veterans. This is appropriate not only when called to salute, but also when the flag passes in a procession, motorcade, ceremony, or when raised or lowered.

When CCFES personnel are in the department uniform, it is permissible to salute as in military uniform.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Larry Causby, EMS Instructor in DPS Training graduated in August from Jacksonville State University with a Postgraduate Certificate in Emergency Management. He has also served as an Instructor Review for Brady's Paramedic Care Principles & Practice, Vol. 4 ;Third Edition.

Sean Gray completed the Ironman Triathlon in Louisville, Kentucky on August 31.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

By Lt. Jeff Moss, Station 23-A

There was discussion several months ago about changing the commercial run cards from 5 engines / 1 truck to 4 engines / 2 trucks. There are those of us who would like to see this change and wondered what ever happened to the discussion?

After further review of this possible change, it was determined that the current procedures are adequate and will remain in place. Any changes that we make in our dispatch array have to be discussed with 911 and Marietta Fire since we work as one.

How come we have a Cobb Lt. pass away and we have only 1 fire truck at his funeral?

The current funeral policy in place determines the actions taken by CCFES. Jared's case actually caused an update in the policy because nothing was in place regarding his particular situation. Multiple CCFES trucks were used to block intersections and were out of service to do so. We must remember that while everyone wants to pay the utmost respect to our members (current, retired, or resigned) that have passed away, we must still provide a certain level of coverage to the citizens of this county. We made every attempt to have people work for others that may have wanted to attend.

Could the department come up with a committee of people to handle situations like fund raisers, raffles, funeral requests, etc. so that family members of sick or fatally ill CCFES members will not have to handle it all on their own?

It is something that could be considered but what we do now may actually be a better alternative. Those members of the crew closest to the employee and family typically take on the responsibility and many times have over the top motivation to make everything work. If the fire department as an entity takes on a more active role then we are held to much more stringent legalities when performing fundraising activities. When an individual or group of individuals handles these functions it protects the family and the department as well from unnecessary "hoops to jump through" and legal concerns causing a more expedited process.

Some people are unhappy with their department yearbooks/annuals. Is there any way we can get a refund?

There is no refund for the yearbooks/annuals.

What are the procedures for standing at attention during the movement of the casket at a firefighter's funeral?

While CCFES has no official written protocol the standard is as follows:

Members lined up and awaiting arrival of the casket – Parade rest with hands behind your back and feet shoulder width apart. Members lining casket path when casket is passing – At attention with hands straight down by your side.

Members blocking intersection as procession goes through – At attention with helmet over your heart.

If the Chief approves the shirt sketch first, why can't stations make their own company shirts for station use?

You are welcome to make a company shirt that can be worn off duty. No company shirts are to be worn on duty per policy. Also remember that if you choose to wear a company shirt off duty you are still held to a certain code of ethics in the public's eye. (Be smart). You are also welcome to have station emblems and flags that can be displayed in the station and bay areas as long as they are approved through Command Staff. Chief Heaton has discussed his philosophy on this several times and it is basically that we are one department, one team, so we will dress uniformly to represent that team.

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MORE QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

By Lt. Jeff Moss (continued from page 5)

If we have such a shortage of paramedics, why are we only allowing 4-8 people to attend school?

There are currently 8 in school and another 4 going through the process to begin at Chattahoochee Tech. There will be another 8 to begin school as soon as the first 8 have finished. While we want to send as many people through school as possible, we don't want to shut down trucks to make it happen unless we just have to do that. It may seem as though we are very short but in reality 126 of 146 paramedic slots are currently filled so the shortage isn't as bad as some may think.

Has there been any thought for a reallocation of paramedic resources? (i.e. ALS engines or taking a look at the staffing and spreading the wealth to the stations that have the least amount of paramedics).

Command Staff relies on the Battalion Chiefs to properly staff the ALS equipment and pass on any particular needs they may have. This subject is discussed at every BC meeting and needs are dealt with based on available resources.

Is there some kind of unwritten rule that Paramedic Lieutenants are not allowed to ride on the rescues? They get paid 5% for being a paramedic. They should have to take equal rotations with the rest of the paramedics?

There is no rule or policy regarding such and Lieutenants are encouraged to ride the rescue on occasion to help maintain their skill level and knowledge.

Is there any truth to the rumor about paramedics getting a pay raise?

This has not been discussed and there are no plans for discussion in the near future.

Is there any possibility of getting 5% incentive pay for working in Training? This may attract more Officers, especially Paramedic Officers that would lose their incentive pay if they went to Training.

At this time some paramedic Lieutenants are able to keep the incentive pay due to the fact that the paramedic program is ongoing and they are able to assist with it. There have been no specific discussions regarding all Training Officers to receive incentive pay but we may be willing to look into it. It would be dependent also on what the Police Department offers their training staff since we are all under DPS and parity is in effect.

We had help OFFERED to us through GMAG for Jared's funeral. WHY did we not accept it, so more fellow Firefighters could attend the funeral of Lt. Jared Carson? MANY fellow Firefighters would have loved to be at his funeral but were told they could not attend. Is this true?

Command Staff passed information to all Battalion Chiefs that CCFES volunteers were available to cover duty for those on shift who wished to attend. There were several on duty personnel who were allowed to attend while other CCFES employees covered their station. We believed that all who wished to go had received the information and were able to attend. GMAG was not contacted for help due to these previous arrangements.

If you have any questions or concerns and would like to see them addressed in the Smoke Signal, feel free to contact Lt. Jeff Moss at Station 23-A Shift. If it is something that should be addressed privately, we will reply to you offline. We want to keep the lines of communication open!

MORE STATION 5 PICTURES



The unique “urban chic” design of new Station 5 is evident all around the facility. Pictured here is the front facade and rear of the building. The community room is totally self-contained, located at the rear of the building at the bottom of the back stairway. Also pictured is Chief Sam Heaton showing a young child the interior of Engine 5, and Admin Spec Brittney Barnes singing the National Anthem. (photos courtesy of Drew Logothesis)

DEATH BENEFIT FUND (continued from page 1)

It does, however, put a check in the hands of a paid-up DBF member or dependent to help minimize money worries during stressful times. In the event of a death, a DBF Board member immediately makes contact with the family to make arrangements for a benefit check to be delivered, usually within 24 hours of the notification.

CCFES employees may join the Fund at any time and may even opt to remain in the fund at retirement. Approximately 65% of the Department’s personnel are in the Fund. The membership dues are \$52 per year, which can be paid once or twice annually, or only \$2 per paycheck through CMAR. The current benefit is \$3,000 for an employee and \$1,750 for a dependent. In order to be eligible for benefits, you must be current with your dues.

The DBF Board would like to take this opportunity to invite anyone who is not a member of the Death Benefit Fund to join now. If you are interested, please contact one of the DBF Board members below. **HELP US HELP ONE ANOTHER!**

Battalion Chief Chris Hilton, Chairperson (1204B – 770-499-4531)

Battalion Chief William Duffy, Co-Chairperson (1314C – 770-509-4949)

Cherie Brumelow, Secretary/Treasurer (DPS Training Center – 770-590-5502)

Lieutenant Todd Freeman (1205B – 770-801-5311)

Lieutenant Keith Quinn (1417C – 770-528-8056)

Lieutenant John Graham (1204B – 770-499-4530)

Firefighter III Pat Tobin (1314C – 770-509-2754)

POLICY & PROCEDURE MANUAL UPDATE

By Ellen Black

Over the past few months, we have released a number of updates to the new Policy and Procedure Manual. This manual is designed to be a replacement for the old OGM/SOG manual. There seems to be some confusion about reading the updates and accomplishing the acknowledgement page online. With that in mind, let me explain the process for clarification:

Each station is sent three (3) copies of each policy or procedure update in a packet. These hard copies are for each shift at each station. The intent is that one of these hard copies goes in the 3-ring binder at each station. They are also located on the L: / (Common) drive in the folder labeled CCFES Policy and Procedure Manual. Double click on that folder, and then double click on the appropriate chapter folder. Here's a hint- the policy number is hyphenated, i.e. 3-3, Vehicle Operations. The first number is the Chapter number and the second number represents the order in which that policy is issued. Hence, 3-3 is in Chapter 3, and is the third policy in that chapter to be issued. There are dozens of policies in development as we speak.

Once you have read either the hard copy that is in the station 3-ring binder, or your Station Officer has, OR the electronic copy, go and take a minute and acknowledge them online. Also, please note that there are some updated policies and procedures that may have the same title as an older item, but they have a different number. If that's the case, discard the older version, and use the newer one as the current version. The newer version ALWAYS supercedes the older version- it even says so in the top section of the update. This should clear up any confusion about the policy and procedure updates. If not, as always, use your chain of command for clarification, or feel free to contact me. We ask that Station Officers take some time when possible to informally go over these updates if the crew feels it is necessary for some of the information contained in the updates.

No one is asking anyone to sign for something they have not read or don't understand. As employees, we are expected to take responsibility for policies and procedures issued by this Department, the County, and all existing local, state, and federal statutes. We are all adults and expected to act as such. You have 30 days to read, ask questions through your Chain of Command, and gain an understanding of the content in these policies/procedures/guidelines. After 30 days, your supervisors will be notified of personnel who have not signed off, and you would be prompted to accomplish this task in a timely manner.

This is certainly less cumbersome for all involved than the old method of signing acknowledgement forms. This process is presently the only electronic mechanism we have that Information Services supports, given current software and other considerations. It's not a difficult process, cost-effective, and very convenient. We hope at some point to have the capability to go totally online with a web-based version in the near future. To distribute nearly 700 copies of each update is not good stewardship of resources, and proven to be no more effective. I have been involved in dozens of on-site visits to law enforcement and fire agencies over the past 20 years, and observed numerous methods for the distribution of policies. Believe me, this is a walk in the park by comparison!

Policy manuals are "living documents", and will always be changing- so will the process that we use to facilitate these changes. As new technology and capabilities evolve, so will our process. As always, if you have any questions feel free at contact me at Fire Headquarters.

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