



# THE SMOKE SIGNAL

## Cobb County Fire & Emergency Services

Summer 2008

### CHIEF SAM HEATON TAKES THE REINS

With family, friends, employees, and other well-wishers in attendance, Sam Heaton was appointed as the new Fire Chief of Cobb County Fire & Emergency Services. The unanimous appointment by the Cobb County Board of Commissioners took place at the May 27, 2008 Commission meeting. As a nearly 23 year veteran of CCFES, Sam had been acting in the capacity of Interim Chief since Becky Denlinger retired on January 1 to accept a position as the Fire Commissioner of the Province of British Columbia.



A nationwide search for the Chief's position was conducted over several months, with 12 finalists selected for the initial interview process. County Manager David Hankerson stated, "We were very pleased with the quality of applicants for this position. Chief Heaton brings years of experience and a commitment to making Fire and Emergency Services even better". Director of Public Safety Mickey Lloyd said, "I've worked with him for several years now, and am proud to make this recommendation".

Chief Heaton is presently the District 7 Vice President of the Georgia Association of Fire Chiefs, the past Chair of the Metro Georgia Search and Rescue (GSAR) Executive Board, a member of the Georgia State Firefighter's Association, the Georgia Mutual Aid Group (GMAG), and the Metro Atlanta Fire Chief's Association.

Sam is presently completing his coursework for a Bachelor of Science Degree in Public Safety Administration from Grand Canyon University in Phoenix. His wife, Bonnie, is a Fire Engineer/ Paramedic for Gwinnett County Fire & Emergency Services. They have 3 daughters and live in Marietta.



Chief Heaton makes a few remarks immediately following his appointment at the May 27 Cobb Commission meeting.



Pictured above are the new life jacket stations installed by the Fire & Life Safety Education Division this past Spring. In conjunction with Safe Kids Cobb County, these loaner jackets are available to visitors at Lake Acworth.

Thanks to members of the Division, including Lt. Scott Dodson, Charles Blackwell, Orlando Zapata, and Drew Logothesis. Charles Blackwell was the Division Coordinator for the project.

# PERSONNEL CORNER

**Cobb County Fire & Emergency Services**  
**1595 County Services Pkwy.**  
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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](http://www.cobbfire.org)*

The Smoke Signal is for employees and friends of Cobb Fire. If you would like to see a subject covered in future issues or would like to submit items for possible future publication, please forward to Ellen Black at Fire Headquarters.

**Editors:**

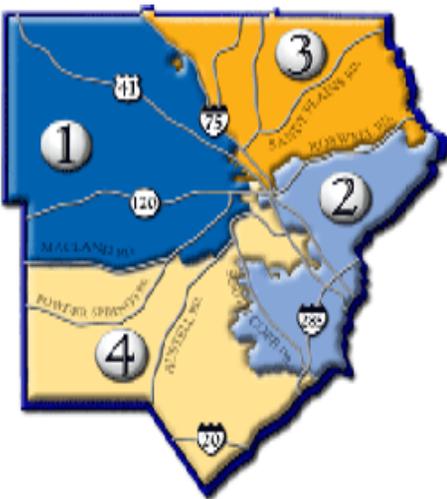
*Ellen Black  
 Sam Heaton  
 Pete Swisher  
 Lynda Paradise  
 Kim York*

**Many Thanks To:**

*Craig Ford, Cobb County Communications*

**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



*Cobb County...Expect the Best!*

**The following personnel have been recently promoted:**

- Ronald Bankston Engineer 15-C
- Mike Bell Lieutenant 1-B
- John Conniff Captain 4-B
- Tom Covington Engineer 4-A
- Scott Dick Engineer 2-C
- JJ Travers Engineer 9-A
- Joe Dupree Captain 4-C
- Bob Dyer Lieutenant 24-C
- Sean Gray Engineer 16-A
- Jeffrey Gregory Engineer 12-A
- Todd Groom Engineer 9-C
- Tim Rolader Engineer 14-A
- Jay Shaw Engineer 5-B
- Shannon Ricketts Engineer 4-C
- Jeff Few Engineer 19-C
- Kevin Gross Lieutenant 4-C
- Barry Jones Lieutenant 6-B
- Taft Champion FFIII 14-B
- Scott Starnes FFIII Airlab

**Recent Retirements:**

- Ronny Stroud Engineer
- Bill Hayes FFII

**NEW FACE AT FIRE HEADQUARTERS**

On March 24, Mark Reida was selected to fill the position of Facilities Maintenance Supervisor. Mark comes to CCFES with five years experience in private sector facilities maintenance.

Mark began his career with Cobb County Parks and Recreation before taking a position with Shaw Industries as a Senior Process Engineer.

A graduate of Pope High School in East Cobb, he holds a B.S. Degree from Southern Tech in Marietta in Textile Manufacturing, and is presently working on an M.B.A. at Southern Tech in Operations Management. He has been married to his wife, Diana, for five years and lives in Kennesaw.

*Pictured at Right:  
 Mark Reida*



## OUTDOOR WATERING EASED

In April, Cobb County eased restrictions set forth under the Drought Response Level 4 to allow for limited watering and outdoor pool use under certain conditions.

Hand watering (defined as one person with one hose with a shut-off nozzle) is permitted for a total of 25 minutes per day, between the hours of 4:00 am and 9:00 am on the odd/even watering schedule. Even-numbered addresses may water on Monday-Wednesday-Saturday, and odd-numbered addresses on Tuesday-Thursday-Sunday.

There are exemptions for new landscape installations, if the customer enrolls in water conservation classes through the Urban Agriculture Council.

The ban on public and private pools has been lifted and are allowed to be opened and water levels topped off as needed. Pools must be covered during the off-season, rather than drained. Chemical treatments should be used rather than draining to resolve chemical imbalance issues. If chemical treatments are not an effective option, a variance must be obtained by the pool company through the Cobb County Water Efficiency Office.

Governor Sonny Perdue's 10% water reduction mandate is still in effect, and Cobb County is making every attempt to meet or exceed this mandate. Measures presently in effect include limitations on flow testing, elimination of irrigation on outdoor county properties, and the installation of low-flow plumbing fixtures. Additionally, you may see water irrigation wells installed at some of the CCFES facilities in the future.

CCFES employees are urged to be wise stewards of the water supply and conserve whenever possible. For further information, you can visit: [www.cobbwater.org/efficiency.htm](http://www.cobbwater.org/efficiency.htm)

## TRAINING DIVISION NEWS

*By Division Chief Stoney Bowles*

Our current class of 24 students started on April 21, and they are heading towards the home stretch of Fire Training. The "Fire Side" will conclude on July 25, and they will move to EMS training on July 28.

Graduation is presently scheduled for Wednesday, October 29 at 7:00 pm at the Jennie T. Anderson Theatre, adjacent to the Cobb Civic Center. I hope many of you will attend the ceremony to support these new firefighters. We will begin another recruit school on July 28, with a projected graduation date in mid-January 2009.

We have been fortunate to recently host some of the best speakers in CCFES history. Denver Fire Chief David McGrail, FDNY Retired Deputy Chief John Norman, and 33-year California Law Enforcement veteran, Gordon Graham have all had a positive impact on our personnel who attended the training. We are currently advertising "Maintaining Crew Integrity" to be delivered by Bill Lang, and a TIC led by Engineer Sean Gray.

We hope we are meeting the training needs of both our field and support personnel with the types of training we have recently offered.

If you are interested in teaching a Department-wide class, please feel free to contact me any time.

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## UPDATE FROM THE SPECIAL OPERATIONS DIVISION

By Division Chief Spencer Miller

To keep you informed here are some new things going on in the Special Operations Division. I'll take it one section at a time:

### EMS

The new ALS and BLS Protocols have been approved and are ready to be implemented. Lt. Joseph Bryant and Dr. Gisness are putting together a video to inform the field of the upcoming changes. The new protocols are on the Common File under *L:\EMS Division\Protocols\Updated ALS Protocols* and *L:\EMS Division\Protocols\Updated BLS Protocols* for crews to begin studying for the upcoming protocol tests. Attached to these files is the new Pharmacology Manual. This manual applies to EMT-Is and Paramedics.

I'm sure you have noticed that the amount of drugs have been reduced in the lockers. This is in an effort to curb the costs of expired and damaged drugs. The Special Operations Division has also helped reduce costs by sending damaged Thomas bags (O2 and jump bags) back to the factory for replacement on warranty. We have also replaced the head blocks with a less expensive version.

The new Holmatro tools have been placed in service on Rescues 23 and 24. These new tools are designed for newer vehicles, and will greatly improve our extrication capabilities. This now gives us Holmatro tools at Stations 1, 4, 14, 16, 23, and 24.

For now, the department will continue to use both the paper and electronic versions of the Medical and Equipment Tracking Form due to the fact that crews are still not 100% compliant on the electronic version. When there is future improvement, then a move will be made to go total electronic and eliminate the hard copy form.

### Technical Rescue

The Trench Truck has a new makeover consisting of new Airshores and a new rack for holding panels and lumber. This increased space in the truck and distributed the load for safer operation. Thank you to all the crews at Station 4 that performed this hard work!

In May, the GSAR Team trained with Gwinnett Fire and several other departments for Swiftwater Rescue in Thunder River at Six Flags for 3 days. There are a few pictures of the training on the Common File under *L:\Pictures\Swiftwater Training Thunder River 2008*.

We also sent Lt. Paul Prater to Warner Robins for 8 days to become a Structural Collapse Technician Instructor. Congratulations to Paul for being the only NPQ Structural Collapse Technician Instructor on the Task Force 7 GSAR Team!

### Hazmat

The Hazmat Team participated in the Radex 2008 Radiological Response Exercise in May along with Marietta and Austell Fire. The exercise was at Jim Miller Park and involved live radiological isotopes. The scenario was 30 contaminated students and 1 pregnant teacher. The complete drill was one week long and tested the responses of local, state, and federal units. Thank you to the CCFES Recruit class and the Paramedic students for doing an excellent job of playing victims, to Engine 30 C-Shift for playing the first arriving engine, and to Unit 900 for providing the Command Post. The pictures from the exercise are on the Common File under *L:\Pictures\RADEX 2008*. These pictures were supplied by Cobb-Douglas Public Health and there are 390 of them.

### Med Ops

The Med Ops Team also participated in the Radex 2008, and got the opportunity to practice in Level C gear. The team also participated in May in the 2008 Active Shooter Drill at Campbell High School. This involved Cobb Police SWAT, Squad 4, Truck 4, Unit 900, Smyrna Fire, and Smyrna Police SWAT and simulated a hostage situation in a school. The drill went very well and several lessons were learned. Thank you to all the crews that worked hard to represent CCFES as true professionals!

### Events

Thank you to the field personnel that worked at the Shrine Circus and the Coca Cola Softball Classic. The coverage went well and your help is greatly appreciated. I realize the strain that it places on your Battalions but the response was very positive.



The Swiftwater Rescue component of the Technical Rescue Team conducting training with other Metro Teams at the Thunder River attraction at Six Flags.



New Truck 1 arrived at CCFES on June 5, 2008. Pictured above is Lt. Dan Dupree conducting the delivery inspection. At an overall length of 47', it is approximately 3 feet shorter than Trucks 19, 8, and 4.

The Sutphen 100' platform includes a 5-section boom, is equipped with a 1500 gallon a minute Hale pump, Detroit Series 60 engine rated at 515 hp, an Allison 4000 Series transmission, and a 300 gallon water tank. This latest Sutphen model is equipped with all LED lights.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

By Lt. Jeff Moss

*Can we open up a dialogue about more pay for Paramedics?*

The proper way to address this issue would be to reduce your ideas to writing, and forward the final product through your Chain of Command for consideration.

*Is the County or Command Staff considering dispatch procedures to include ambulance-only calls for those citizens only requesting medical transport?*

This is already happening for calls which meet certain criteria- you just may not realize it's occurring. If you are dispatched on a call that should have been clearly dispatched as ambulance-only, then notify your Chain of Command so these situations can be addressed.

*Will there be further changes made to the Unlock Policy in light of the current fuel situation?*

That is presently be evaluated by the Command Staff, and decisions will be based on the numbers.

*What priority has the Department put on the acquisition of new mattresses? Can consideration be given to replacement of mattresses on a more frequent basis? I ask this question because it was my understanding that we were on a 3-year replacement schedule and it appears we are not on that frequent of a cycle.*

Mattresses are budgeted on an annual basis, and on a rotational schedule, but it is not necessarily on a 3-year basis. As with many items that meet threshold purchasing requirements, specification that must be met, and other purchasing guidelines, this is handled by the County bid process. There are no provisions for the purchase of mattresses this year.

*Just wondering about what is Chief Heaton's management philosophy and what are his plans for the Department now that he is Chief?*

At this point, he said that he foresees no major changes in goals and operational guidelines. He would like to see communications improved, and has plans to conduct more employee and officer forums as well as planning more station visits. See the "Chief's Corner" in this newsletter for more on this subject.

### INFORMATION SERVICES TIDBITS

*Here is a list of procedures and contact information when experiencing I.S. issues:*

**FIREHOUSE:** Contact Damon Gensel first via e-mail at [damon.gensel@cobbcounty.org](mailto:damon.gensel@cobbcounty.org). After a reasonable amount of time, call Damon at 770-528-8168. After hours FRMS Contact is 678-910-7889, or pager 404-415-4667.

**COMPUTER-BASED TRAINING:** Content-based & password issues- contact Capt. Chuck Baird at 770-590-5662, or e-mail him at [cbaird@cobbcounty.org](mailto:cbaird@cobbcounty.org)

**FEMA TRAINING-** FEMA Webmaster at [netwebmaster@dhs.gov](mailto:netwebmaster@dhs.gov). Popup blockers must be disabled if you still have difficulty after you are logged in.

**MOBILE DATA COMPUTERS:** Contact Lt. Dan Dupree at 770-528-8317, or via e-mail at [ddupree@cobbcounty.org](mailto:ddupree@cobbcounty.org). DO NOT TAKE THE UNIT TO DIVERSIFIED UNLESS SPECIFICALLY INSTUCTED TO DO SO!

**FOR OTHER I.S. QUESTIONS:** Contact the Cobb County I.S. Call Center at 770-528-8740.

### MORE HEADQUARTERS NEWS

By Interim Deputy Chief Chuck Carter

During the recent Captain's Promotional Process, the Command Staff received a significant number of good ideas from candidates for departmental improvement. A portion of the interview included the candidate establishing two areas that, in their opinion, needed attention. Many candidates share the same thoughts and ideas that could be implemented with little or no cost.

One area of concern was Leadership Training for Officers. Captains Tanks and Conniff have developed an idea of conducting an Officer Forum. The Forum would allow for an exchange of ideas, and permit veteran Officers to share their successes and mistakes with younger Officers new to the position of Lieutenant. Additionally, they could set aside the first half hour to answer questions or concerns that may arise, and talk with members of the Command Staff.

Another idea discussed in the Captain's Promotions was the downsizing of the rescue apparatus currently in service. One concept introduced was to move extrication equipment to aerial trucks to allow the purchase of smaller, more maneuverable and fuel-efficient rescue units. With aerial apparatus performing extrications, paramedics could focus on patient care. The Staff discussed this change at an earlier date, and with rising fuel costs and budget tightening, this seems like a logical move. We will be evaluating the possibilities.

This is just a couple of the ideas that will be discussed when a Forum is scheduled. As always, we welcome thoughts and ideas, and appreciate any comments you might have on these and any other subjects.

## CHIEF'S CORNER

By Sam Heaton



I would like to take a moment to say what an honor it is for me to have this opportunity to lead such a great organization like Cobb Fire & Emergency Services. As most of you know, I truly love this department, and want only the best for the agency and its members.

We are all fortunate to work for such a great department and Cobb County. I have always believed we have the best Fire and EMS agency in the State of Georgia, and would challenge most as the best in the Nation.

I appreciate the support that I have received throughout my career, and particularly over the past few months during the Chief's selection process. Thanks so much to all of you!

A couple of questions that have already been posed to me are:

*What is your overall philosophy?*

My work philosophy is very simple- "Work hard, do the right thing, and be nice!" I believe if a person utilizes this philosophy, it will carry them wherever they wish to go in their career, allow them to feel good about themselves, and for others to feel good about them. I value highly the concepts of Respect, Integrity, and Commitment, and believe these go hand in hand with my philosophy.

*What changes do you plan to make?*

As far as changes go, I do not see any major sweeping changes right away. Chief Denlinger left the department in great shape. I believe a few minor "tweaks" here and there may be forthcoming, as the new Command Staff begins to work together, things will begin to take shape. I will do my very best to keep everyone informed as any changes occur.

I look forward to the opportunities and challenges ahead. No one person can do this job without the wholesale support of others, and without returning that support back down through the ranks, both sworn and civilian. I have said many times that this is OUR Department! Let's continue to make this the best Fire & EMS agency in the Country!

## CONGRATULATIONS

**Five CCFES members recently completed the Buster Britton Memorial Triathlon in Pelham, Alabama:**

Bill Beyer  
Ben Hand  
Jeff Moss  
John Herman  
Jerrick Torrance

Captain William Tanks received his BS Degree in Management & Technology from Morris Brown College on May 10, 2008.

**Members of the Medical Event Team received "Road 1" Certification through the League of American Bicyclists following a 2-day course at CCPSTC:**

John Herman  
Bill Beyer  
Troy Swann  
Scotty Pope  
Sean Gray  
Brian Patterson  
Denell Boyd  
Jeff Moss  
Felecio McDowell  
David George

## SAFETY VILLAGE UPDATE

By Charles Blackwell

The Cobb County Safety Village is now under construction! The 7.96 acre site is slated to house the 27,500 square foot interactive state-of-the-art teaching facility. It will contain scaled-down replica buildings of familiar structures in Cobb, complete with traffic signals, sidewalks, and a permanent facility for child safety seat installations and inspections.

We anticipate the facility will open in March 2009, and our goal is to streamline Fire, EMS, Police, Sheriff, and E-911 life safety education efforts. Field trips to the site by 2nd and 4th grade students will supplement some of the lessons already being delivered in the schools. In addition to the children's programs, a variety of courses will be offered to adults and senior citizens.

We are very excited to be on the cutting edge of this unique facility! Hope to see you when we open!

*(Pictured below are the footings for the padded escape ladder pit)*



## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (continued from page 4)

*What is the current plan to increase Paramedics in the Department? Why are some Paramedics on Special Teams such as HazMat when there is such a shortage?*

There is one group in school right now that will help boost the numbers slightly. The plan and hope is that Chattahoochee Tech will pick up the program and make it easier for us to get people through a program. The Performance Measurement Committee is also looking into other solutions to help increase the numbers. Paramedics on Specialty Teams have volunteered and trained to be assigned to such teams, and there is no policy restricting this. They are still at the disposal of Battalion Chiefs to be pulled off the Team on an as-needed basis to ride Rescues when staffing calls for such a move. We don't want it to become a case where being a Paramedic would restrict someone from pursuing other interests within the Department that they feel might be beneficial to their career.

*There has been a question from the Field concerning the wireless internet in the Stations. Could someone shed some light on this?*

The wireless is still planned for use. The plan is to include use for Fire and Police so that officers can stop at a station and link up to download reports, etc. There will not be any personal use of the wireless permitted. It is still considered a workplace access, and all current policies shall apply. There are also plans that the MDCs will be able to access the wireless at stations, too.