



# THE SMOKE SIGNAL

## Cobb County Fire & Emergency Services

Summer/Fall, 2007

### HYDRANT MAPPING PROJECT

By Darrell Dunlap

On August 1, 2004 CCFES and the Water Department joined forces in a project that would accurately locate and identify all fire hydrants in Cobb County, both private and County owned. Now, three years and approximately 26,352-plus hydrants later, we are working on Station 18. Once completed, the initial pass will account for about 90% of the hydrants. That means that all stations should be using the Firehouse program instead of Aunt BEE come October of this year. Phase II will not take this long, since we will only be going back and tagging the hydrants that have been installed since we first went through, and getting any we missed.

To give you an idea of what we expect to accomplish in each phase, here's a short rundown:

#### PHASE I:

This is the initial pass through all of the station territories. We attempted during this phase to locate all existing hydrants listed on the map, both public and private. We also look for hydrants not previously listed, and once located, we enter them into the system. This process should account for 80% - 90% of all fire hydrants in Cobb County.

#### PHASE II:

During this phase, we go back and log all newly located, new installs, and moved/removed hydrants. Generally, this is our cleanup phase. We also work on keeping the completed territories current. When Phase II is completed, we hope we have mapped and accounted for 95% - 97% of all fire hydrants in Cobb County.

One thing to keep in mind is we estimate 3% - 5% of all hydrants in the county will always be in some state of flux.

Since January 2007, Division Chief Simler has set up accountability where any new hydrants that come through the Fire Marshal's Office will be given to Sheral Race and myself; we will then input them into the system as soon as possible.

Sheral and I are painfully aware that anytime we start using a new system, things don't always work right all the time. Well, here's a little information just so you know; we are working hard behind the scenes to try and get things working smoothly for you. (It's not like hydrants is the only thing you have to worry about all day!) To begin, this is not just a Fire Department software application. All of this hydrant information has to match between Cobb Fire, Cobb GIS, Cobb Water Maintenance, and Cobb Water Engineering. That's four different computer systems that we are now trying to link together and share information and do it accurately. I have to tell you, the part you don't see behind the scenes is so much more difficult than you could ever imagine. But our expectation is that once this all comes together, (and it will), within a short period of time after a hydrant is installed or removed from your territory, your records and maps will reflect that information.

Once the hydrant part of Firehouse is up and running properly, it should make at least that part of your life easier. We will be able to track repairs and get them completed more quickly than in the past. Station officers and crews will have more information about hydrants in their areas, specifically pressure and GPM on private hydrants. Additionally, we hope as you use the software a bit more, the time you spend doing paperwork will decrease. People are working to correct problems as we speak.

In locating hydrants, sometimes I have to sit back and scratch my head. I have found hydrants in places they shouldn't be.



*This is like playing, "Where's Waldo?" I am constantly discovering hydrants that are difficult to see from the road.*

Take some of these examples: On the East-West Connector at Brookwood Drive, you have to go 4-wheeling up the hill and behind the trees to find a hydrant that is 30 feet of the road, and 12 feet higher than street level. We have found some as far as 40 feet off the roadway. We had areas that had been redeveloped and the map didn't look anything like what was on the ground. Last but not least, while I can neither confirm nor deny its exact location, evidence indicates that there is a hydrant underwater in a pond in Powder Springs.

Once all of this work comes together and the information nears completion, finding your hydrants will be easier no matter what territory you are working. There should be less confusion locating hydrants needing repair, and work orders should not get lost in limbo. Private hydrant information will be forthcoming to include flow pressure. With GPS (Global Positioning System) points on each hydrant, you should be able to locate each hydrant- even if kudzu grows over it. Adding to all this, hydrants are not the only things being mapped. We are also mapping manholes and storm drains to include flow direction, and all water line cutoff valves to include the line size.

A couple of things to help you out: For the moment, pay more attention to hydrant location on your map, than on the address. Please watch the training video on inputting hydrants and work orders. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me or Sheral Race at Fire Headquarters. Now that we are wrapping up the initial pass, you should soon see improvements by leaps and bounds!

**THE CCFES YEARBOOK  
IS COMING!  
(More on Page 2)**

# PERSONNEL CORNER

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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:**

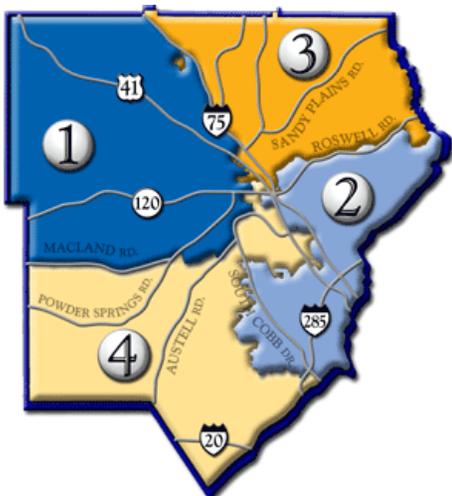
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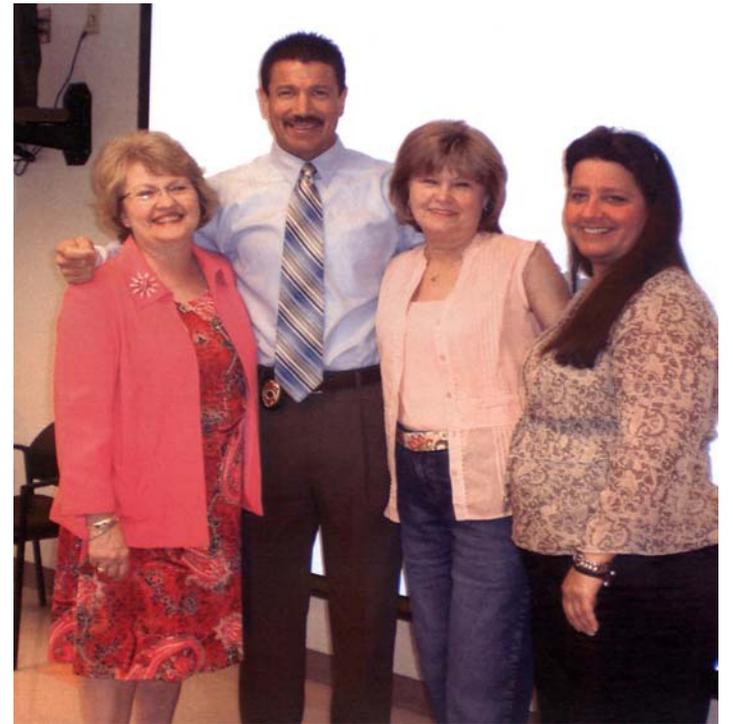
**COBB FIRE IS A DEPARTMENT OF COBB COUNTY GOVERNMENT**

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*Cobb County...Expect the Best!*

On April 20, a retirement reception was held at Fire Headquarters for Diane Kinsey. Diane had 22 years of service with CCFES. Many thanks to those who came to wish Diane well, made a contribution towards the gift, or assisted with the celebration. Pictured on the right are Diane, Deputy Chief Randy Crider, Mary Dowda (retired), and Sharron Garner.



On May 18, Administrative Specialists Kim York and Joy Allen graduated from the Executive Support Professionals program.

Firefighter Ryan Hardage (Station 20-A) recently graduated from Kennesaw State University with a B.S. in Sports Management.

Lt. Steve Lester (Station 10-A) received his Associates in Applied Science from Georgia Perimeter College.

Firefighters Brandon Grimes (Station 4-C) and Dru Dunn (Station 7-C) completed the Georgia Smoke Diver course this past March.

On July 11, Chief Rebecca Denlinger received the designation of Chief Fire Officer (CFO) from the Commission on Professional Credentialing. Presently, there are only 525 CFO's worldwide.

Firefighter Jason Gallups was honored in May by the East Club Rotary Club with the presentation of Firefighter/EMT of the Year. The recipient of this annual award has displayed "Service Above Self". By spearheading several projects, including the Firehouse Records Management System implementation, Jason has certainly done exactly that!

Firefighter Torbjorn "Toto" Singheimer has been selected to fill the vacant position in the Technical Operations Section. Toto will be managing the Public Access Defibrillation Program, assisting the Quality Assurance Team, retrieving EMS equipment, and coordinating special events teams.

Jeremy DeJames has recently been promoted to Engineer.

Todd Redman has recently been promoted to Lieutenant.

Lieutenant Joseph Bryant has been assigned to the Technical Operations Section at Headquarters. Joe is responsible for many aspects of the EMS Division such as Quality Assurance, Special Teams, equipment procurement, related budget areas, and managing the pharmaceutical supply.

In April, Capt. Ron Fagan, Eng. Trevor Levy, and Firefighters Steve Bennett and Kerry Lambert received Firehouse Magazine's "Heroism and Community Service Award" for their heroic rescue efforts at the Holiday Inn fire last year.

Brittany Barnes is a recent addition to the Fire Marshal's Office. A Powder Springs resident, she is also a student at Chattahoochie Tech, and a McEachern High School graduate. A little known fact about Brittany is that she has something in common with Sharron Garner, Sheral Race, and Denell Boyd- she is a twin.

Another new addition to CCFES is Lisa Gaddist-Brown. Lisa is an Administrative Specialist assigned to Deputy Chief Randy Crider in the Preparedness Division. Lisa moved to metro Atlanta 2 years ago from Queens, NY. She is married, and has 2 daughters, Kenisha (10), and Kya (4).

## PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Many thanks to those personnel who expressed an interest in serving on the newly created Performance Measurement Advisory Committee. The selection of the initial 10 members was difficult, but with staggered terms, there should be many future opportunities to serve.

Members:

- Lt. Donnell Campbell, 9-C*
- Capt. Mike Flowers, 8-B*
- FF Sean Gray, 16-A*
- FF Todd Groom, 23-C*
- Insp. Stephen Mize, FMO*
- Lt. Joe Sanchez, 30-B*
- Inv. Rod Sanders, Fire Investigations*
- Eng. Chris Smith, 22-A*
- Lt. Mark Tillman, 1-C*
- Lt. Scott White, 26-B*

## YEARBOOK UPDATE

Cobb Fire & Emergency Services is making preparations for the publication of another yearbook.

Individual portraits of all personnel are scheduled for November 5, 6, and 7. This is a Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, and will fall on C, A, and B shifts, respectively. All CCFES employees should make every attempt to be present on one of those dates as these portraits will be taken by Lifetouch Photography. The locations will be at all Chiefs Stations (8, 4, 14, and 22). Make-up dates are November 13 and 20 at Fire Headquarters.

We are looking for old photos previously unpublished you may have that may be worthy of publication in this edition, particularly from the last 10 years. We will accept these in electronic or hard copy format, and will return them to you promptly. All submissions and questions can be forwarded to Denell Boyd at Headquarters at (770) 528-8325.

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS BY LT. JEFF MOSS

**Thanks again for a great set of questions for this issue. As in previous editions, I submitted them to Deputy Chief Heaton for answers; input was also solicited from Chief Denlinger, and Deputy Chief Crider. You may see something a little different this printing; the answers to time-sensitive questions may go out in e-mail form before printing of the hard copy Smoke Signal, as well as being reprinted here. If you would like to submit questions to me, please feel free to send them to me at Station 23, A- Shift.**

*Q: If you add up the hours, we work just over 9 years longer than any other county employee. Is there any plan in the near future to improve our retirement benefits?*

A: HR and Finance are continuously evaluating our retirement plan to ensure what the County offers is the best for everyone. It is important to realize that while the formula used to calculate retirement benefits is the same throughout the county, the employees who are in higher-risk positions, such as firefighters and police officers, are monetarily compensated more for their jobs. Because firefighters earn more money over the course of their careers than some other positions in the county, firefighters earn more retirement benefits as well. The number of hours worked by employees worked by firefighters assigned to a 24-hour shift is indeed higher than the number of hours worked by employees who work a 40-hour week, and includes hours during which employees are inactive or at low activity levels. This fact should not be overlooked when discussing the compensation package offered to Cobb firefighters.

*Q: It was asked before in regards to Class A uniforms that a survey of the Department showed very little interest, but I never saw any survey nor have I found anybody who answered the survey. So what survey are they talking about, and who was asked?*

A: There was an e-mail sent to all employees inviting each person to participate in a survey of different topics. The survey was conducted by Survey Monkey. In this survey participants were asked to rank many subjects in on their order of

importance. The Class A uniforms consistently ranked lower than other topics such as equipment and facilities. The stats show that somewhere around 50% of the Department chose to participate in the survey.

*Q: What is the status of getting Class A uniforms?*

A: Class A uniform items will be available on the next uniform order form distributed this October. The cost will count toward your yearly maximum allowance of \$400. Employees should review the Policy and Procedures Manual section 2-1 for details of items constituting the Class A uniform.

*Q: Will the dispatch procedure for "suicide threat" be changed from ALS to BLS, or possibly a PD only call?*

A: CCFES, MFD, and 911 are currently reviewing categories of what should be considered a non-emergency call. The list includes "suicide threats" and if adopted, should be in effect by the year's end. This would change a suicide threat to a BLS call.

*Q: In the event of a LODD, is it possible that an employee can designate who would be preferred as a notification officer rather than the Department Chief being automatically sent to do so as stated in the policy?*

A: Senior Staff would attempt to assign a person who was closely associated with the employee to assist in the notification process if this were to occur. This is a delicate situation in which the circumstances must be carefully considered before the decision to allow a different spokesperson is allowed. This is an official function of the Department and would require that a Department official be present.

**MORE QUESTIONS &  
ANSWERS ON PAGE 4**



*Training Division Chief Terry Martin retired on August 29 after 24 years of service. Pictured on the left is Chief Denlinger presenting Terry with his retirement hat at his reception. We all wish him well!*

## IN MEMORY OF WAYNE WHITE 1954-2007



Cobb Fire & Emergency Services lost one of our own on June 13 with the passing of EMS Coordinator Wayne White. In the 6 years Wayne was with CCFES, he made many improvements to EMS Training. With his extensive knowledge and experience not only in the Emergency Medical field but also computer-based applications, Wayne was responsible for developing web-based training, and other improvements to enhance the delivery of Fire and EMS instruction.

Many people did not know that prior to becoming an EMT, Wayne was a P.O.S.T. Certified Police Officer in Dawson, Georgia and a volunteer Firefighter. In the 1970's he was named the Georgia EMT of the year, and spent many years as the Training Coordinator for the Georgia EMS Region III Council. Wayne was a talented artist, carpenter, and wood carver. He was survived by his wife Linda, 3 daughters, and a son. He is missed.



**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS by Jeff Moss (continued from page 3)**

*Q: What is the time frame for Stations 28 and 29 opening?*

A: Station 28 is scheduled for an October 2008 opening. Station 29 is still in the planning phase. The County is currently seeking a developer to partner with plans to include Station 29 as part of the construction on a new project in the Cumberland/Galleria area.

*Q: Are the Med Units going to get some type of organization racks to make getting the equipment out easier?*

A: The cages and racks for the Med Units were ordered before the units went into service, but were not received in a timely manner. Due to this unanticipated time lag, the Med Units are temporarily back in service in the reserve rescue units for safety purposes. The cages will be installed as soon as they arrive.

*Q: Since Med 2 is always starting out of Station 7, is there any plan to move Med 2 to the first battalion to cut down on the 1 hour drive both ways to get in territory?*

A: At this time, there is a proposal in the pipeline requesting that the Med Units be made into 24 hour trucks. The overtime funding for the Med Units expires on October 1st of this year and there are no current plans for changes to the Med Units' operations until the proposal is decided upon. Options under consideration by those with authority include full time funding, continuation of overtime funding, and discontinuation of the Med Unit program.

*Q: Is it possible to have the mailman go to all of the downtown hospitals once a week to get any equipment that is sent down there?*

A: No. The mail route takes all day to complete and leaves no time for other errands. The position in the Technical Operations Division will be handling those tasks.

*Q: I would like to know if there is any plan for a GPS navigation system to be installed in our trucks. Metro Ambulance uses them, and they seem to be nice.*

A: Motorola has that capacity and options for use in Fire apparatus are being evaluated. A GPS system exclusively for providing directions, which requires that a location must be entered manually into the unit each time is impractical, as it would prove to be time consuming and distracting during an emergency response. We are monitoring available technology and watching for GPS-guided navigation units that can assist in emergency response. However, there is money in the budget and the process is underway to order approximately 12 handheld GPD units. These will be used to provide coordinates for helicopter services and various other uses. Tentative plans are for the units to be carried on rescues and chief's cars.

*Q: Is it true that the MED Units will be staffed full time beginning in January 2008, adding 6 Engineers and 6 Firefighters?*

A: See the answer to one of the other questions above. This will depend on the answer to the proposal regarding the operation of the units.

*Q: Many other Metro Atlanta departments have been issuing personnel uniform duty shorts for the summer months. Is this a possibility for those personnel who wish to wear them?*

A: No.

*Q: Is there a process in the works to revisit current policies that may or may not be working? If so, how can field personnel give input on the current policies, and suggest changes?*

A: Yes. Battalion Chief Scott Demkowski heads up the committee that reviews and recommends changes, additions, etc. to our existing policies and procedures. The committee is currently reviewing the Operations Guideline Manual, aka "The Yellow Book", and moving the appropriate policies to the newer Policy & Procedures Manual, in the white 3-ring notebook in the stations and offices. If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact Battalion Chief Scott Demkowski for more information.

*Q: Why can't we wear golf shirts during summer months? I have been told that it will not look professional. If that is the case, then why is training and office staff allowed to wear them?*

A: We have provided many options for comfortable clothing including long and short sleeve shirts, duty shirts, and new weather-resistant coats. Nomex uniforms have been provided to help conform to NFPA standards and to provide additional safety for personnel. NFPA allows for Nomex or cotton uniforms but it has been determined that Nomex is a more cost-effective alternative, along with its other advantages. Nomex looks better, lasts longer, and provides more protection. Our uniforms allow our crews to look neat and professional. This helps instill confidence in the public we serve on a daily basis.

*Q: When overtime is worked, why is retirement deducted without any increase in benefits, if it is not one of your 3 highest earning years?*

A: Retirement benefit money is always taken out of your full proceeds, including overtime, throughout your career whether or not it is one of your 3 highest paid years. Overtime counts toward the calculation of your 3 highest years and can have a significant impact on the calculation.

*Q: Is the new module for pre-fire plans in Firehouse ready for use? What should we be doing with pre-fire plans right now?*

A: The Fire Marshal's Office and Information Services are now working on revamping certain guidelines and criteria for the module. In the end, the FMO will initially enter the information into the module, and then the appropriate station will have security access to certain areas. This will allow station personnel to enter needed information into the system without affecting the original template. There are also plans to provide mobile PFP information on the MCD's. At this time, stations should continue to use the Aunt Bee system as in the past to update and enter pre-fire plan information.