

# Ann Arbor Fire Department

## Quarterly Newsletter

www.a2gov.org/fire

December 2007

### Bikes for Tykes

A total of nine children received a jaw-dropping surprise when Battalion Chief Hubbard moved the fire truck to reveal nine shiny new bikes, each with a corresponding helmet, and a personalized license plate. This was all part of the inaugural Bikes for Tykes event held at Station 1 on December 18, 2007. The department teamed up with a local bike shop, Two Wheel Tango, to give away nine bikes to needy Ann Arbor kids this holiday season.



Naomi and her new bike!  
Photographer: Lon Horwedel at Ann Arbor News

The Red Cross provided the list of children to be recipients of the bicycles.

When the bikes were first revealed, the children were so stunned they couldn't move. Staff members encouraged the children to go find their bike by the personalized license plates. Little 5-year-old Naomi was so excited because her bike had a basket on it. Even 10-year-old Nicole, who was too "cool" to smile, wouldn't take her hands off her new bike. All of the children, the parents, and the fire department staff were so excited. It was the most amazing way to kick off the holiday season.



Firefighter: Michael DeCraene assembling a bike

The department hopes to team up with Two Wheel Tango again next year for the second Annual Bikes for Tykes. A big thanks to all who participated including: Two Wheel Tango, the Red Cross, Shift 2 personnel, and administrative staff for all the hard work that went into the event. It is sure to be remembered for years.



### Message from the Chief

I would like to take this opportunity to express how important it is for our department to develop a comprehensive five-year plan as requested by the City of Ann Arbor, Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Financial Services Area Administrator. To my best knowledge, the current budget process relies heavily on identifying critical needs (one to two years) to be included in the line-item budget. My previous experience makes the development of such a budget a difficult task. If we are only budgeting/planning for expenditures that are critical, it would seem that we are planning to eliminate the fire department all together. I hope this is not what the citizens of Ann Arbor want.

Long term, I expect the demands of the department to increase as a result of a few key issues. I anticipate an increase in medical calls which will cause an increase in costs for our medical supplies, equipment, and apparatus. The continual development of the downtown area, high-rises, and condominiums are also costly. High rise buildings require expensive equipment and in case of fire, a large amount of personnel responding. Our fleet replacement schedule has been redeveloped and is being considered for approval. As discussed in the last newsletter, the old fleet replacement plan was developed by the previous administration and was not adequate for the department.

We must put forth our best efforts to develop a plan that represents the needs of the fire department for the next five years. Although this task may seem difficult, given the broad spectrum of fire department budgetary needs, our five-year plan will address staffing, equipment, and ways to maintain appropriate service levels for a safe community for Ann Arbor residents to live. - Samuel Hopkins, Fire Chief



# Underground Parking Structures

There has been discussion of adding underground parking structures into the downtown Ann Arbor area. The fire department does not have an apparatus that can respond to the interior of the underground structures. Therefore, plans must be developed to ensure safe and timely response to underground structures when necessary.

Vehicle fires in an underground structure have the potential to extend beyond parking areas. The fire code requires a very powerful exhaust system be in place to remove the fumes that occur every day and to ensure proper ventilation in case of a fire to protect the interior of the structure.



Example of a utility vehicle for fire purposes

The department would like to design a low-profile utility vehicle that can easily maneuver in and out of tight spaces which would have first aid and fire response capabilities. This type of vehicle would also be helpful in other instances, such as the University of Michigan home football games. The vehicle the department currently utilizes is positioned outside the gates and would be difficult to have a timely response to an incident inside the gates, due to its size.

# Rope Rescue

The Ann Arbor Fire Department recently underwent confined space and rope rescue training. The department utilizes ropes to rescue victims from high rise situations, such as window washers, from confined space situations, such as a victim stuck in a manhole, or from new construction areas where steel workers are trapped or injured. There are many situations that would require a "rope" rescue.

The confined space training included: reviewing potential hazards of confined space rescues, building overhead support systems and pulleys, and also air monitoring training. Air monitoring is critical in confined space rescues due to the possibility of low oxygen levels, chemical contaminants, and explosive atmospheres.

The training also allowed an opportunity to standardize the rope rescue equipment that is carried on Rescue 1, Tower 1, and Ladder 5. The rope bags are now labelled, and the age of the ropes are documented. Ropes have a life span of 10 years from manufacturer date or five years once they are put into use.



Firefighter James Tiernan making a rescue

Each rope costs approximately \$1 per foot. The department recently purchased 600 feet of rope to replace some that were very outdated. There is still over 2,500 feet of rope that needs to be replaced. Some of these ropes were purchased as far back as 1993. The department is hoping to replace the rest of the ropes in the next few years.

## Statistics (January 1 – December 28, 2007)

Call Type	Rescue/ Medical	False Alarm	Hazardous Conditions	Fire	Other
Number of calls	3,932	781	410	289	839
% of call total	63%	12%	7%	5%	13%

**Total Calls: 6,251 (vs. 5,631 in 2006)**



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### Fire Prevention Week

The department hosted an open house in October to kick off fire prevention week. The theme for 2007, chosen by the National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA), was "Practice your Escape Plan." The event had one of its largest turnout in years. It is estimated that over 1,000 people visited the station during the open house.

Children of various ages participated in an activity where they needed to escape from a smoke-filled room. There were also many other hands-on educational activities for children and adults to enjoy such as: a vehicle extrication demonstration, practicing the stop, drop and roll movements, rope climbing, and fire extinguisher demonstrations.

There were many positive comments received at the open house as well as on comment cards. Some of the comments were: "This event is wonderful. My son (2 years old) loves fire trucks and fire fighters. I'm looking forward to coming to the next fire department open house" and "This has been the best open house we have been too, ...thank you for doing such a great job! We learned a lot and had fun, too".

Fire safety and prevention should be practiced in all homes every day. Cooking is the leading cause of home fires in the U.S.; it's also the leading cause of fire injuries. Eighty-two percent of all fire deaths occur in the home; having a working smoke alarm reduces the chance of dying in a fire by nearly half. The Ann Arbor Fire Department promotes public education for all age groups not only during the open house, but throughout the year through various public education activities.



**Cream of Mushroom  
Pork Loin**

**Ingredients:**  
1 pork loin  
1 large can of cream of mushroom soup  
1 packet of onion soup mix

**Directions:**  
Mix soup and soup mix together and add ½ can of water to mixture. Place the pork loin on a pan covered in foil. Cover the loin with soup mix and then cover with foil. Cook at 250 degrees for 6 to 8 hours or until cooked through.

### Public Education

Matt Schroeder, Brad Tanner and Scott Peterson recently participated in the University of Michigan Trauma Burn Center's "Straight Talk Program". The program is a juvenile fire setter intervention for youths who have been experimenting with fire. The goal of the program is to deter high-risk behavior and to reduce the recurrence rate of youth fire experimentation.

The firefighters' impact on both the youth and parents was overwhelming. The audience was visibly moved by their stories and testimonies of how fire setting personally and emotionally affects them. The extent of the firefighters' influence was evident not only on the audience faces, but also in the program evaluation forms. Here are a few excerpts: "My son and I came home full of emotions and reactions we could not begin to put into words! Thank you for the intense day, the testimony [from firefighters]...we will never forget them." "This program should be offered in all cities!"

Karla Klas from the burn center stated that everyone greatly appreciates the Ann Arbor Fire Department support and willingness to participate in the program. They are hoping to expand the collaboration between the department and the burn center.

The Ann Arbor Fire Department promotes public education and fire safety throughout the year through various public education activities. The following is a list of people (by age group) who have participated in a department sponsored public education event.

#### January 1 – December 13, 2007

Age	Total
0 – 5:	2,389
6 – 10:	1,586
11 – 15:	667
16 & over:	631
<b>Total:</b>	<b>5,273</b>

### Fire House Recipe

Pictured left: Fire department members submitted recipes to be considered for inclusion into the 2008 Ann Arbor Fire Department Calendar which was sold to raise money for the Bikes for Tykes event. This recipe was submitted by firefighter Michael Reddmann and was included in the calendar for the month of December. Calendars are no longer available.



## Highlights

- Operations identified a glitch in the Firehouse software records program. The program was not allowing EMS calls to be correctly identified when cancelled on scene by medics. The problem has been corrected.
- A/C Hollingsworth has reached an agreement with utilities and fleet allowing the department to place the technical rescue team trailers and tow vehicle at the south industrial site. This provides for a more centralized location for team response and equipment storage.
- The department, along with surrounding area departments, have begun to deploy the ResQ-Pod, part of a first responder medical trial for actual CPR emergencies.
- Administration is meeting with Huron Valley Ambulance (HVA) management bi-monthly to review and discuss quality control of response to EMS calls. Additionally, administration is in the final stages of an updated EMS dispatch procedure that was cooperatively reviewed by HVA.
- The department was recognized in the Alliance News for being the first fire station in Michigan to use solar energy. A grant was utilized to complete the installation of a solar water heater which is expected to save around \$600 a year in natural gas costs.

## Employee news

- Driver/Operator Dan Armitage and his wife welcomed baby Clay on October 12. Clay has two older twin brothers.
- Amelia Moshier received a commendation letter for her coordination of the Ann Arbor Fire Department Open House last October.

## Positive Feedback

- On October 14, Shift 3 responded to a residence for a structure fire. They not only contained and stopped the fire, but the crews also performed salvage and overhaul which minimized the damage to the structure and personal property of the homeowners. The fire marshal received many praises from the clean up company, insurance company, and investigator and, most importantly, the homeowners.

## Who's who in the Ann Arbor Fire Department?

You could say Derek Wisely grew up in an environment that would only allow him to become a firefighter. His father owned a John Deere store located next door to the Dexter fire station. In fact, many of the volunteer firefighters at the department worked for his dad. Derek spent much of his childhood at the fire station learning all he could about becoming a firefighter. He even used to take the firefighters ice cream cones!

When Derek turned 18, he joined the Dexter Fire Department as a volunteer firefighter. After six years on the department, he was hired by the Ann Arbor Fire Department as a full-time career firefighter. Derek currently holds the rank of lieutenant and has also served as a driver/operator, and he's been on the union's executive board as a trustee. The biggest change Derek has seen in his career at the department is the reduction in manpower. The workforce is also younger compared to 10 years ago.

In five years, Derek would like to see area fire departments become more regionalized, including a regionalized dispatch center. Based on economic conditions, this type of change would be beneficial to many departments and cities. He would also like to see the department purchase a more traditional style rescue truck.

As for his personal life, Derek and his wife have a daughter, Elise, who is six. Derek also has son, Nick, who is 21 years old and in the Army. Clementine, the rabbit, is the family pet.

