

July  
2022

# Fire Line Newsletter

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## From the Desk of "Your Fire Chief"

I am extremely honored and blessed that the Police and Fire Commission had unanimously selected me as Fond du Lac Fire Rescue's next Fire Chief. It is my privilege to serve the community in this capacity and I am truly excited to see where we can move this agency and community in the near future. It would be remiss of me if I didn't take a second to thank all of the outpouring of support that I have received through this process and after being named as Chief. The text messages, emails, phone calls and words of encouragement and congratulations were overwhelming and I truly am grateful from the bottom of my heart. I am also appreciative for those that took time out of their day to attend my badge pinning ceremony. This process and appointment is something I will never forget and is an incredible highlight of my life and the pinnacle of my professional career.

Now that the Chief selection is completed, the real work is ahead of us to improve and put into place processes to advance the service and the agency. A few of the highlighted needs that have been recognized and need immediate attention are the Mental Health and Wellness of our members and the community, recruitment of new hires and diversity within the department. All of these improvement processes were started during the Interim Chief appointment, and I fully intend to elaborate and expand on all of these topics with the assistance of the entire membership.

The Mental Health and Wellness aspect within the agency is a long overdue topic for consideration. Research has found that almost all firefighters and paramedics will suffer some sort of Post-Traumatic Stress (PTS) symptom(s) during their career. The need for our members to identify the risks and signs of PTS is paramount for their livelihood and longevity in this career field. We have just recently implemented certain aspects of a Mental Health program to assist members with these issues and

we will be expanding the program in the near future to provide support and assistance before issues arise.

Recruitment of new hires and creating a diverse workforce are two facets that go hand in hand. Both of these topics are not issues that FDLFR are facing alone, but are issues noticed nationwide. The candidate pool for Firefighter Paramedic's has been slowly decreasing over the past ten years, and finding minorities and women to enter into this career field is even smaller. We must think outside the norm in order to recruit more talent and get younger people to realize that becoming public servants in the fire service is a great opportunity. We have already taken steps to improve this area of concern through the fire explorer program which is in infancy stages, but will bring in young teenagers to discover the career field of firefighting and para-medicine. We will also be targeting groups and minorities this fall, with the help of other stakeholders in the City, to provide interest and exposure of the career field. The purpose of these programs is to provide avenues and opportunities to groups of individuals that might not have ever had the exposure to our profession in the past.

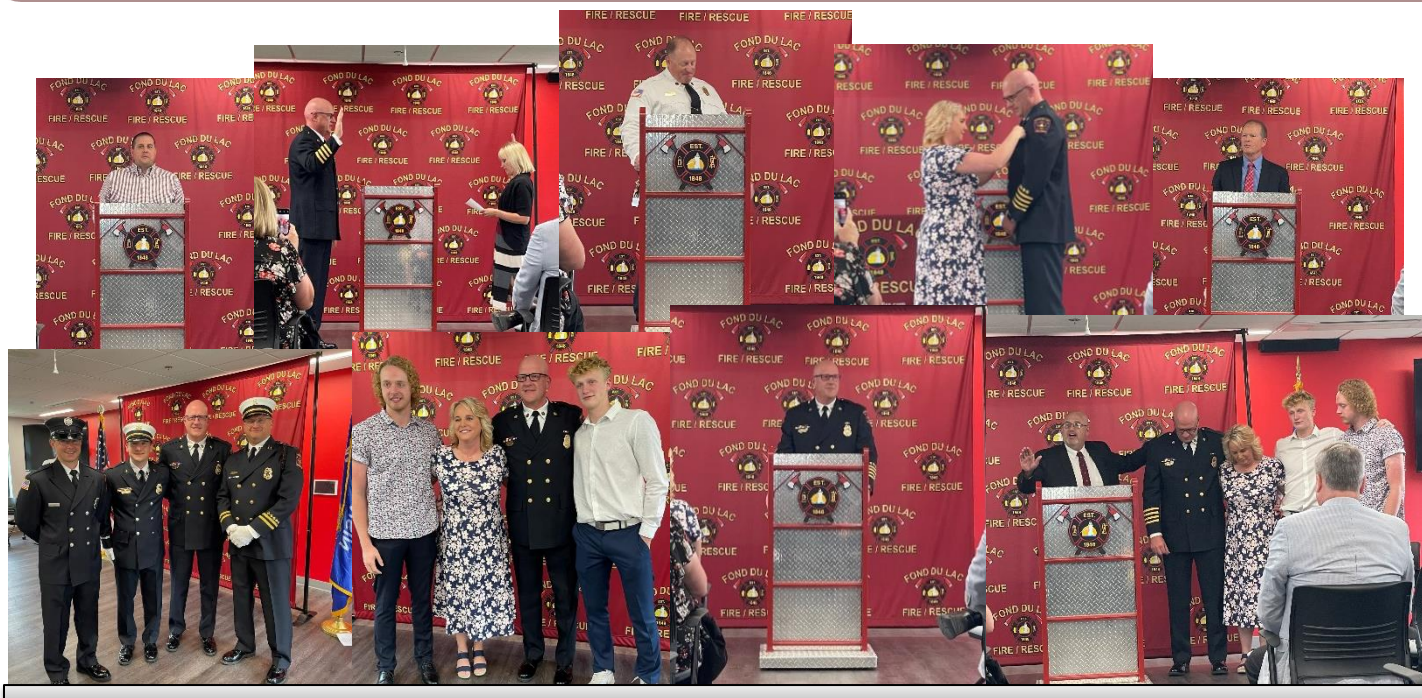
Once again I want to thank everyone for all of the support that I have received in being named "Your Fire Chief" and I fully intend to use all of my energy and determination to make Fond du Lac and the surrounding community the very best in the State of Wisconsin and nationwide. I am truly humbled and grateful for this opportunity and I am excited for what will come in the future!

*Until next time...  
Stay Safe and Godspeed!*

*Chief Gerritson*

## Swearing-In Ceremony for Chief Erick Gerritson

Erick Gerritson was sworn in as the new Fire Chief for Fond du Lac Fire Rescue. AC Jim Knowles served as the MC for the event with Police/Fire Commissioner Dan Hebel speaking along with City Manager Joe Moore. The Oath of Office was given by City Clerk Maggie Hefter with Chief Gerritson's wife Melanie pinning on his badge.



## ...Acting to Save

Types of Calls:	May 2022	May 2021	Year to Date (2022)	Year to Date (2021)
Alarms Involving Fire	22	9	59	43
Fire Mutual Aid Given	3	2	6	9
Fire Mutual Aid Received	1	0	2	5
Other Calls (False Alarms, Service Calls, etc.)	108	104	411	417
Emergency Medical Calls	586	573	2617	2580
Paramedic Intercepts	7	5	35	29
Interfacility Transports	39	50	180	201
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>716</b>	<b>686</b>	<b>3087</b>	<b>3040</b>
Fire Inspections Completed	15	189	1298	1262
Defects found during Fire Inspections	11	95	571	575





# The Code Summary

By: Assistant Chief Garth Schumacher

## Looking ahead...

Welcome to the July addition of the FireLine Newsletter. It is my hope that we have a safe and uneventful 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration. I wanted to take some time to update you all as to some of the items that we are looking at for EMS. Recently you have seen more hands-on training with Dr. Grahl and Joe DeBoer, we hope to continue this trend moving forward. One area we hope to focus on coming up is assessment and documentation. We have to remain vigilant in this process and make sure that we are completing documentation with substance. In other words, if we are doing the bare minimum on documentation, when it comes to having to justify our reports and patient care, we are only as good as what we put in the report. The old adage that if it wasn't documented it wasn't done is as true today as it was when I attended paramedic school. Please keep this in mind when assessing and documenting.

Another area we have been working on are CIP items going forward, one area that we are exploring are monitor upgrades. As most of you by now have seen a demo unit of the Phillips Tempus monitor, I will be soliciting some feedback in the near future. My goal is to move to

something like this should the boots on the ground like the product. There are features to this monitor that are very beneficial to both EMS and medical control. There are also aspects that are changes we may or may not be too keen on. We all know how change sometimes is hard to embrace in the fire service, but these we have to weigh against the possibility of better patient care, better reporting, and quicker access to information by medical control.

My goal through this process is to not push anything on the membership without first seeing if it truly is a good fit. One thing we can do is remain status quo with the current monitor setup and replace as necessary, or we can look at making a system change to a different product. The funds for this project will have to be spent in 2024, this gives us ample time to explore options.

Also in the CIP is money allocated for CPR machines, this was placed in the CIP prior to me and I don't believe we need to revamp our current practices with new machines. There are adjuncts that we can use to maintain the Head Elevated CPR and continue to utilize the Lucas Devices. That being said we are looking at implementing IV Pumps to the

med units and I have one popular brand that we can demo and train with. As of this article I am still waiting on some training videos from the distributor.

Another area that several of us have been working on is the new Aurora expansion and how the EMS garage is going to look for our service. We are tackling issues such as storage, re-stock of supplies, and making sure the size of the bays are ample for our med units. It may seem mundane or even trivial but we want to get this correct right out of the gate.

I also wanted to take this opportunity to address a question that has been brought up regarding COVID Booster Vaccination. If you desire a vaccination you can make appointments through either the Fond du Lac County Health Department or through Walgreens. Your Primary Care Provider may also have avenues for you to get boosted or vaccinated but the two I listed are straight forward and easy to schedule. In some cases you may be able to schedule same day vaccinations. The question was brought up about a booster vaccination here at the station that however is not as feasible as the Walgreens and County Health route. If you have further questions on this please reach out.

I appreciate the work you all have been doing out there and continue to be impressed with our member's dedication and professionalism, they continue to be great representatives of Fond du Lac Fire Rescue, keep this tradition alive!

*Until the next edition, be safe and take care of each other.*



**2022**  
Rising to the  
Challenge

## OPEN HOUSE

*Several community partners joined FDLFR for an EMS Open House at Station 1. Hands-on activities were available for those in attendance.*





## Welcome to Fond du Lac Fire Rescue Cade Curtis!

Cade is the newest recruit at FDLFR recently starting his 4 week Recruit Academy.



FDLFR recently joined FDLPD in a game of dodgeball with the kids from the Boys and Girls Club.



This spring not only did we have the usual baby duck rescue but Noah Kreilkamp also saved a fawn who had wandered across Main St. Noah carried the fawn back to safety in the woods across Main St.



**Congratulations to Brian Westby** who retired on April 29<sup>th</sup> after 21 years of service at FDLFR. *Best wishes in your retirement Brian!*



May 13<sup>th</sup> brought another successful brat fry when over \$6300 was raised to donate to the American Red Cross.



Ben Kooiman was recently sworn in by City Clerk Maggie Hefter as a Lieutenant for FDLFR. Ben's wife, Heather, was in attendance to pin him. **Congratulations Lt. Kooiman!**



## Happy Birthday – June & July

Edgar Ramirez-Tellez • Rick Gerritson • Carl Bahr  
John Rolfe • Nate Wilson • Lori Muentner  
Connor Knaus • Andrea Hoksbergen  
Joe Goldapske • Sam Tennesen  
Mitch Petersen • Taylor Huenink

## CONGRATULATIONS!

Captain Ben Stephany – 15 Years  
Engineer Jacob Vogds – 15 Years  
FF/P Andrew Behnke – 5 Years  
*Thank you for your valued and appreciated service to FDLFR.*



Both with a  
June 18, 2007 Hire Date

June 12, 2017  
Hire Date



# ANNUAL RECOGNITION DINNER

Tuesday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> marked the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Recognition and Awards Banquet which was held at Avenue 795. It was a great night celebrating the successes of 2020 & 2021. Those in attendance included members from the Police/Fire Commission, City Council, City Clerk's Office, as well as the Medical Directors. The Awards were presented by Interim Chief Gerritson with Emily Matesic serving as the MC for the evening.

## OFFICER OF THE YEAR AWARD



Captain Joe Maramonte  
2020 Officer of the Year



AC of EMS Todd Janquart  
2021 Officer of the Year

## FIREFIGHTER OF THE YEAR AWARD



Engineer Dwight Fisher  
2020 Firefighter of the Year



Engineer Rick Gerritson  
2021 Firefighter of the Year

## PARAMEDIC OF THE YEAR AWARD



Lt. Carl Bahr  
2021 Paramedic of the Year

## EXCELLENCE AWARD



FF/P Matt Simon  
2021 Excellence Award



Office Mgr. Lori Muentner  
2021 Excellence Award

## AWARD OF MERIT



FF/P Sam Tennesen  
2021 Award of Merit



FF/P Connor Knaus  
2021 Award of Merit

# ANNUAL RECOGNITION DINNER, continued

## UNIT CITATION



Third Shift  
Unit Citation



Lt. Paul Wilson & Lt. Shawn Kneeland  
Unit Citation

## STORK AWARD



1<sup>st</sup> Shift – Station 3  
Stork Award

## SPECIAL RECOGNITION OF SERVICE



Dr. Nate Larsen, Medical Director  
Special Recognition Award

## RETIREES HONORED



Deb Pinnow – Records Clerk



Kevin Doll - Engineer



Todd Janquart – AC of EMS



Troy Haase – Division Chief

## SPECIAL THANKS TO MASTER OF CEREMONIES EMILY MATESIC







## Well-trained people are the best defense against fire.

By: Assistant Chief of Training/Safety  
James Knowles III

### A Navy Seal Applies the 'Art of War' to a New Enemy: Fire

Source: *Frumentarius*, (2020). A navy seal applies the art of war to a new enemy: fire. Sandboxx

The perennially-cited ancient Chinese General Sun Tzu, author of "The Art of War," instructed all contemporary and future practitioners of warfare to "know thy enemy." In a hundred battles, he assured them, "you will never be defeated." Sage advice indeed, and as many times as it has paid off handsomely for history's most successful military leaders, it has also been ignored and, as a result, has led to as many ignominious defeats.

On the battlefield, this maxim is fairly clear-cut. There are generally two sides to every conflict, and an [effective commander](#) aims to know his enemy's political motivations, military strategies and tactics, the extent and limitations of his material resources, and the overarching strengths and weaknesses of his forces.

On the fire ground, the enemy is different. While it is indeed a living, breathing, and advancing foe, fire possesses no intelligence nor motivation; that is, other than a relentless drive to consume all available fuel and air as it develops and grows to as large an inferno as conditions will allow.

Does this mean, because a non-sentient elemental force —fire— is the enemy of the firefighter, that a Fire Officer or Chief cannot truly *know* his or her enemy on their own battlefield? Absolutely not. Fire develops and acts in certain predictable ways, whether it be in a compartment (house, building, or other enclosed structure), a passenger vehicle, an airplane, a naval vessel, or in the wild-land of the western United States.

For the purposes of this article,

because your author is a municipal firefighter and his number one threat from fire is in an enclosed structure, we shall focus on knowing our enemy within that particular battleground.

So what does fire want when heat, fuel, and oxygen come together in just the right way to give it life in the bedroom, attic, or kitchen of your house? Simply put, its only motivation is to grow and consume every last bit of fuel within that geographic space. Fuel is anything that will burn, which — given unlimited capacity for the fire to grow — will end up being pretty much any and every thing. Sure, some fuels burn more readily than others, but eventually, without firefighters engaging it with water or some other method to rob it of heat, oxygen, or fuel, the fire will consume almost everything in that house.

The firefighter's chosen weapon to fight this enemy is water. Lots and lots of water. Water removes the heat from the combustion process that is necessary for the fire to continue to exist and grow. It cools everything it wets and thus robs the fire of one of its essential resources. Without the heat, the fire loses the war. Firefighters can also rob a fire of oxygen, using carbon dioxide extinguishers, foam, or other retardants. This also removes a necessary resource from the enemy, and results in his total defeat. For a large and or fast-growing structure fire, though, water is still the weapon of choice. It is plentiful and effective and can be employed in the tens-of-thousands of gallons in a fight.

What about the tactics the fire employs to achieve its strategy of

growing ever larger and consuming all in its path? A fire that starts in a corner of your room, in a waste basket, will start in that basket and grow up and out. It will burn the fuel in that trash can, and grow large enough to advance up the wall, to the ceiling, or make a leap to the adjacent couch or bed. Like an army consuming the crops of the land it just conquered, the fire begins to consume the fuel that is the couch material, curtains, or bed. It gains strength like an enemy conscripting troops as it goes, growing larger and more destructive. And hotter.

As the fire grows, it releases what can be thought of as its air forces, in the form of smoke. Smoke is not some minor hindrance to sight, or some slight irritation to breathing like it is around an open-burning campfire. Smoke in a compartment filled with petroleum-based furniture and other materials (fuels) is *deadly, combustible, turbulent, acrid, and hot*. It will eventually fill the compartment from ceiling to floor as it banks down like the pitch-black force of nature that it is. That is, until it either mixes with air introduced through an opening and explodes violently outward, or ignites once a certain auto-ignition temperature is reached, resulting in a flashover which will consume in fire everything within that compartment.

Yes, [smoke is flammable](#). And yes, if you are in that compartment when it flashes over, it does not matter if you are armored in the best fire gear available; the fire will win and you will lose.

Knowing the fire will employ these tactics helps the firefighter in his battle. In today's firefighting

operations, you have precious few minutes from the start of that fire in the room/attic/compartment to get water on the fire, or disrupt the combustion process before the fire evolves into a raging inferno consuming the whole space in which it began. If the ignition room has already flashed when you arrive, then you start the battle from there, and contain the fire to its present location and size. You engage the enemy where and how you find him. If the fire has involved the structure fully, and burned through the roof, for example, then you employ what we call a defensive strategy.

A defensive fire attack means that the firefighters have arrived to an advanced enemy that has grown to a size and strength that prevents the firefighters from engaging it inside the structure (and thus stopping it from taking the whole structure). In a defensive fight, the structure is lost. We have given it up to the enemy, and are fighting to save the adjacent structures. We will fight it in one structure, hope to keep it contained there, and save the other properties exposed to the fire.

Arriving first at the scene of a fire, the officer who will command the incident has to size his enemy up quickly and accurately if he or she is to effectively defeat it with the minimal risk possible to the firefighters engaged. That means knowing the enemy: its location, the fuel it has to work with, the nature of the structure in which it is growing, how far it has advanced, and where it is going next. Sun Tzu, in other words, was not just speaking to battlefield commanders when he said "know thy enemy." He was also speaking to those who fight fire.

# Fire Prevention

## *The Bureau Never Sleeps*

By: Division Chief of Community Risk Reduction & Life Safety  
Jason Roberts



## Community Risk Reduction

### Inspections

Fond du Lac Fire/Rescue personnel has utilized time in April and May to focus on follow-up inspections for liquor license reviews, past open violations, and violations concerning alarm and sprinkler systems. We are proud to report that the number of open system violations has been reduced by **49%**. Furthermore, our overall open violations have reduced by 12 pages. The new software program will assist with tracking of follow-up inspections, compliance tracking, and data analysis.

The department has moved to charging for re-inspections of occupancies after a repeat visit. This will be utilized in addition to the citation to gain consistent compliance. The focus will continue to be on education regarding the fire and municipal codes prior to enforcement action.

### Education

As the summer is in full swing, I hope we were able to connect at one of many of the events around our community. You will find us at National Night Out on Tuesday, August 2<sup>nd</sup> from 4-7 pm at the park next to the fairgrounds.

Come say hello and grab a few items that will start your school year off in a cool direction. We are excited to report that work is being done to prepare educational outreach for the upcoming school year. We have re-evaluated our fire prevention materials and shifted in a new direction. Fond du Lac Fire/Rescue is utilizing materials from groups such as the National Fire Safety Council <https://nfsc.org/> and the Professional Fire Fighters of Wisconsin Charitable Foundation fire safety newspaper <https://pffwcf.org/firesafety/>

### Fire Investigations

Help us mitigate the risk of fire. Our community and its members have been devastated by the damage, loss of possessions, injuries, and pet fatalities in recent months. We are asking you to do your part to be extra safe. Simple steps such as properly discarding smoking materials, shutting off and unplugging appliances prior to leaving the home, and pertinent safe cooking practices will assist with reducing the risk. As always, check your smoke alarms monthly, establish a meeting place, and practice your fire escape plans.



## Free Smoke Alarm Installation

*Fond du Lac Fire has partnered with the American Red Cross of Wisconsin and the Fond du Lac Senior Center to perform home safety visits and install smoke alarms. This is a two-day event on May 24-25, 2022. During the 20-minute visit, volunteers and other partners will install the smoke alarms and share information on causes of home fires, how to prevent them, what actions to take if a fire starts, and how to create a fire escape plan.*

### \*\*\* UPDATE TO THIS STORY \*\*\*

Fond du Lac Fire Rescue was able to visit a total of **41 homes with 87 alarm installations** during the two day event. We are working on scheduling 33 other appointments during the coming weeks which will more than likely bring our total alarms installed to 150 or more. We worked with our community partners that made this event possible: The American Red Cross of Wisconsin, Mercury Marine, The Fond du Lac Senior Center, ADRC of Fond du Lac County, Nicholas Family Foundation and Festival Foods!





# Consejos de seguridad durante el verano



## Cómo realizar actividades de manera segura



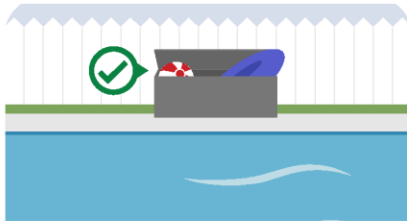
Nunca nade cerca de un barco, un muelle o una rampa para embarcaciones.



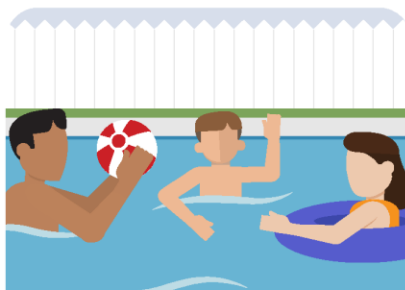
Utilice siempre chalecos salvavidas aprobados por la Guardia Costera de EE. UU.



Los adultos deben permanecer con los niños cuando estén cerca del agua.



Mantenga la piscina y sus alrededores libres de flotadores, pelotas y juguetes después de salir de la piscina.



Siempre nade acompañado.



Lleve siempre un casco de ciclista y ropa brillante mientras corra su bicicleta para que la gente pueda verlo. Coloque reflectores en su bicicleta.

Conduzca agarrando el manubrio con las dos manos. Además, hágalo en dirección del tráfico. Deténgase ante todos los letreros de alto y obedezca los semáforos.



Para más información y recursos gratuitos, visite [usfa.fema.gov](https://usfa.fema.gov).

# Summer Safety Tips



## Activity safety



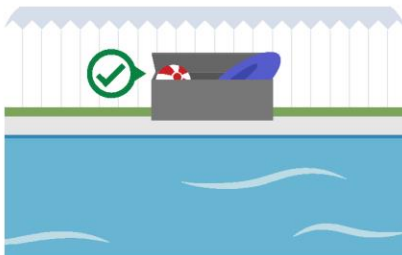
Never swim near a boat, marina or boat launching ramp.



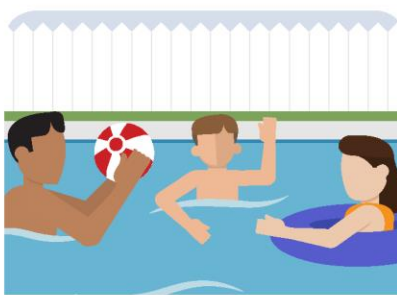
Always use U.S. Coast Guard-approved life safety jackets.



Adults need to stay with children when they are around water.



Keep the pool and deck clear of floats, balls and toys after you get out of the pool.



Always swim with a buddy.



Always wear a bike helmet and bright clothes when cycling so people can see you. Put reflectors on your bike.

Ride with both hands on the handlebars. Ride in single file with traffic. Stop at all stop signs and obey traffic lights.



For more information and free resources, visit [www.usfa.fema.gov](http://www.usfa.fema.gov).