

FREMONT COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT



The District

January-February 2016

District Chief

Happy New Year. I hope that you all had an enjoyable Christmas and Holiday Season. I look forward to the start of a New Year as we continue to progress the District into a positive direction. I hope that each of you will also look forward to upcoming year and join us as we implement some small but what we feel are significant and necessary changes.

I take the responsibility upon myself for allowing some of the bad habits and lackadaisical attitudes that were allowed to pass by over the years. I will make no excuse except that I was hoping for the best and that everyone would accept some personal accountability upon themselves.

But alas the ideology of a dreamer. I felt that given enough opportunity and leeway everyone would eventually catch the vision and direction of the District. We have tried many different directions to accomplish the goal of having trained and competent firefighters. Firefighters that can accomplish the requirements of the District in a reasonable amount of time and provide for themselves a successful volunteer experience.

But the one thing that it really comes down to is personal accountability on everyone's part. I hate to beat a dead horse on this subject, but maybe we have done more damage by providing more and thus requiring less. I can see the puzzled looks on your faces and yet there are some out there who know exactly what I am talking about. So a quick trip down memory lane for some of you. Not so long ago in a place not so far away there was no District, no tax payer funds to buy new fire stations, pay for the heat and lights, put fuel in the trucks, no shop to make all of the repairs or maintain the equipment. No new bunker gear with fancy flashlights and radios.

Continued page 2



Fremont County Fire Protection District

Save the Date!

District Banquet January 23

St. Margaret's Gym
Cash Bar-6:00 P.M.
Dinner-7:00 P.M.

Watch for your Invitation!

In This Issue

- Craig's Message
continued
- Dan's Message
- Upcoming Events

District Chief

continued

PPE was another story, everything was a hand me down and very seldom did we get new equipment. Usually it was at the mercy of a more generous fire department that could afford new gear. Training was all provided in house and very few opportunities to travel to outside training. A lot of the training was OJT and a lot of the time bad habits were passed down and we did it because that was how we had always done it. I am not saying that it wasn't good training most of the time, we just did not look outside the box, nor did we keep up with the changes that were happening all around us.

Each department had at least two different fundraisers a year or they dipped into their own pockets to keep the lights on and the trucks running. Everyone had some skin in the game; everyone took some responsibility not just for themselves, but also for the department.

So, with all that being said, have we taken away the opportunity to have ownership and personal accountability? Are we no longer asking enough of our volunteers? Looking at the volunteer fire service I actually see that about the same amount of time is being required, or maybe even a little less than was in the past. And maybe that is the problem. Maybe if we each took some accountability and ownership in the department as well as our fellow firefighters to ensure their/our success maybe we could function a little bit more like a team.

Maybe the next time that you walk into the firehall you could pick up a broom and sweep the floor. When you use the firehall for your personal use maybe at least clean up your mess. Yes folks I travel around the district and am saddened by what I see. I will not go into detail, but at least clean up after yourselves. For crying out loud at least act like adults. We do not have a maid service to run around and pick up after you, we can't afford it. And if we did you would need to decide what you could do without. All of you should be able to understand that everything comes at a cost and if you want us to pick up after you then it is going to cost in another area, maybe training, maintenance, equipment, or whatever.

I understand the requirement and sacrifice that it takes to be a firefighter. But I am not sure that everyone does. Making 1 or 2 meetings a year and not completing the required training does not allow you to put on the mantle of volunteer firefighter. There is a certain criteria that is required to be able to retire and enter into the respected role of a reserve firefighter, and even then there is required training. And our reserve folks understand that because they have been there and done that. They have made the sacrifice and done more for their community than most people can fathom. They understand what personal accountability is and what it is all about. And I will bet you that they know what a broom is and how to clean up after themselves. They take pride in what they do and what they have.

So get off your butts, talk to those who have really made the sacrifice and have the desire to be a firefighter and accept the accountability that goes with it. I will make a commitment to those who make a commitment to the District. But don't come to me and tell me you want to take chief officer classes when you haven't even got your Firefighter I certification or your NWCG Firefighter Type 2 qualification. The District is about providing fire and emergency response to the tax paying citizens of the District, not for your personal gain. It is about taking personal responsibility for what you choose to do.

Not everyone is cut out to be a firefighter, but for those of you who are willing to do what it takes I cannot express the gratitude and admiration that I have for you. The fire service is a dangerous business and we need to ensure the safety of our firefighters to the best of our abilities. Allowing people to slip through the cracks is not exercising our due diligence. For those of you who have the desire to be a firefighter I will make everyone effort possible to ensure your success. But in the words of Yoda, "Do or Do Not. There is no try" and "You will find only what you bring in."

So to each of you I look forward to working with you in the New Year and am excited about the opportunities that are before us. I hope each and every one of you knows how much I/we appreciate all that you do and have joined us in making Fremont County Fire Protection District one of the best fire departments and accepted the responsibility that goes with that. Once again Thank You for all that you do.

Craig

District Trainer

Hey folks,

As we roll into another new year, I like many of you, tend to look back at the plans, goals and resolutions made for 2015. Now, as I said last January, I am not much for making New Year's Resolutions because they are usually unrealistic and unachievable. You know, win the lottery, become independently wealthy and never have to work again, stuff like that.

For me, 2015 was an unusual year, with many challenges personally, professionally, physically and emotionally. Now, I will not go into detail about any of those challenges or experiences. I will however, try and present my thoughts and some of the lessons I have learned because of them.

Attitude and choice; we have all heard the saying "attitude is everything" and there is definitely truth to that. Whether that attitude is good or bad is your choice and that choice is going to be impacted by the situation and/or way you feel at that particular moment. We all have bad days, nobody can be rainbows and unicorns all the time.

Lesson learned: It is how we act and what we say on our bad days that people remember.

Perseverance; the determination and tenacity required to accomplish our goals, regardless of the hardships and difficulties that we face. As firefighters we have a drive to succeed, we don't like to lose and we take it personally when things don't go our way. Being a firefighter is not a sprint, it is a marathon and sometimes winning the war requires losing some battles. "Failure is not an option", no statement has ever been truer. Failure is simply a life lesson designed to lead us in a different direction in order to succeed.

Lesson learned: It's not how many times you get knocked down in life that counts, but rather, how many times you get back up.

Dedication; a Firefighter's dedication to their neighbor and community is unquestionable, especially when that Firefighter is a Volunteer. The commitment of time and training required to not just do this job, but to do this job to the best of your ability should be above reproach.

Lesson learned: Be better today than you were yesterday, be better tomorrow than you are today.

Priorities; Family, Job, Fire Department! This has been the list and order since day one. For many of us Family and Fire Department are synonymous and quite often become interchangeable. This in turn impairs our ability to prioritize one over the other anytime the tones drop. Selfless or Selfish?

Lesson learned: When it comes to personal wellbeing and time spent with family, it's ok to be self-ish.

Just somethings to think about

Have a great 2016

Dan

Upcoming Trainings

Mid Winter Fire School

January 8-10 Contact Headquarters



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The District

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