



### CHIEF'S CORNER

#### The End of Non-E's

Hello everyone, and welcome to the Valentine's edition of the Chief's Corner. I hope everyone is doing well and looking forward to the coming of spring. I know I will be very happy to see some warm weather and spring days where you can get outside and enjoy yourself. The topic for this month's corner is the Fire Department's progress towards eliminating the provision of non-emergency transports and how we got to this point. I will also mention some history of these transports and what the next step will be as we move forward. So, without further delay, let's get started.

Years ago when the Fire Department began providing ambulance transport, we did not provide non-emergency service. The department had assumed the emergency transport service when the private company doing them informed City Council that they would no longer be providing emergency service. The Fire Department would respond and transport patients in emergency situations and the private company handled the non-emergency transports from nursing homes and carrying patients to doctor visits, etc. However, in the spring of 1977, the private company decided that it was going to close and ceased to provide any type of ambulance transport; at that point the Fire Department inherited the non-emergency aspect of the service.

As time went on and the call volume continued to increase, the non-emergency transports became a substantial part of the service we provided. In the early 1980s, they amounted to over 25 percent of the total number of transports. We were also responsible for the out-of-town transports, both emergency and non-emergency, at that time. These out-of-town runs were very difficult to schedule and really placed a strain on department resources. When you were required to take a patient, on short notice, to another hospital in Tidewater, for example, it meant your medic unit would be gone for hours and could not be used to help answer the emergency calls. Now some of these calls could be handled by off-duty personnel, but many of them happened late at night with little warning and we would have to send on-duty members.

Sending medics who had already been working most of a shift caused problems because these employees were tired and it was not safe for them to be driving long distances without the proper amount of rest. There were several accidents where medic units were damaged and equipment was destroyed. If you get the chance, you might want to discuss this situation with Battalion Chief Bomar. He can tell you about his "ride" down the median strip on Route 360 in Amelia. It was quite the event back in the day.

After several years of LFD handling these transports, Centra Health expressed a desire to start providing this service and

approached the City about taking the out-of-town transports. The Fire Department needed to concentrate its resources on the emergency calls and gladly turned the out-of-town transports over to Centra. This signaled the turning point with the non-emergency transports and the department has been slowly shifting the responsibility for these to outside agencies ever since. Several years later, Centra asked to begin to provide all non-emergency transports between the facilities which they owned and/or operated. The City issued them a "Certificate of Convenience and Necessity" and Centra has been taking the majority of these transports since then. This brings us to the present day situation.

Centra Health and several other agencies have expressed a desire to handle all of the non-emergency transports within the City. With the ever increasing call volume the Fire Department is experiencing, now is the right time for us to stop providing this service and concentrate on the emergencies. During the City Council Work Session on January 28, 2014, Acting Battalion Chief Heather Childress and I presented a proposal to allow the Fire Department to stop providing this service and turn over all non-emergency transports to other agencies. Council approved this request and the City will now begin the process to determine what agencies have a desire to provide non-emergency transports. We plan to issue a certificate to agencies that meet the State requirements for ambulance transport and allow them to perform these transports within the City.

This process should not take long and I anticipate that there will be a lot of interest. In the near future, the Fire Department will no longer be providing any non-emergency transports and that will close a colorful chapter in the department's history of ambulance service. It's been a long time coming, but the time is right and we are ready to turn the page on this issue.

That pretty much wraps it up for this month. I hope everyone can "survive" the remaining weeks of winter and let's start to get ourselves ready for the change of season. Keep up the great work and take care of our citizens. However, never forget the most important rule: "Everyone goes home safe at the end of the shift!"

Chief

### \* REMINDERS \*

#### Communications Meeting

The next Communications Meeting will be held February 6, 2014 at 8:30 a.m. in the Fire Admin. Training Room.

#### Holiday Observed

City offices will be closed on February 17<sup>th</sup> in observance of President's Day.

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## ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to the following members who celebrate anniversaries with the department in February.

### 26 Years

Maurice Braxton      Ronnie Coleman

### 25 Years

Russell Ayscue

### 23 Years

Tim Staton

### 16 Years

Tyson Crawley

### 6 Years

Megan Signor

### 1 Year

Beau Arnn                      Heather Bowen  
Tucker Driskill              Jason Marston  
Sam Young

## OMD OFFICE HOURS

By: Acting BC Heather Childress  
The department's Operational Medical Director (OMD), Dr. Marilyn McLeod, will have office hours in Fire Administration from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on the following dates: February 17, March 5, March 31, April 8, and April 22.

You are encouraged to stop by and take advantage of the time with Dr. McLeod. She will be here doing chart reviews, run calls, and getting to know our personnel better. This is a perfect opportunity to ask questions or if you want to review a call with her!

Dr. McLeod is proud to be our OMD and she wants to grow a stronger relationship with everyone. I hope our members will use this opportunity to get to know her and use her as a resource. Contact me at 455-6360 if you would like to set up a specific time or have specific questions for her.

## CERTIFICATIONS

**EMT Intermediate**  
Heather Bowen

**EMT Enhanced**  
Robert Tucker

## TRAINING NEWS

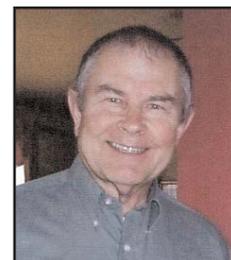
The department will conduct a two-day ITLS course at CVCC during the months of February and March. There have been many changes to the curriculum since the majority of our providers attended their initial training so this will be a great opportunity for everyone to be informed of those changes. The Training Division plans to conduct ACLS and PALS training in a similar fashion. Information regarding this will be released at a later time.

## RETIREE RECONNECT

The purpose of this segment is to allow department members to "reconnect" with our retired members and find out what they've been up to! It will also introduce new department members to our retirees who served for many years and share some of their valuable knowledge.

### Captain Carl Davis

25 Years, 3 Months of Service  
(Feb. 3, 1976 to May 1, 2001)  
Email: rivrrat275@aol.com



### Share a fond memory/experience(s) that you were a part of during your career at LFD.

- My first day at work was at the old Rivermont Station (#4) right after the annexation. I was assigned to A Shift on Engine Company 9, which was using Engine 4. My officer was Acting Commander Jim Cothran. Bill Tolley and Billy Blum were on the engine with me. My first emergency run was lint smoldering in a clothes dryer on Essex Street. A couple of days later I had my first working fire, a kitchen fire on Morningside Drive.
- I remember one cold night I was pumping Engine 9 (the Saulsbury Swift Strike) at a working fire on Daniels Hill. It was so cold, when we finished, I couldn't move the engine because the wheels were frozen to the street. I had to take a sledge hammer and break ice around the tires before we could move.
- I also spent 1-1/2 years as a dispatch supervisor before police and fire communications were combined. In those days, the communications center was in the basement of Station 1. It was interesting to experience the other side of the radio traffic. That helped me better understand what information the dispatchers needed when I later returned to the line as a company officer.
- Once when assigned to Station 4 with Chick Carwile and Steve Walthall, it was Super Bowl Sunday and we were eating supper while watching the game in the kitchen. We had grilled steaks outside and the overhead door was still open. A guy came through the back door, drunk as could be, muttering something about an emergency. When I asked him about it, he said there was a pop and there was smoke in the bathroom. I asked him the address and he pointed out back and said, "right here!" I said, "Bedford Avenue," and he said "yes!" I asked him what block and he said "600!" I told him there was no 600 block of Bedford Avenue, and he got agitated and said again, "right there!" I called communications and reported a still alarm in the 600 block of Bedford Avenue. The dispatcher said "there is no 600 block of Bedford Avenue." I replied, "I know, just send a full response in this direction and I'll give them an address when we get there." I told the guy to stand on the porch so we could see where to stop. When we turned the corner, we didn't need to look for him because there was heavy fire in a house on the corner, 600 Amherst Street! We were there a good while!
- I remember a call on Early Street when a caller had stated that smoke was coming out of the eaves of a neighbor's house. We arrived with heavy smoke showing and reports that the resident was inside. We broke the door down and I found her unconscious on the floor overcome with smoke. I carried her out and covered her with a blanket until the ambulance arrived and took her to the hospital where she recovered. I got a reprimand for entering without an air pack, but I am quite sure had I not done so, she would not have survived.

### What do you miss the most about the department?

I still miss the camaraderie of the guys and gals around the department and the feeling of accomplishment when we saved a building or a life.

### What advice would you give to someone beginning their LFD career?

Keep your eyes and ears open, learn all you can, not only from training, but from the older, experienced firefighters.

## CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to Holly and Brian Shackelford on the birth of their son, Isaac Cole. He was born January 17, 2014.