



**Chief's Corner**

**A Good 2015 — Looking For A Great 2016!**

Hello everyone and welcome to the first Chief's Corner of the new year. I hope you had an enjoyable holiday season and got to spend time with friends and family. It's now time to settle in for the long cold winter (a.k.a. fire season) and await the arrival of warmer weather. Here's hoping for a mild winter and an early spring. This month, I want to take a quick look back at a successful 2015 and look forward to some exciting things for 2016.

2015 was a very good year for the Lynchburg Fire Department. Below are a few highlights:

- We answered over 19,651 calls for service and we provided excellent fire suppression and emergency medical care for our citizens. We did all of this without any of our providers getting seriously injured or ill.
- We maintained our return of spontaneous circulation percentage (ROSC) at double the national average.
- We conducted our 14<sup>th</sup> recruit academy and successfully graduated 12 new firefighter/EMTs.
- The department won several awards in the region (including the Outstanding EMS Agency in the BREMS region) and received the Gold Award from the American Heart Association for our cardiac care.
- A number of new officers were promoted during two promotional ceremonies and we have some new members in Administration.

This all adds up to a very successful 2015. While I am happy the department had a good year, we will be working to make 2016 even better.

As the new year begins, there are a number of projects in the works that should keep the department moving in the right direction. In the spring of this year, we will be updating our Strategic Plan. This plan has been the basis for a great deal of the things the department has been involved in over the last number of years. It helps to set the direction for the department and helps us prioritize where we place our resources. It's very important that we review this plan every couple of years and keep it relevant. While this will not be a complete rewrite of the plan, we will update some of the "goals and focus areas" to help the department continue to move in the right direction. The Strategic Plan update is an important project and I hope a lot of department members will actively participate.

Also this spring, a group will begin to work on the process of reaccreditation. The department must reapply every five years to maintain our status through CFAI (Commission on Fire Accreditation International). This fall, the department must submit the paperwork as we reapply and we can expect a visit from the accreditation team in late 2016 or early 2017. The department has maintained our accreditation status for 10 years

and it ensures that we are following the best practices and delivering excellent service. While the process is laborious and time consuming, it is worth the effort. Only a small number of departments throughout the world voluntarily participate in this process, but it helps to focus your efforts and become one of the best.

This year we should also see the completion of the renovations to Fire Station #6. (Can I get an "amen" on that.) This project has been a long time in the making, but it should be completed before the summer. The fully refurbished station should provide a great "home" to Engine 6 and Medic 6, as well as a base from which the department serves the center city (sometimes called "midtown"). The department will also look at a number of other stations that need updating and plan for that work in the near future.

With a number of anticipated retirements in 2016, the department is planning to conduct another basic recruit school this summer. We are not sure of the exact number of recruits for this school but it is beginning to look like we will have somewhere between 8-10. The department is getting younger with each recruit school and that means more opportunity for employees.

Speaking of opportunities, the department will be conducting several promotional processes later this year (2016). With the exhaustion of both the Captain and Master Firefighter lists, this will be necessary to fill both current and anticipated vacancies. The timelines for these processes will be forthcoming in the not too distant future.

The last thing that will bring change to the department in 2016 is the retirement of City Manager Kim Payne. We don't know who will be the the next leader for the City, but some things are bound to be different. Mr. Payne has been very good to work with and the department will surely miss him, but I'm confident the next manager will be supportive and assist the Fire Department with our mission.

Well, that's it for this month's Chief's Corner. Here's hoping you are prepared for another productive year. The Fire Department continues to provide excellent service to our citizens and I am looking forward to a great 2016.

Keep up the good work and stay safe. Enjoy the winter season and get outside and pursue some cold weather activities. However, never forget the most important rule: "Everyone goes home safe at the end of the shift."

Chief

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## Department Welcomes New Chaplain

Please join us in welcoming Rick Edwards as the new Lynchburg Fire Department Chaplain.



Rick reached out to the organization to serve in this volunteer capacity and officially began his service at the recent recruit school graduation.

Rick previously served as the chaplain for the Williamston, NC Fire Department. Rick is a highly acclaimed member of the transit team at Liberty University. You can follow Rick on Instagram @lubusdriverrick. He is available to all department members by phone at (719) 205-3073 or by email at raedwards@liberty.edu.

Retired Captain Les Davidson is planning to retire as the Department's Chaplain in March, after serving the department with a total of 60 years of service as a Captain and then as the Chaplain.

## Certifications

### EVOC 1, 2, 3; Firefighter I & II; Haz-Mat Awareness & Operations

Brandon Bergeron  
Dana Bischoff  
Corey Douglas  
Charles Evans  
Frank Fowler  
Ashley Howard  
Peter Keller  
Lonnie Kincaid  
Chris Mabes  
Joshua Mata  
Aaron Reeves  
Joseph Watts

### Structural Collapse Technician; Vehicle Rescue - Level I

Roger Rozell

## Congratulations!

Congratulations to Cobly Felton and his wife on the birth of their daughter, Grace Margarete. Grace was born January 4, 2016 and weighed 5 lbs., 5oz.

### REMINDER

City offices will be closed January 18<sup>th</sup> in observance of Martin Luther King Day.

## Ayscue Selected As Logistics Captain

By: Deputy Chief Jason Campbell

Congratulations to Captain Russell Ayscue who has been selected to fill the role of the Logistics Captain. He will be responsible for the maintenance and repair activities for fire department facilities, purchasing of equipment and supplies for the organization, and supervision of the fire apparatus shop.

Captain Ayscue assumed this role effective December 30, 2015. Former Logistics Captain Jonathan Wright was promoted to Battalion Chief of Training; however, he will continue to serve as the department's coordinator for radios and the transition to the new radio system in 2016, along with continuing to serve as the department's liaison for the Fire Station 6 renovation project.

Please join me congratulating Captain Ayscue as he assumes his new role. Also, join me in thanking Chief Wright for his tireless efforts while serving as the Logistics Officer for the past eight years.



Captain  
Russell Ayscue

## 60 Second Safety

By: Captain Tom McCrickard

### Apparatus Safety

Vehicle crashes involving fire apparatus is the second leading cause of firefighter fatalities in the United States. According to a recent article in the Richmond Times-Dispatch and the NFPA, approximately twenty percent of the firefighter fatalities over the last decade occurred while firefighters were responding to or returning from calls. Only heart attacks from overexertion kill more firefighters in the line of duty.

Almost every day there is new information concerning yet another vehicle crash involving a fire apparatus or ambulance. The majority of these crashes occur at intersections. The law mandates we drive with due regard at all times. Never assume another motorist sees you, hears you, or is going to give you the right-of-way.

Driving any apparatus, especially "code 3," is an awesome responsibility. As a driver/operator you are not only responsible for yourself, but also for the crew on board (including a patient in a medic unit), the apparatus, and, to a certain extent, the other motorists and pedestrians around you. The ramifications of a crash involving a fire apparatus or medic unit extend FAR beyond bent metal. No one benefits if we crash responding to a call for service. Do not overdrive your abilities or the capabilities of the apparatus. Always drive with due regard, obey the law, and remember your EVOC training.



## Is Your Chimney Ready for Winter?

By: Jennifer Mayberry, Public Education Specialist

November and December 2015 were undoubtedly some of the mildest months to begin winter this area has seen in a long time with temperatures ranging between the 50's to 70's. With all of the rain we have received in this area, it's probably a good thing because we'd still be shoveling out from under the snow if we had been below freezing temperatures.

One of the most common methods of keeping warm and cozy is a fire in the fireplace or wood stove. This ritual has been passed on through many centuries! Who doesn't like to sit by the warm fire with hot chocolate or coffee, watching a good movie when it's cold outside or warm up after you've been playing in the snow? But before you light that fire, be sure you have had your chimney checked by a certified chimney sweep or technician!

When you light your fire, smoke, gases, tar fog, and unburned wood particles rise through your chimney, sticking to the inner liner. As the chimney cools, this creates creosote. Creosote can take many forms from crusty and flaky to tar-like and dripping, but all forms are highly combustible! The more you burn, the more of this residue sticks to the inside of your chimney and builds up. If this isn't cleaned out properly, then the next fire you light could ignite the creosote resulting in a chimney fire or worse, a house fire.

The best ways to prevent chimney fires is to remember these steps: only burn seasoned dry wood, use dry kindling to start your fire, never burn trash or garbage such as cardboard or styrofoam plates and cups, and get regular chimney inspections. With the proper care, chimney fires are 100 percent preventable.