

THE CHATTANOOGA FIRE DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER



SEPTEMBER 2023



Members of the Chattanooga Fire Department continue mourning the loss of Captain Tom Montgomery, a 25-year veteran. He passed away September 8th at the age of 52. His death has left firefighters holding tight to memories of him at the fire halls and out on calls working together. Tom came to us on October 15, 1997 from the Public Works Division. He served in our Supply Division before being assigned to the Training Division as a new recruit and then became a sworn firefighter. He brought many skills to the table from his outdoor background that made him an asset on our Hazardous Materials Team and our Urban Search and Rescue Team. He had an illustrious career and worked his way through the ranks, becoming a captain in 2008. He continued to provide leadership in that role throughout the rest of his career. He worked on engines, ladders and squads and had a wealth of experience on each of those apparatus. At the end of his career, he served North Chattanooga as a captain on Engine 12 Blue Shift. His personal and professional contributions to the department and the community will be greatly missed. Our thoughts remain with his loved ones and his extended CFD family as everyone copes with this loss. Relatives held a private memorial service to honor Tom.

"Captain Montgomery's love for the outdoors brought invaluable skills to our team, and his affinity for mechanics – namely his family's vintage 1929 Ford Model A – aided in his expertise on engines, ladders, and other gear. He was a dedicated member of our Fire Department, but more importantly, he was a pillar of strength and wisdom for our team for the past 25 years and a dear friend to many. As we mourn a beloved friend and leader, let us remember to lean on the bonds we share with each other," said Mayor Tim Kelly. "Together, Captain Montgomery's legacy will live on."





Firefighters from across the region, along with members of law enforcement, learned life-saving skills during the Chattanooga Fire Department's confined space rescue training courses held during the month of September. Participants gained the knowledge they need on how to operate in different, challenging spaces, as well as air monitoring, victim packaging, and air systems. Their final drill consisted of rescuing two victims that were unconscious inside of a tanker trailer donated by BASF and Highway Transport for the CFD's classes. It provided a realistic scenario with obstacles for the first responders to work through in order to make a successful, safe rescue. This type of training can be brought back to each of the students' individual jurisdictions in the event of any confined space emergency. This is also crucial practice for the Regional Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Team. The Regional USAR team has been conducting training in all of the primary disciplines of USAR, including rope rescue, trench rescue, structural collapse, confined space rescue, and trench rescue.



It was another successful year for the Chattanooga 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb! Firefighters from across the region and community members turned out to honor the lives of the heroes lost on that tragic day.





Firefighter Zach Walker (Quint 1 Blue Shift) and his wife, Allissa, welcomed their daughter, Mia Rose, on September 6th. Zach says he got a huge promotion when he became a dad. "I could not be more proud to hold that title for this perfect baby girl," he said.

Senior Firefighter Alex Efoim (Quint 8 Green Shift) and his wife, Sierra, welcomed their daughter, Ayira, on September 7th. Alex says Ayira already has him wrapped around her finger just like her older sister.



Senior Firefighter Drake Terry (Ladder 5 Blue Shift) and his wife, Tarin, welcomed their daughter, Stella Ann, on September 19th. "The greatest gift we could ever receive," Tarin said.

Senior Firefighter Henry Frick (Squad 13 Blue Shift) married Alex Johnston on September 23rd. Several of his fellow firefighters attended the wedding. Congratulations to the Fricks!

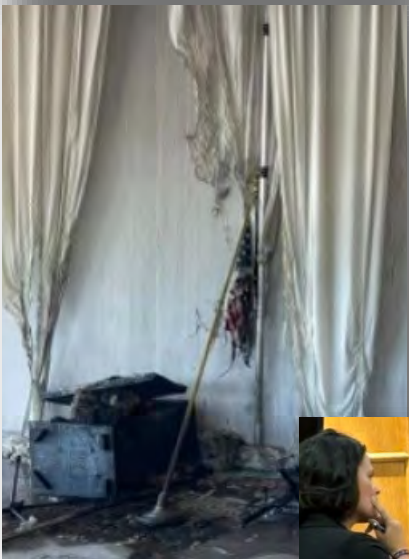


MAJOR INCIDENTS

Blue Shift companies responded to a fire at East Lake Academy of Fine Arts on September 1st. At 10:36 AM, Chattanooga Fire was called to the school at 2700 E 34th Street on reports of a small fire in the second floor boys bathroom. The School Resource Officer extinguished the fire and CFD personnel ventilated the structure. One teacher suffered some smoke inhalation, but denied treatment by HCEMS. A CFD investigator and fire inspector responded, along with Engine 9, Quint 14, Engine 5, Ladder 5, Ladder 1, Ladder 13, Squad 20, Battalion 1, Battalion 2, and Battalion 3. The entire school was evacuated until fire officials deemed it safe for students to return to the building. There were no other injuries. Great work by the school staff executing their fire evacuation protocols and by the SRO for taking quick action to put out the fire.



A suspect is facing multiple charges in connection with damages done to the Chattanooga Masonic Center. Kadum Harwood, 29, is charged with arson, vandalism, burglary and reckless endangerment. At 2:11 AM on September 4th, firefighters responded to the Masonic Lodge at 551 W 21st Street on a fire alarm activation. When CFD personnel arrived on scene, they found a fire on the left front exterior of the building which was quickly extinguished. Also, the front doors were open and as crews made entry, they found another small fire inside the structure which had activated the sprinkler system. The sprinklers effectively extinguished the interior fire. Along with fire and water damage, there was also damage to the building from vandalism. Through the course of a multi-agency investigation involving CFD investigators and law enforcement, Harwood was identified as the suspect in the case. Police say Harwood can be seen on surveillance video using a sledgehammer to destroy parts of the building. They say he also fired a gun into the area before he left and threatened to burn the building on social media. At his preliminary hearing, the judge raised Harwood's bond because of his lengthy criminal history. Harwood moved to represent himself in this case, which has been bound over to a grand jury.



A woman and her dog escaped their burning home with only seconds to spare as a grease fire in the kitchen spread very quickly. On September 14th at 2:12 PM, Red Shift companies responded to a residence in the 5100 block of Lantana Lane off Highway 58 in the Ware Heights subdivision. The call originally came in as a fire alarm and then a neighbor called 911 to report that the kitchen was on fire. Engine 15 could see smoke from Highway 58 and when they arrived on the scene, Lt. Michael Battle took command. Heavy fire and smoke was showing from the front and side of the house. The garage and kitchen were fully involved. Firefighters established a water supply and then several crews went in for an aggressive offensive fire attack as flames broke through the roof. The garage and car parked inside the garage were on fire with gasoline from the car burning, adding to the fire fight. Several hundred feet of supply line was needed and pressure was boosted due to the extended length of the lay. Firefighters had the blaze under control in 10-15 minutes and prevented the fire from ravaging the rest of the structure. The resident stated that she was home at the time cooking when she found herself dealing with a grease fire. She went to call 911 and when she turned back, the flames had spread rapidly. She grabbed her dog and got out without any injuries. She will be receiving assistance from the American Red Cross as she deals with the aftermath of this fire. Responding units/agencies included: Engine 15, Quint 6, Quint 8, Ladder 7, Squad 19, Battalion 2, Battalion 3, CFD Safety Chief, HCEMS, CPD and EPB.



Battalion Chief Brandon Schroyer and the Ladder 13 Red Shift crew saved a man's life at Boyd Buchanan School on September 14th. A spectator at the football game had a cardiac arrest in the bleachers right before the middle school football game and 911 was called by bystanders. CPR was started by civilians and BC Schroyer arrived on scene to take over CPR and attach the school's AED. The first shock was being delivered as the L13 crew arrived. L13 personnel took over CPR and shocked the patient two more times when a pulse and respiration were restored. Medic 16 arrived on scene and transported the 74-year-old patient to the hospital and he was conscious by time he arrived there for further treatment. Last we heard, he's doing well! Great work by BC Schroyer, Captain Kevin Carpenter, Lieutenant Shaun Hinojosa, Senior Firefighter Jason Dill, Firefighter Tim Loving, and Firefighter Tim Chassen.



Hazardous cargo on Interstate 24 caused two separate shutdowns in a span of several hours on September 20th, prompting a response by multiple agencies. The first incident happened on I-24 Eastbound following an organic peroxide spill in East Ridge. At 4 PM, fire and police responded to a hazmat incident on the Germantown Road off-ramp from I-24 East. A motorist spotted a FedEx tractor trailer with fluid leaking out of the back of the truck and called 911. The interstate was shut down in both directions and homes in a 1,000 foot radius were evacuated as a precaution. The truck had a mixed load with other chemicals being transported on the trailer, but those containers were not impaired. The organic peroxide tote had a pinhole leak, prompting a full hazmat response involving multiple agencies. Firefighters suited up and made entry into the trailer to assess the leak. Marion Environmental then responded to the scene to begin securing and off-loading the leaking product. They placed the chemical into a new tote for further transport and conducted further cleanup at the site. Thirty-eight homes and one small apartment complex were evacuated as a precautionary measure. Residents went to the Brainerd Rec Center, staffed by the American Red Cross. There were no injuries.

Once emergency crews cleared that scene, they were called to a wreck at 8PM on I-24W at the 4th Avenue exit after a van collided with a tractor trailer transporting industrial floor cleaner, prompting another hazmat response and forcing the temporary closure of the interstate in both directions. It appeared that a Chevy Astro van came up the wrong way on 4th Avenue exit ramp and pulled in front of the tractor trailer, causing a head-on collision. Due to the patient being pinned in the vehicle and their position in the wreckage, firefighters performed a complicated extrication operation. The patient was cut out of the mangled car by skilled firefighters and then transported to the hospital with serious injuries. He was the only passenger inside the van. The driver of the tractor trailer was transported to the hospital with leg pain. A small leak was coming from the tractor trailer of a product called ZEP, which is a floor stripping material. A private environmental company handled the cleanup.



Engine 9 and Ladder 5 Green Shift responded to a car crash where a car left the East Ridge tunnels at a high rate of speed and left the roadway upon exiting the tunnel, striking a tree and catching fire. This happened on September 21st at 2 AM. Firefighters encountered difficult conditions upon E9's arrival. due to the steep terrain and vegetation overgrowth. The fire was extinguished and one victim was located deceased inside the car.





CFD personnel assisted East Ridge FD with firefighting operations at a three-alarm commercial fire at Camping World on Ringgold Road on September 22nd. Catoosa County Fire Department, Rossville FD, and Tri-Community Volunteer Fire Department provided manpower as well. More CFD companies were requested and additional firefighters reported to the scene. Mutual aid partner agencies provided coverage at fire halls while so many fire companies and agencies worked the blaze. Multiple 911 callers reported seeing smoke and flames coming from the structure around 6:30 PM. Two alarms quickly grew to three alarms in order to bring more resources to the location. As of 9 PM, the fire was under control. There were no injuries. Squad 13, Ladder 13, Quint 8, Engine 21, and Battalion 2 Green Shift responded with other area fire departments. CFD's Operations Chief, Mutual Aid coordinators, EPB, HCEMS, East Ridge PD, and the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Rescue's Rehab Unit were also present.

The cause of a fire at an East Brainerd home is under investigation by the CFD. Quint 21 Red Shift arrived on scene in the 7100 block of Revere Circle on September 27th around 3:15 PM with heavy smoke showing from the structure. Captain Joey Smith established command and then initiated an interior attack. Fire was located in the garage and on the exterior wall. One person was home at the time of the fire and had evacuated the structure prior to CFD's arrival. There were no injuries. Engine 21, Quint 8, Ladder 13, Squad 13, Quint 6, Squad 7, and Battalion 2 responded.



Chattanooga firefighters spent six hours on the scene of a commercial fire in Hixson on September 30th. Multiple 911 callers reported seeing flames coming from a business in the 4700 block of Adams Street off Hamill Road in the early morning hours. Fire companies found a pallet yard, warehouse, several pieces of equipment and a camper burning. Firefighting operations got underway, including crews with handlines and two aerials flowing water. Heavy machinery was brought in order to break up the pallets and fully extinguish the fire. There were no injuries. Everyone got out of the camper. Occupants and pets were both accounted for. Squad 19, Ladder 19, Engine 11, Quint 16, Quint 6, Engine 15, Quint 10, Squad 7, Ladder 7, Battalion 2, and Battalion 3 Green Shift responded. Our mutual aid partners provided coverage at our fire halls while our crews were on this call. The cause of the fire is under investigation. There's extensive damage to equipment and contents at the business.





Congratulations to Eric Penn Jr. on his promotion to Senior Firefighter! He accepted his new rank this month at Station 17 where the command staff and fellow firefighters commended him for his positive attitude, hard work and dedication.

"It's good to see young folks in this department take the next step in moving their career forward," said Fire Chief Phil Hyman. "I appreciate you taking on the role of Senior Firefighter, especially when it's critical for our department's success. I have no doubt that you will do extremely well and I look forward to seeing you in upcoming promotions in years to come."



The CFD's new drone unit is now a deployable asset. Chief Soder and Captain Nichols make up the team. This will greatly help on the scenes of fires, hazmat incidents, land searches & rescues, training events, and our upcoming deployable water rescue team.



Members of Chattanooga Fire Fighters Association Local 820's Fire Ground Survival instructor cadre taught the Fire Ground Survival course to members of some of the Chattanooga area's mutual aid departments this month. Members from Bradley County Fire, Catoosa County Fire, La Vergne TN Fire, Sequoyah Fire and Hwy 58 Fire attended. Fantastic work by all those involved!!



The CFD was honored to be a part of the welcome home celebration and parade for Captain Larry Taylor after he received the Medal of Honor at the White House for his heroic actions in the Vietnam War.



From Chief Hyman: As you know the CFD has had a Peer Support Team for a number of years now and has in my opinion, been very successful in connecting members with various services or simply being a listening ear for many of us. I want to personally say thank you to all of our members that have served in a peer support role. You understand the purpose and impact it can have on our department and I truly appreciate your commitment. That being said I want to offer other members to get involved and serve in this much needed capacity. As you know our department is undergoing a change where many of our older members are knocking on the door of retirement or just getting tired. The call to action is for our newer members to get involved and relieve our members that have faithfully fulfilled their service through peer support. Again, I am asking for folks to step up and volunteer for the peer support team so that it can continue for future years to come and serve our members accordingly. If you are interested or want more information please contact the following individuals.

Captain Joe Butler 423-488-0616
Captain Brent Arnold 423-240-2235

Fire Prevention Week is right around the corner (October 8-14) and this year, we are kicking things with a big community kickoff event coupled with lots of safety messaging. Please join us for the celebration on Sunday, October 8, 2023 at the Avondale Community Center (1305 Dodson Ave) from 1-4 PM for a family-friendly, free, fun event! Hope to see you and your families there!



The official theme for Fire Prevention Week 2023 is “Cooking safety starts with YOU! Pay attention to fire prevention.” The CFD will be working to educate the public about the simple but important actions they can take when cooking to keep themselves and those around them safe. We will be sharing lots of content with information on this topic.



