



## Firefighter Andrew Johnson Dies



Firefighter Andrew J. "A.J." Johnson, 25, died on Thursday, Dec. 4. He was critically injured in a motor-vehicle accident on Tuesday, Dec. 2. Johnson, also a Captain at Archer Lodge Fire Department, was riding in an all-terrain vehicle with Archer Lodge

and Rocky Mount firefighter Kirby Turner when it was struck by a car. Johnson suffered critical injuries and was transported to WakeMed hospital. He passed away two days later, but continued to save lives as his organs were donated. Assigned to Ladder 11 on "C"



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## Historic Bell Transferred to City



On Nov. 19, the city's historic fire bell returned home. At a ceremony at Station 1, Fire Chief John McGrath, Mayor Charles Meeker, and NCSU Chancellor Dr. James L. Oblinger participated in a transfer of custody.

The 1,000-pound, solid bronze bell had been housed at North Carolina State University for the last 60 years. On Oct. 12, members of the fire department's Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) team removed the bell from the roof of Withers Hall.

Cast in 1870, the bell was first housed in Metropolitan Hall on Fayetteville Street. The building held the City Market, the mayor's office, and even a fire station. In 1914, the bell was moved to the tower at Station 1 on West Morgan Street.

In 1938, the bell was removed from the fire station. By 1948, it was installed atop Withers Hall as the school's bell. In 2007, the bell's history was uncovered by graduate student Matt Robbins. Watch the ceremony and see more photos on the [newsletter web site](#).



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shift (pictured above), Johnson joined the Raleigh Fire Department on Feb. 7, 2005. His father is Lt. M.J. "Pops" Johnson, assigned to Engine 7 on "C" shift.



The funeral service on Monday, Dec. 8 at the Powhatan Freewill Baptist Church in Clayton was attended by hundreds of firefighters and other responders. Johnson was buried with Raleigh Fire Department honors in Pinecrest Memorial Gardens in Clayton. See more photos on the [newsletter web site](#).



## Strategic Planning

The Raleigh Fire Department administrative and command staff conducted a 2008 strategic planning seminar in late October. The purpose of the two-day session, held at a Lake Wheeler conference center, was plotting a course for the Raleigh Fire Department over the next three to five years.

The planning seminar followed a needs assessment conducted earlier this fall by the fire department planning office. Each division was requested to project future resource requirements including staffing, space, and physical assets.

The fire department's number one goal for the next three to five years is increasing staffing in the Prevention, Training, and Services divisions. These increases

include additional fire marshals, trainers, and mechanics.

The number two goal is facility infrastructure, including developing and placing into action a facility replacement plan. The Raleigh Fire Department has outgrown its space and its ability to house apparatus and perform training and support functions.

Newer and larger facilities are needed. The highest priority facilities for replacement and expansion include some of the older stations, the maintenance shop, and the training center.

The planning seminar also identified many other goals for the next three to five years, including building Station 29 in the Leesville Road corridor, adding shift safety officers and shift fire marshals, and installing video conferencing capabilities at all stations.

Longer-term goals, extending to 10 years, were also discussed. The Raleigh Fire Department in 2018, for example, is projected at 30 engines, 10 ladders, 3 heavy rescues, 5 battalions, and 650 personnel.

The fire department planning office is completing an official master plan to reflect the outcome of the two-day planning seminar. The master plan will be released in January. It will be reviewed annually, and updated every three years.

## Ladder Company Changes



The city's eighth ladder company was placed in service at Station 4 on Tuesday, Jan. 6. Ladder 4 operates a 2001 Spartan/Quality 75-foot aerial ladder (left), previously operated by Ladder 23. Also on that date, Ladder 16 moved to Station 17, and Mini 4 moved to Station 16.

Ladder 23, now operating a 1988 Pierce 85-foot Snorkel (right), moved to Station 24 on Saturday, Jan. 3. Also on that date, Battalion 4 at Station 17 moved to Station 23, and Mini 24 moved to Station 23. ■

SEE MORE NEWSLETTER PHOTOS ON THE WEB SITE [WWW.LEGEROS.COM/RFD](http://WWW.LEGEROS.COM/RFD).

## New Employees

Ryan Cutright, Fire Protection Inspector, Oct. 20.

Brian Morgan, Sr. Plans Examiner, Oct. 6.

Christopher Warren, Fire Protection Inspector, Oct. 6.

## Promotions

### January 3

Promoted to Battalion Chief: Kendall T. Hocutt, Ronny D. Mizell.

Promoted to Captain: Christopher J. Atkins, Jan C. Chamblee, Christopher K. Gibbons, Robert T. Hodge, Edward D. Moxin, Timothy J. Wilson.

Promoted to Lieutenant: Jimmy C. Batten, Scott P. Franks, Kevin R. Kirton, David E. Lynn, Andrew S. Meier, Michael C. Murray, Bobby J. Page, Marc F. Ross, Darren M. Strapp, Christopher P. Tucker, Grant A. Williams.

### December 1

Promoted to Captain: Marvin Evans, Jonathan S. Nipper.

Promoted to Lieutenant: Todd A. Glover, Jeffrey L. Harrison, Kevin A. Laxton.

### November 22

Promoted to First Class Firefighter: Claude A. Foster III.

## Retirements

Battalion Chief Patricia G. Pickard retired Dec. 1, with 26.7 years of service.



Battalion Chief A. Randy Wall retired Jan. 1, with 31.8 years of service.



Capt. Terry W. Partin retired Dec. 1, with 30.4 years of service.



Capt. Ronald P. Ricks retired Dec. 1, with 37 years of service.



Lt. S. Mark Alford retired Jan. 1, with 29.8 years of service.



Lt. William C. Artis retired Jan. 1, with 28.6 years of service.



Lt. J. Michael Clayton retired Jan. 1, with 25.1 years of service.



Lt. Ricky F. Moore retired Dec. 1, with 30.2 years of service.



Senior FF King D. Harris retired Dec. 1 with 30.2 years of service.



## Deaths

Retired Capt. Henry Lloyd "Goose" Gosnell Jr., 62, passed away on Tuesday, Nov. 18 in South Hill, VA. He retired in 1981 with 30.7 years of service.



## Fire Prevention Programs

Two major programs bore fruit in 2008 for the Fire Prevention Division. December marked the one-year anniversary of the division's Priority Inspection program. The initiative is designed to ensure that the limited assets of the Fire Prevention Division are being utilized to inspect occupancies with the highest potential for life safety and property loss.

During the same period, the Operations Division provided invaluable assistance with the Pre-Planning Blitz. This program provided a rapid and comprehensive "windshield survey" of businesses throughout the city, and will improve the accuracy of the division's database of commercial occupancies.

By combining the data captured by these two programs, the Fire Prevention Division has developed a wide variety of performance measurements to help more efficiently utilize current assets, and make a compelling argument for additional resources in future budget years. ❖

RALEIGH FIRE DEPARTMENT IN 2009: 27 FIRE STATIONS, 28 ENGINE COMPANIES, 8 LADDER COMPANIES, 3 RESCUE COMPANIES, 4 BATTALION CHIEFS, 568 UNIFORMED AND CIVILIAN PERSONNEL.



## Firefighter of the Year Award

Capt. Kevin Coppage has been selected as Firefighter of the Year by the American Legion, Raleigh Post 1. The award will be presented at a ceremony on Thursday, Feb. 12, at the American Legion building at 3600 Lee Road, Ra-



aleigh. Assigned to Engine 3B, Capt. Coppage constantly strives to improve himself and others. Even if a firefighter is not assigned to his company, he works to raise their skill level. He takes additional responsibilities as a Recruit Academy instructor, and also helps with training veteran firefighters.

Capt. Coppage joined the Raleigh Fire Department in 1994, and was promoted to Captain in 2006. He serves the community as a member of Mt. Zion Baptist Church and is part of the New Members Ministry. A loving husband and father, he will be attending the ceremony with his family as well as fire department members. Read more about Capt. Coppage on the [newsletter web site](#). ❖

## MDTs For Fire Apparatus



The first mobile data terminals (MDT) for fire apparatus have been purchased. The Data911 system has the ability to access CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch), the FIREHOUSE records management system, In-Vehicle Navigation (INV), the RFD network, and the Internet. The MDT system includes dual monitors to be mounted on the engine cover. One will be used by the Captain, and swivels for driver use. The second will be used by personnel riding in the rear. The monitors feature touch-screen capabilities. A total of nine MDT systems will be installed in apparatus in the first quarter of 2009, beginning with Engine 1. ❖

SEE MORE NEWSLETTER PHOTOS ON THE WEB SITE [WWW.LEGEROS.COM/RFD](http://WWW.LEGEROS.COM/RFD).

## Training Division Updates



The Training Division recently purchased a pump simulator. Built by FD Training Systems, the \$58,000 unit requires no hydrant, no hand lines, and only 50 feet of hose deployed from four apparatus discharges to provide pump panel instruction. The computer-controlled unit records nozzle pressure and can simulate various scenarios, including kinked and burst hose lines, and loss of incoming pressure or volume.

Capt. John Fanning is the Career Development Coordinator and plans to use the simulator to both teach enhanced pumping operations, and more thoroughly measure performance levels of promotional candidates. The simulator will also save an estimated 9 million gallons of water annually.



Four mobile classrooms have also been added at the Keeter Training Center. They increase the classroom capacity to seven. Also added is a new locker room on the lower level of the main building. It's currently used by Recruit Academy #35, which started their training Sep. 29.

SR 3, a 1995 Propst commercial bus, has also been placed in service. It is utilized for transporting recruits, during USAR Task Force #8 deployments, and other special functions. ■



# Retiree Christmas Party

The annual retiree Christmas Party was held on Tuesday, Dec. 8 at the Wake County Shrine Club. Attendees were treated to food, fellowship, and funny stories. See more photos on the [newsletter web site](#) and mark your calendar for next year! ■



ON WEDNESDAY, JAN. 3, AN EVENING CEREMONY AT CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS RECOGNIZED BOTH 2008 RETIREES AND RECENT PROMOTIONS. THE CEREMONY CONCLUDED WITH A RECEPTION AT STATION 1.



## Buckle Up For Safety

From Battalion Chief Jerry Pace: Engine 9 was involved in an accident on Wednesday, Dec. 17. As I approached the scene my heart skipped a beat. Engine 9 was on its side, and all four of the crew members were out and without a scratch on them. In 2007, there were 27 vehicle-related line of duty deaths in the country. Of those, 11 were not wearing their seat belts. Seat belts save lives. Let's take the time to buckle up and not become one of those statistics. ❖

## Yearbooks Delivered



The long-awaited yearbooks arrived in November. *Raleigh Fire Department 2007: 95 Years of Service* was distributed to personnel by the yearbook committee. The publisher has also mailed those copies ordered through them. Over 560 copies have been sold. The books remain available from the publisher, [www.mtpublishing.com](http://www.mtpublishing.com). Thanks for everyone's support during this year-long project. Watch for the next one as we approach 2012, our 100th anniversary as a fully-paid fire department. ❖

## Other News

Line firefighters have been measured for dress uniforms. Upon their delivery, the uniform program will be complete with all Raleigh Fire Department personnel assigned a dress uniform for attending ceremonies and other special events. Watch for a DOI this year on dress uniforms, as well as other areas including service awards, funerals, and chaplains. ■

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### MONTHLY RETIREE BREAKFAST

Pam's Restaurant, 5111 Western Boulevard, 7:30 a.m.  
Jan. 13, Feb. 10, Mar. 10, Apr. 14.

## Where Are They Now?

Retired Capt. Ben Johnson lives in Raleigh with his wife Nancy. They have a daughter who works for the DOT, is a licensed make-up artist, and sings in a band. She's started using his basement for band practice. They're not too loud.



Ben keeps in touch with other retirees through the monthly breakfast at Pam's, and as part of a small "birthday club" group. The club has met monthly for many years now. Though some of the original members have passed, their wives continue to participate.

A lifelong Raleigh resident, Ben is a member of several social groups, including the Old Raleigh Boys and ROMEO (Retired Old Men Eating Out). He's also an antique car owner, and he recently drove his 1915 Ford Motel T in the Raleigh Christmas parade. After his retirement in 1980, Ben owned and operated several duplex and triplex apartment buildings that he built during his time in the fire department. He "retired" from the apartment business several years ago. ❖

## Historical Society Update

The work of organizing a Historical Society continues in February. After a series of informational meetings held in October and November, Battalion Chief Alan Walters and Historian Mike Legeros are planning a kick-off meeting for 2009. **Tentative** dates, times, and locations are Feb. 24 & 25, at 7:00 p.m., at Station 1.

There are several tasks to accomplish in 2009, and the purpose of the meeting is to start working in those directions. Needs include electing officers, creating committees, discussion and status of current historical projects, and planning for future events. Contact Chief Walters (919-420-2395) or Mike Legeros (919-786-0110) for more information. ■

## ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

THE RALEIGH FIRE DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER IS A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION FOR PERSONNEL, RETIREES, AND CITIZENS. THE EDITOR IS RALEIGH FIRE DEPARTMENT HISTORIAN MIKE LEGEROS. FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT [rfdnews@legeros.com](mailto:rfdnews@legeros.com). SEE MORE NEWSLETTER PHOTOS AT [www.legeros.com/rfd](http://www.legeros.com/rfd). FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE RALEIGH FIRE DEPARTMENT, VISIT THE WEB SITE [www.raleigh-nc.org/fire](http://www.raleigh-nc.org/fire). ■