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THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE BOSTON FIRE DEPARTMENT NUMBER 05-2012

From the Commissioner

Roderick J. Fraser, Jr.

The State of the BFD: The state of the Boston Fire Department is excellent. We have been blessed during this economic downturn to have outstanding support from the city and we have had level funding in our budget with some modest budget increases. Cities and towns across the country are laying off firefighters and closing companies, but we are hiring and promoting.

The Boston Fire Department is one of the most proficient first responder organizations in the world and our success is due to the hard work and dedication of our Fire Fighters, Command Staff and non-uniformed support staff. Boston has the lowest fire fatality rate of any city in America, a feat accomplished through a combination of excellent training, a well constructed fire regulation code, aggressive fire prevention and fast response times. Last year (2011), we had 2 fire deaths, the year before that (2010) we had one and the previous year, (2009) we had zero for the first time in history.

Our apparatus replacement plan continues to be fully funded and we are ordering 3 ladder trucks and 5 engines. BFD put two new ladders at L14 and L23 into service in October 2011. Three new engines were put into service at E17, E22 and E33 in December 2011. Three additional new engines just went into service, E7, E52, E53 also built by KME.

Additionally, we are going out to bid on a new Decontamination truck and new lighting plant. We just received the fully refurbished dive truck and it looks awesome. We continue to bring down the average age of our apparatus fleet and we continue to make improvements in design and safety.

Safety: We need to make “safety” part of our culture. Safety is everyone’s responsibility, not just the responsibility of the Safety Chief. We have come a long way in improving safety over the past few years, but we need to continue to bring safety consciousness to the forefront of all we do. I was at the Fire Department Safety Officers’ Association (FDSOA) conference this past winter and I learned that the second leading cause of line of duty deaths of fire fighters is vehicle accidents. Many of them have a common denominator, not wearing seatbelts. Five years ago, our people were cutting the seatbelts out of our apparatus. That is not happening today, but not everyone is getting the message about wearing seatbelts. We have had some of our members disconnect the sensors under their seats which alert the officer who is/is not wearing their belts. Company officers need to ensure that everyone is wearing their seat belts. Please, wear your seatbelts. In the words of Fire Lieutenant Bridgette Dunagen of the Chicago Fire Department “you can rescue someone just as easy by telling them to buckle their seatbelt as you can by throwing them over your shoulder and carrying them out of the building.”

The Training Division has assigned everyone to watch the video “Everyone Goes Home” produced by the National Fallen Fire Fighters Foundation and the Chicago Fire Department. It is an excellent video and I hope everyone learns from it and that everyone in the BFD goes home safely from each and every incident.

New Dive Team Vehicle: The BFD Dive Team has a new response vehicle. We sent the original 1985 E-one rescue body out to be completely refurbished and mounted it on a 2011 International Dura Star 4400 chassis with a 256” WB. The Dura Star chassis has a large crew cab and the new dive truck is a huge improvement over the old. The cost of refurbishing the old dive truck body and mounting on a new chassis was considerably less than purchasing a completely new dive truck. The 2011 International 4400 Crew Cab & Chassis cost \$84,379.00 and to remove, refinish and remount the body on the new chassis was \$105,959.0000 for a total cost of \$190,338.00. At that time, we had been given cost estimates for a new dive truck at approx \$375,000.00. In this case, the refurbishment of the body and remounting on a new cab and chassis made sense and saved the department approximately \$185,000.00.



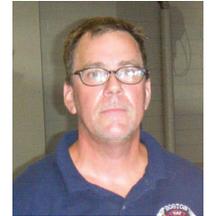
Rescue Dive Team support truck call sign J-20

Facilities: BFD has hired a new plumber, Jason Whelan, who has been with the department since October 2011. In his role, Jason will be installing and maintaining chilled water, steam, heat, water, gas, drainage, sewerage and other plumbing systems.



Jason Whelan

The department has also hired an HVAC Technician, Kevin Cummings who joined us in March of 2012. He is responsible for maintaining heating and cooling systems, including preventative maintenance, installation, inspect, test and repair of HVAC systems.



Kevin Cummings

We are looking to add a painter, who will perform painting service through the Fire Department.

BFD has planned the following firehouse projects for this year:

New kitchens at E29 and E50

Asphalt/concrete work at E17, E37, E49 and HQ

Painting projects at E17 and E50

BFD is working with the City on the completion of new stairs at Fire Alarm, installation of standby generators at those firehouses that don't have them, starting with E53, evaluation of the Engine 3 firehouse and a project for exterior repairs at E2, E7, E29, E48 and the Training Academy.

A project to improve the drainage at Fire Alarm is scheduled to take place this summer and plans for additional fencing to be paid by Homeland Security are in design.

The department recently completed a Homeland Security-funded Trench Rescue prop at Moon Island and is starting a firehouse boiler replacement project, beginning with E20, E28 and E39.

The work to design a replacement for the floating dock at the Marine Unit is underway and construction is expected to take place this summer.

The state training grant will be funding several facility improvements at Moon Island including a new locking system for the buildings, new lockers and replacement of the overhead doors, replacement of locks on storage containers and removal and disposal of a storage container.



133rd Annual Awards Ceremony

The 133rd Annual Awards Ceremony was held recently. This year's recipients were (l-r) FF Kevin Bailey, E5; FF Brian Coppney, L6; FF Paul Stanley, R2; FF Steve Bradley, E42; Capt. Martin Andrews, SOC; FF Philip Ordonez, E18; Chief of Dept. Steve Abaira, FF Ballin Wright, R1; Commissioner Roderick Fraser, Capt. Sean Linnell, L4; FF Kevin Ranahan, L4; FF Brian Mullin, L4; Lt. Glenn McGillivray, E42 and FF Gary Dardia, R1. Not pictured is FF Vernon Allen, E37. Congratulations to all. Special thanks to the Boston Firemen's Relief Fund for hosting the ceremony.

Photo: J. Connor

From the Chief of Department

Steve E. Abraira

I am honored and extremely proud to have been chosen to be the Chief of Department for the Boston Fire Department. It is quite humbling to think that I have become part of the storied history of the first professional fire department in the country. Having the opportunity to lead this Department is both challenging and rewarding beyond what mere words could express. This appointment is without a doubt the pinnacle of my career that has spanned nearly four decades. I would have never imagined thirty-eight years ago, as a nineteen-year-old rookie Miami Firefighter, that I would be anything more than a tailboard firefighter let alone lead the Boston Fire Department.

Given the above, I want to assure you, the members, that my entire focus is to work to improve our Department. The health and safety of our members is a huge concern of mine and is without a doubt, the number one priority for me as Chief. I can assure you that I will make every effort to identify and improve the safety of our operations as well as provide the safest equipment possible. It is my goal to reduce firefighter injuries and to assure that all our members enjoy retirement when that time comes. As my retired firefighter father always stressed to me “you want to have as many years in retirement as you had in service to the City”. This should be the goal of all of our members. We can only accomplish this by taking care of ourselves physically both on and off duty and to operate safely at work, properly utilizing all protective equipment provided.

Another area that I believe is of significant importance is accountability at all levels. We must be willing to take responsibility for our actions or inactions. Part of this includes presenting a professional appearance. Unfortunately, we have some challenges when it comes to presenting a uniform appearance. This is an area I am committed to improving as well.

Finally, I have stated before that the only reason any of us are here is to serve the citizens and visitors of this City. I can also take that a step further, and state unequivocally that the only reason I or anyone in a staff position, is here is to support what you do to provide that service. Without you, there is no reason to have a Chief of Department, or anyone else for that matter. I look forward to visiting with you all out in the stations.

National Certification of our Safety Chiefs: We have partnered with the Fire Department Safety Officer’s Association (FDSOA) to obtain national certification as Incident Safety Officer (ISO) for our Safety Chiefs. The Safety Chiefs are completing this important certification through an online ISO course. The course was also made available at Department expense to all District and Deputy Chiefs who wanted to take the course and obtain national certification. We are now offering the course to all Lieutenants and Captains that would like to take it as well. Going forward, national certification will be required for the permanent position of Safety Chief.



Boston Engines Donated to Haiti

The Department is donating two surplus fire engines to the Pompiers Du Cap-Haitien (Cap-Haitien Fire Department) in Cap-Haitien, Haiti. Cap-Haitien is the second largest City in the country but it does not own one proper fire engine.

During the month of May, Cap-Haitien was the scene of a number of very large fires. The architecture in Cap-Haitien is similar to the New Orleans French quarter and is made up of many colonial wood structures. Many of the fires were simply contained and allowed to burn out.

Mayor Thomas Menino, Marie St. Fleur and I worked together to develop a plan to donate two of our de-commissioned City of Boston fire engines to benefit the people of Cap-Haitien. The transfer of ownership was approved by the City Council and the Mayor and have been donated to Dorchester House Multi Service Center for further transportation to Haiti.

Transportation of the engines to Haiti was donated. An anonymous donor paid to have the engines repainted and lettered prior to shipment. The BFD maintenance division has performed the necessary preventive maintenance on the pumpers and they have both passed pump certification.

The two engines are the former E-39, a 1992 E-One protector and E-55, a 1993 E-One protector. These two engines which served the City of Boston proudly for 20 years will now serve the people of Cap-Haitien.



New Ladder Truck Design: The apparatus committee has worked hard to design, test and choose a new ladder truck that best meets the needs of the department. After many internal meetings, review of different designs and discussion with manufacturers, the committee unanimously recommended that we purchase the new KME 109' Boston style Aerialcat ladder truck. We will be ordering three of these ladder trucks this year. Below is listed the most important upgrades with some supporting information:

- 1) 208 inch wheel base. KME is currently attempting to get under 208", at 207.75" these trucks will have the shortest wheel base of any 105' class ladder truck in production in the U.S.
- 2) Redesigned rear end. 90 degree corners have been eliminated, new 45 degree corners will allow for increased maneuverability and decrease "tail strikes" on tight turns.
- 3) Pre piped waterway that can operate in two different modes, Firefighting or Rescue mode. In the rescue mode the monitor will be pinned to the upper mid ladder section. Pinning the monitor to the fly section is accomplished with the push of a button.
- 4) The KME aerial ladder is constructed with 100,000 psi steel, and a 2.5:1 safety factor. Compare this to other vendors that use 40,000 psi or 70,000 psi ladders.
- 5) All aerial ladder sections are wider and have taller handrails than any aerial ladders currently in service within the department. The fly section is 23.5"W X 21.25"H on the KME compared to 19.75"W X 17.96"H on the current ladders in service.
- 6) The new aerial ladders will be rated for a 750 pound tip load. An increase from the current 250 pound tip load.
- 7) Full outrigger spread will be 14' however when "short jacked" the footprint will be 8 inches more narrow than the current scissor jack spread.
- 8) Outriggers will no longer have decorative stainless steel or diamond plate covers that do not stand up to harsh Boston street conditions. The new specification calls for 3/8" steel plates to be welded directly to the vertical stabilizer. Plates are to be painted with red "linex" (coating found in pick up truck beds that does not scratch or chip).
- 9) EMS compartments and rearward facing seats in the cab have been eliminated. All members will be seated facing forward with a seat belt and a SCBA behind them. This will allow firefighters to remain seated and belted while still being able to get their bottle on and be ready to go to work as soon as the truck stops. This configuration will provide seating for 6 firefighters.
- 10) Keeping the same complement of ground ladders, both 35 foot ladders will be located on the right side. The left side will be fitted with "rescue" style compartments. This will allow for more organized and practical equipment storage and mounting.
- 11) High side "rescue" style compartments will also allow for a PTO driven Amkus tool system. Included will be 3 hydraulic reels of 150' of hose, feeding 3 tools that can operate simultaneously without pressure loss. These tools will be 4.5 times faster and stronger than portable hydraulic generator driven tools. Also this system will be operating with the "flip of a switch".
- 12) The aerial ladder will be fitted with tip mounted controls. The member assigned to the roof position will now be able to operate the stick from the fly section as well as the turntable.
- 13) All compartments and the aerial ladder (entire length) will have LED lighting. Lighting on the aerial will provide a much higher level of safety for members operating on the roof.
- 14) All power saws will be located together in a compartment that is accessible from the ground as well as the turntable.
- 15) These specifications were written by Boston Firefighters for the Boston Fire Department. This truck is being specifically build for OUR needs and not the builders.