

# IN THE LINE OF DUTY

April - June, 2019 Volume 5 – Issue 19



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Photo Credit: Lt. Kevin Nelmes



Professionalism ~ Integrity ~ Compassion

Greater Naples Fire Rescue District

14575 Collier Boulevard  
Naples, Florida 34119  
239.348.7540

[www.GreaterNaplesFire.Org](http://www.GreaterNaplesFire.Org)



# Greater Naples Fire Rescue District IN THE LINE OF DUTY

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- Dedicated to our Community, Our Profession and Each Other -



## Office of the Fire Chief By: Kingman Schuldt, Fire Chief



**I**n November 2014, the Greater Naples community voted to create the Greater Naples Fire Rescue District by bringing together the Fire Districts of East Naples and Golden Gate. Since then the District has expanded to include, in some form or fashion, the Isles of Capris, Ochopee, and FDOT service areas.

These decisions continue to offer tremendous opportunity for the Fire District to create a comprehensive operational and financial approach to the way it provides the community with fire and emergency medical response services and education.

The leadership of the new Fire District recognized the need for a strategic plan that would incorporate the best vision and forward-thinking of the men and women whose services are essential to the District's operations and future growth. On May 12, 2015 the Greater Naples Fire Rescue District Strategic Plan was affirmed by the members of the Board of Fire Commission. As part of this Plan the District adopted three core values; Professionalism, Integrity, and Compassion. I regularly consider these during the daily duties we assume, and often refer to these in a variety of settings. Many of you have been witness to these discussions during employment or promotion interviews for example. We are not perfect, we make mistakes, and if we try to demonstrate these core values in every aspect of our mission, we will most often be successful.

**Professionalism**; an individual's conduct at work. Many people of "blue collar" careers consistently display a high level of this trait, although many of these occupations require very little formal training and experience modest earnings. Equally, a number of people assuming "white collar" jobs such as doctors and lawyers can display very little professionalism. Have you ever wondered if anyone will even notice if you don't demonstrate professional behavior at work? It turns out everybody cares; bosses, customers, and co-workers. They will probably notice a lack of this quality first, and it could have severe consequences on one's relationship with other team members as well as career aspirations.

**Integrity**; a fundamental value that employers seek in the employees. It is the cornerstone of a person who demonstrates sound moral and ethical principles at work. Integrity is the foundation on which relationships and trust are built. A person who has integrity lives his or her values in relationships with coworkers, customers, and stakeholders. Honesty and trust are central to integrity. Acting with honor and truthfulness are also basic tenets in a person with integrity.

**Compassion**; an authentic desire to help others, and having a positive effect on others elicits a positive emotional response. When we treat ourselves and others compassionately, we tend to come together in a manner that raises the group to greater heights as a whole. With this, bonds are formed, trust is established, and a willingness to collaborate on projects and shared visions becomes the driving force behind our intentions.

## Firefighter Cancer Benefits

By: Kingman Schuldt, Fire Chief

On May 3, 2019 Senate Bill 426; Firefighter Cancer benefits was passed by the Florida Legislature, and subsequently signed by the Governor on May 3, taking effect on July 1, 2019. Since these Actions, The District, along with other Florida fire service leaders have been working in cooperation with insurance industry partners to fully understand implications of the pending law, and establish an implementation plan to provide adequate coverage for our firefighters.

The following summary was provided largely in part by Lewis, Longman, Walker, a legal firm that specializes in Special District law and compliance requirements.

SB 426 creates a new section 112.1816, Florida Statutes, which provides two new employer-funded benefits, and enhances existing disability and death benefits for any firefighter diagnosed with certain types of cancer. Unlike other statutory presumptions, SB 426 simply directs that benefits be provided to firefighters who meet several eligibility requirements and are diagnosed with cancer.

The bill defines “cancer” to include 21 specific diagnosis, to include:

Bladder cancer	Mesothelioma
Brain cancer	Multiple myeloma
Breast cancer	Non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma
Cervical cancer	Oral cavity and pharynx cancer
Colon cancer	Ovarian cancer
Esophageal cancer	Prostate cancer
Invasive skin cancer	Rectal cancer
Kidney cancer	Stomach cancer
Large intestinal cancer	Testicular cancer
Lung cancer	Thyroid Cancer
Malignant melanoma	



Under the new law the term “firefighter” means an individual employed as a full-time firefighter “whose primary responsibilities are the prevention and extinguishing of fires; the protection of life and property; and the enforcement of municipal, county and state fire prevention codes and laws pertaining to the prevention and control of fires.”

The new benefits are described in subsection 112.1816(2) as an alternative to workers’ compensation benefits. Any firefighter meeting the eligibility requirements described below is entitled to the benefits upon a diagnosis of cancer. The benefits include:

- Cancer treatment within the employer’s health plan or a group insurance trust, with any deductible, copayment and coinsurance costs related to cancer treatment reimbursed by the employer; and
- A one-time payment of \$25,000 at the time of the initial diagnosis. *Continued...*



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In addition to these benefits, for purposes of determining leave time and employee retention policies, an employer must consider a firefighter's cancer diagnosis as an injury or illness incurred in the line of duty.

To be eligible for the cancer benefits outlined above, a firefighter:

- Must have been employed by his or her employer for at least 5 continuous years;
- Must not have used tobacco products during the 5 years preceding the diagnosis; and
- Must not have been employed in any other position in the 5 years preceding the diagnosis that is proven to create a higher risk for any cancer.

The cancer benefits cannot result in any cost to the firefighter. If there are any out of pocket deductible, copayment or coinsurance costs incurred by a firefighter due to cancer treatment, the new law requires "timely" reimbursement by the employer.

The cancer benefits under the new law must be made available to an eligible firefighter for 10 years after the date he or she terminates employment, as long as the firefighter:

- Continues coverage in an employer-sponsored health plan or group health insurance trust after termination of employment;
- Meets all the other eligibility criteria for an active firefighter at the time of termination of employment; and
- Is not subsequently employed as a firefighter.

Section 112.1816(3) requires that, if a firefighter participates in an employer-sponsored retirement plan, the plan must consider the firefighter to be totally and permanently disabled in the line of duty if he or she meets the plan's definition of totally and permanently disabled due to a diagnosis of cancer or as the result of cancer treatment. If the firefighter does not participate in an employer-sponsored retirement plan, the employer must provide a disability plan that provides a benefit of at least 42% of a firefighter's most recent annual salary for life.

Section 112.1816(4) requires that, if a firefighter participates in an employer-sponsored retirement plan, the plan must consider the firefighter to have died in the line of duty if he or she dies as the result of cancer, or as the result of cancer treatment. If the firefighter does not participate in an employer-sponsored retirement plan, the employer must provide a death benefit to the firefighter's beneficiary equal to at least 42% of the firefighter's most recent annual salary for at least 10 years following the firefighter's death.

It appears that the basic eligibility requirements for cancer benefits contained in section 112.1816(2) discussed above do not apply to the disability benefits under subsection (3) or the death benefits under subsection (4). Under the new law, a firefighter is deemed to be disabled in the line-of-duty or to have died in the line-of-duty upon a diagnosis of cancer, regardless of whether the firefighter used tobacco or was employed in another position with a higher risk of cancer during the preceding 5 years. It appears that a firefighter will be eligible for the new cancer-related disability and death benefits immediately upon meeting the definition of "firefighter." *Continued...*

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Additionally, subsection 4(c) provides that the beneficiaries of any firefighter who dies as a result of cancer or cancer treatment are entitled to the benefits described in section 112.191(2)(a), which currently provides a one-time payment to the beneficiaries of a firefighter killed in the line of duty in the amount of \$50,000 (increasing to \$75,000, effective July 1, 2019 – see SB 7098, below).

SB 426 makes it clear that all costs associated with the new firefighter cancer benefits must be borne “solely by the employer.” Although current disability and death benefits under a retirement plan are funded in part with employee contributions, the new law expressly prohibits an employer from increasing employee pension contributions to fund the cancer-related disability and death benefits.

The bill increases employer contributions to the Florida Retirement System to fund disability and death benefit enhancements as follows:

- Required employer contribution for Special Risk Class will increase by 0.08%.
- Required employer contribution to pay down the unfunded liability for the Special Risk Class will increase by 0.01%.
- Required employer contribution to pay down the unfunded liability for the DROP will increase by 0.02%.

The above contribution increases are in addition to the FRS employer contribution rate increases passed by the legislature this year (see page 5 of this memo).

These additional FRS contributions are estimated to exceed \$4.84 million during the first year of implementation. This estimate does not include the actuarial impact of disability and death benefit enhancements under local government retirement plans. It also does not include the increased costs associated with the guaranteed cancer treatment benefit or the \$25,000 lump sum payment.

Article X, section 14 of the State Constitution, requires cities and special districts sponsoring local retirement plans to fund any increase in retirement benefits on a sound actuarial basis. Therefore, although it is not addressed in the new law, an actuarial impact study will likely be required to determine the increase in contributions necessary to fund the disability and death benefit enhancements.

Finally, SB 426 requires the Division of State Fire Marshal within the Department of Financial Services to adopt rules to establish employer cancer prevention best practices related to personal protective equipment, decontamination, fire suppression apparatus, and fire stations.





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## Operations Section

By: Nolan Sapp, Assistant Chief



**S**ummer is officially here; the children are out of school for several weeks. Some children have limited adult or no adult supervision. Those with supervision are generally closely monitored, however the leading cause of death of children between the age of 1 and 4 is drowning in Collier County. Florida leads the nation in drowning incidents. Over half of the total drowning deaths occur with people 25 years of age or younger. Nationally 40 people a day die as a result of drowning.

With the summer heat upon us, we find that we yearn for the comfort of a cool swimming pool for relief. This is an area of concern that presents itself as a welcome relief from heat, but it also presents a serious hazard. Drowning is preventable by so many methods. The obvious method is to educate children by starting early and explaining the dangers of swimming alone. No matter the age, you should never swim alone.

Educating children is good, but we all know it takes a little more to protect those that are so important to us. Using other means goes a long way in drowning prevention. Alarms to alert everyone are essential if you have a pool. Some use door and window alarms, while motion alarms in the pool are available as well. Barriers such as fencing, and covers work well. In the state of Florida fences and gates with high latches are required by law.

The next level of protection is something you will carry with you always; and that is the ability to swim. Learning to swim as early as you can and to educate your children to swim is the best method of protecting yourself and your children. Have life jackets available or use those that are available at resorts or vacation locations. The message is simple, protect yourself and your family.

Supervise children at all times around any body of water no matter the size; from simple five gallon buckets to pools, canals, ponds, or the ocean. There is no better method to prevent drowning. Adults who may not be able to swim well, take lessons. Always swim with a partner and never alone.

Use barriers and alarms such as pool fencing and approved gates to limit access to the pool or canals and to strengthen the security around the pool. Keep fresh batteries in those devices, just as you should in your smoke detectors. If any barrier is broken or fails to operate properly, get it resolved as soon as you can.

Prevention is so important but the last line of protection is to learn CPR, First Aid and Water Rescue skills. Greater Naples Fire Rescue, as well as other local Public Safety providers teach these skills. In Collier County you can reach out to the Safe and Healthy Children's Coalition also. They are leading the charge to prevent another death due to drowning. They have partnered with the Public Safety Providers of Collier County; together we hope to make a difference. Have a safe summer.



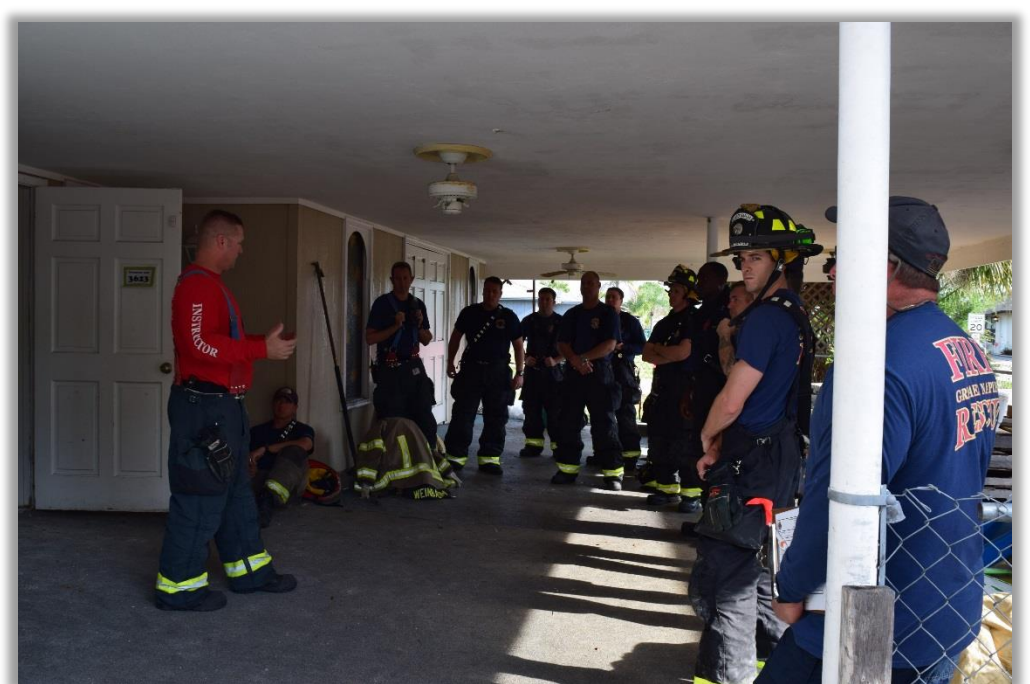
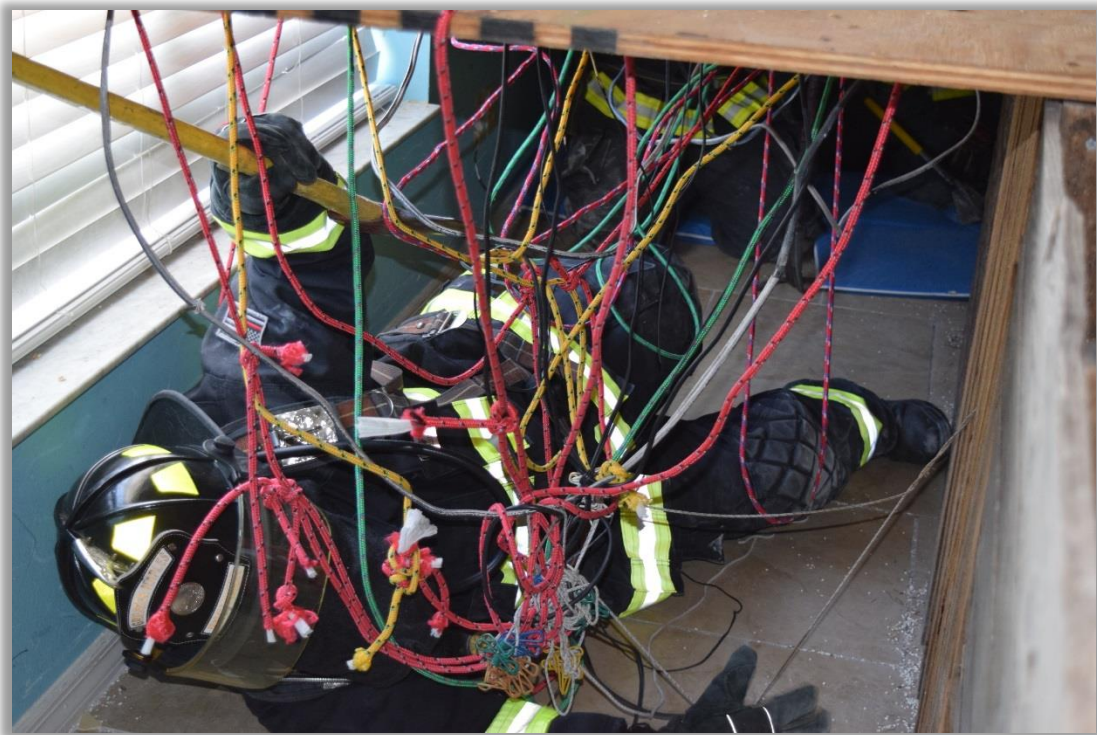


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## Training





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## Officer Development

### *How Well Do You Know Your Job?*

By: Andy Krajewski, Battalion Chief



**H**ow well do you know your job? Are you of the mindset that since you have been employed for “x” number of years you know everything you should of your position? That’s a dangerous mindset to have. We are given opportunities to educate ourselves every day. Do we take them? Do we *recognize* them? I’m not necessarily speaking about formal book education, although that is available to us also. Every day in our work places, every day when we get in our apparatus and leave the stations, we are presented an opportunity to educate ourselves.

Whose responsibility is it to get us this education? Well, it’s our own but, it’s *not* ours alone. Each of us needs to be motivated enough to seek the education for ourselves. That is very different than having to *get* the education ourselves. Sure there is always technology, the internet and YouTube have everything you need and more. But is it really relevant to what are looking for? How do you test the information you get to see if it meets your needs? Can you ask YouTube questions and get a timely answer?

You will find there are those who are not willing to provide you education/training/practice in the area you seek. It’s not their job, their philosophy. That’s okay. There are still many others who *are* willing, who *want* to help you grow and succeed. Seek them out, start asking questions and you will likely be led to the individual(s) who have the knowledge you are looking for and they will be happy to educate you and share their knowledge. If you have knowledge and experience and are well versed in a particular subject matter, look to share it. That is wonderful way to reinvigorate your passion for your job. There are people who want to know what you know, seek them out to educate them and share you knowledge and experience. Sharing your knowledge is one measure of how well you know your job.



One important fact we need to recognize about each of our positions is that we are in the “people service” line of work. *What are you talking about, we are in the fire service haven’t you noticed. We go on medical calls, we respond to vehicle crashes and fire calls. Or, I’m in an office and have a work station, what do you mean I’m in a “people service”?* All true and, all have one thing, in particular, in common – PEOPLE. Every station is different, every run is different, every day is different, every work station is different. But, we are in continuous contact with people. Supervisors, co-workers, people walking in, people on the phones, people on the calls we run. Would it not be of the greatest benefit to educate ourselves on how to speak to, interact with, and listen to the people we interact with? Would we not be a better supervisor, co-worker, employee if we took the time to gain some education on how to “deal” with people? People are the largest aspect of our daily jobs and we have the choice to make that either a major hindrance or asset. I have experienced both.



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## Investigative Section

By: Shawn Hanson, Division Chief

**C**ommunity Risk Reduction (CRR) is the identification and prioritization of local risks, followed by the integrated and strategic application of resources (emergency response and fire & life safety) to reduce their occurrence and impact for the overall enhancement of community and firefighter health and safety.

A collaborative and integrated approach to CRR is one that balances emergency response with proactive measures that work together to reduce risk through assessment, prevention, education, and mitigation. One element to an agency's successful CRR efforts is the conduction of assessments or pre-fire plans. Pre-fire plans are critical to any CRR efforts in that they play a significant role in reducing response times through station zone familiarization, risk identification, and tools (knowledge) that provide firefighters with the opportunity to get ahead of the call.

Fire & life safety inspections provide an integral component of the CRR process by identifying risks, facilitating the mitigation of those risks, providing education aimed at preventing the reoccurrence of them, and preventing introduction of new fire & life safety risks in the community.

Emergency response and fire & life safety share CRR education efforts through the delivery of District programs. Examples of the programs are Community Emergency Response Training (CERT), crowd manager training, evacuation drills, wildfire prevention education, fire extinguisher training, student fire & life safety education, and many other programs.

Record keeping of all aspects of CRR is vital to the District's ability to accurately track and analyze data to ensure effective strategic deployment and application of CRR.

Combining emergency response and fire & life safety efforts in a collaborative approach to CRR provides the best model for a successful program: it additionally provides for fire department visibility within a non-emergency role, encourages firefighter and community face-to-face interactions, and promotes firefighter health and safety.





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## **Finance Section**

**By: Tara Bishop, Deputy Director of  
Administration and Finance**

### **Best to Leave Fireworks to the Experts**

**S**ummer is synonymous with barbecues, parades and fireworks displays. But along with all the festivities are plenty of visits to emergency rooms – especially during July.



In 2017, at least eight people died and about 12,900 were injured badly enough to require medical treatment after fireworks-related incidents, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. And while the majority of these incidents were due to amateurs attempting to use professional-grade, homemade or other illegal fireworks or explosives, thousands were from less powerful devices like small firecrackers and sparklers.

More fires are reported on July 4 than any other day of the year, according to the National Fire Protection Association. Each year, fireworks cause on average 1,300 structure fires, 300 vehicle fires and nearly 17,000 other fires resulting in thousands of injuries.

The National Safety Council advises everyone to stay away from all consumer fireworks and to only enjoy fireworks at a public display conducted by professionals.

Please take special care when handling sparklers, as they are a lot more dangerous than most people think. Parents don't realize they burn at about 2,000 degrees. Sparklers can quickly ignite clothing, and many children have received severe burns from dropping sparklers on their feet.

### **Two Words About M-class Fireworks**

Just don't.

You hear them go off every year: M-80s, M-100s, even M-250s. The unmistakable explosions associated with these devices can rattle the windows of homes for blocks. They are produced illegally and without quality control, have short fuses and cause hundreds of extremely severe injuries each year.

Please enjoy your summer and be safe out there.

<https://www.nsc.org/home-safety/tools-resources/seasonal-safety/summer/fireworks>



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## Planning Section

By: Wayne Martin, Deputy Chief



**H**urricanes are a scary threat to anyone who lives in Collier County. By taking precautions and making preparations in advance you help keep yourself, family, and pets safe and out of harm's way.

Begin researching before the storm which evacuation shelters allow pets. A good place to inquire is Collier County Emergency Management to find out where you can take your pet before the storm hits at [www.collierpets.com](http://www.collierpets.com).

Identify other safe locations, such as a friends' home or hotel that will allow you to keep your pets with you when you evacuate. You can also download a list of hotels in Collier County that accept pets or consider a boarding facility for your pets. If going to a County Shelter be sure and prepare for your own needs.



Prepare a supply kit for your pets. Your kit should have a weeks' worth of non-perishable food, water and medications. Keep a sturdy cage or carrier to comfortably hold your pet and a collar and leash. Make sure all vaccinations are up to date and keep a copy of your records. A good idea is to have a few good pictures of your pet to help identify them in the event that they become stranded. Place identification on your pet's collar or consider having your pet microchipped for help with identification. Another great idea is to keep an emergency pet card that has all of your pets' information at your fingertips. List your pet's name, age, food requirements, any special pet needs/medication and your veterinarian's information.





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## Awards & Recognition



Fleet Mechanic Matthew Day  
Completion of Probation



Finance Specialist Pat Meulenberg  
35 Years of Service



Captain Kevin Schoch  
15 Years of Service



Inspector Ian Stewart  
1 Year of Service



FF Billy Cipriano  
Apprentice to Full Time



Lt. Jake Beckman, Lt. Ben Krick  
Promotion to Lieutenant



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## Awards & Recognition



DE Paul Pernak, DE Torrence Andrews  
Promotion to Driver Engineer



AA Linda Swisher  
Congratulations on Retiring after 32 Years of Service!

### Phoenix/Eagle Awards

Battalion Chief  
Jeff Davenport

Captain  
Scott Hogan

Lieutenants  
Manny Arroy  
Jordan Boutil  
Mike Lowe  
Tony McGee  
Jason Michae  
Todd Nugent  
Daniel Sawye  
(2) Jason Sell  
John Taylor

Driver Engineers  
Aaron Cline  
David Cranor  
Jay Crouse  
Ken Moyer  
Adam Orsolini  
Matthew Stoller

Firefighters  
Mario Castaneda (2)  
James Farley  
Brad Frazier  
Kristen King  
Robert Oxar  
Bradley Packard  
Dolores Perez  
Paul Pernak  
Nathan Pratt  
Daniel Rojas  
Michael Tomaselli  
Mike Zmejkoski





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## Chaplain's Corner

By: Jack Strom, District Chaplain



Recently I had to have surgery on my face to remove some ugly (cancer). Before the surgeon started his task, he asked me to laugh for him. When I inquired why, he said he wanted to see where my laughter wrinkles were. He explained that he wanted to protect them and if at all possible, to cut around them so they would still accent my countenance.

After the surgery and the stitches were removed, I looked in a mirror and then looked in my file of many years of collecting sayings and quotes and also information about laughter. In fact I have one whole

shelf in my library that is filled with humor and joke books. Since my wife and I are Norwegian, I have several joke books about our own culture and heritage.

I'm sure you have heard it said, "The family that prays together, stays together." I also believe close to that *together* result is "The family that laughs together also stays together." As your Chaplain, I of course, have a few statements from the Bible about a happy spirit:

"A cheerful heart fills the day with song." Proverbs 15:15 (MSG)

"A cheerful disposition is good for your health." Proverbs 17:22 (MSG)

I'm a firm believer that a cheerful heart does good like a good medicine. An added positive result is that if you laugh often when you are younger, when you get old your wrinkles will know where they belong. Even a smile should be thought of as a whisper of a vocal laugh.

Staying healthy should be the easiest thing in the world. Your body has great wisdom and is wonderfully equipped to take care of itself. Add a little humor to your life and you'll live a longer and healthier life. You have the best insurance available when you have learned to laugh.

There is general agreement that the ability to laugh at yourself, at your own appearance, flaws and foolishness is the ultimate in humor. That is when you perceive yourself as silly but basically lovable. In fact, blessed is the person who can laugh at themselves because they will never cease to be amused. Such humor becomes the shock-absorbers that soften and minimize the bumps and chuckholes of life.

In a recent survey about humor, the majority of respondents volunteered they liked to be around people who had a good sense of humor and people who laughed easily. This response was of particular interest, because they were asked only, "What makes you laugh?" The fact that people like to be with others who have a good sense of humor is a real asset in just about any line of work. Especially I think this true of First Responders like each of you who are a part of GNFD.

Laughter is like a mini-vacation. Why not choose to take a vacation from worry and concern with some laughter? You'll enjoy the time away from your problems and be a better person.

# LOL



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## Employee News

### Condolences

Our prayers are with the following families:

Jorge Lara Family  
Matt Day Family



## Employee Spotlight

Congratulations to Driver Engineers Jason Borowski and John Richard (not pictured) on their graduation from the Hodges University Paramedic Program!



## Welcome to GNFD



Training & Special Operations  
Administrative Assistant  
Martie Morgan



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## In the Community

