



THE BOTTOM LINE



KEEPING YOU INFORMED.

Welcome New Fire Commissioners

AL DUFFY & NICK BIONDO

The District recently welcomed two new Greater Naples Fire Rescue District Fire Commissioners to the Board as a result of the November 3rd General Election. For Seat 2 that represents the East Naples area of the District, we welcome Al Duffy, a 38-year veteran of the fire service. For Seat 5 that represents the Golden Gate area of the District, we welcome Nick Biondo, a 26-year veteran of the fire service. Their official four-year term became effective November 13 and they were sworn in at their first Commission meeting which was held on December 8, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. at the District Headquarters. We look forward to working with Commissioners Duffy and Biondo and are confident they will significantly contribute to the successes of Greater Naples Fire Rescue with their combined experience.



EMS Division Chief, Kevin Nemes, using an electrostatic sprayer to sanitize Election Polls in November, 2020.

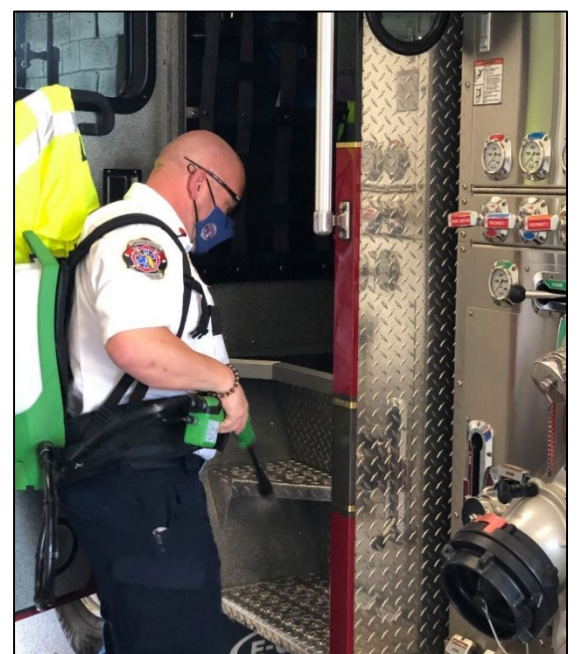


Commissioners Al Duffy and Nick Biondo with Judge McGowan after being sworn on December 8, 2020.

Protecting Voters at the Polls

USING ELECTROSTATIC SPRAYERS

In preparation for the 2020 November election, firefighters sprayed down polling locations with electrostatic disinfecting sprayers. These sprayers contain a solution called bioesque, which kills Covid-19. These devices are also used to clean our facilities, apparatuses, and gear. The District was pleased to make voting polls safer and support the community to go to the polls and exercise their right to vote amidst the pandemic.



EMS Division Chief, Kevin Nemes, using an electrostatic sprayer to sanitize Engine 73.



IN THIS ISSUE

LIGHTING THE NIGHT

MAKING A WISH COME TRUE

HOW FAR WE'VE COME



NATIONAL FALLEN FIREFIGHTERS FOUNDATION

Lighting the Night
Showing Support for Fallen Firefighters

NATIONAL FALLEN FIREFIGHTERS
FOUNDATION

Greater Naples Fire Rescue participated in the “Light the Night for Fallen Firefighters” event September 27 through October 4 to pay tribute to fallen firefighters nationwide.

We were honored to join fire departments across the nation for “Light the Night for Fallen Firefighters”. This is an annual event sponsored by the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation to recognize and honor those firefighters who have made the ultimate sacrifice. These are America’s fallen heroes.

According to the United States Fire Administration’s “Firefighter Fatalities in the United States in 2018,” 82 firefighters died in the line of duty, five fewer than the 87 who died in 2017.

Of the 82 line of duty deaths (LODDs), 33 were career deaths, which included five rural fire department deaths and 28 urban/suburban fire department deaths; 44 volunteer deaths, which included 27 rural department deaths and 17 urban/suburban deaths; and five wildland agency deaths, which included two full-time deaths and three part-time or seasonal deaths.



Station 70 participating in the Nation Fallen Firefighters Foundation “Light the Night” tradition.

The deaths were evenly split as to the type of duty. Of the total deaths, 51% occurred during an emergency, and 49% occurred during a non-emergency, such as training, administrative activities, performing other functions not related to an emergency incident and post-incident fatalities. Another major finding of the report was the cause of fatalities. Of the 82 overall deaths in 2018, 37 were due to stress or overexertion.

With the National Fire Academy unable to host their annual Fallen Firefighter Memorial Weekend due to the pandemic, this is just a small way for departments to remember those who have died in the line of duty.

For the second year, the men and women of Greater Naples Fire Rescue honored their fallen comrades by lighting their fire stations. We must never forget.



SHOWING SUPPORT

*Making a Wish
Come True*

PARTNERING WITH MAKE-A-WISH

Greater Naples Fire Rescue District was honored to partner with Make-A-Wish Southern Florida to create a special moment for Adrian, a 4-year-old battling Leukemia. Adrian wished to have a bedroom makeover fit for a car and truck enthusiast. GNFD Firefighters presented Adrian with some real fire equipment from the station to finish off his bedroom. It was a privilege for GNFD to show support for his family and make Adrian’s wish come true.



Adrian, a 4-year-old battling leukemia, showing off his love for firefighting.



GNFD Firefighters bring Adrian real fire equipment for his bedroom makeover on October 5, 2020.

WELCOME

*Meet Our Newest
Employees*

We are thrilled to grow the GNFD family as we highlight the recent employment of three high class professionals. Finance Manager James West, Facilities Maintenance Technician Briant Cardeso, and Fire Inspector Earl Floyd all join the Fire District to enhance our service to the community.



OUR 6 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

How Far We’ve Come

The Merging of East Naples and Golden Gate Fire

EST. 2014

On November 4, 2014, 149 founding members of Greater Naples Fire Rescue District ventured into new and uncharted territory. Today the Greater Naples has grown to be one of the largest independent fire districts in the State, protecting more than 160,000 residents in an area of 1,512 square miles. There are currently 235 members that serve the greater Naples communities of Golden Gate, East Naples, Isles of Capris, Port of the Islands, Everglades City, Chokoloskee and the Ochopee service area. While the Fire District continues to expand services at a staggering rate, the opportunity to grow the membership proposes an exciting future.

The Fire District strives to meet expectations associated with rapid growth and the expansion of services the community. Such demands bring the need to increase a wide range of capabilities while administering cost-effective budget strategies that maximizes resources and expenditures.

The coming year will be an exciting time with the addition of the 16th fire rescue station, formal merger of the Ochopee service area, purchase of a number five fire apparatus and planning for a new support services complex. This addition of resources significantly contributes to the District’s abilities to respond to emergencies and support functions necessary to ensure operational capabilities.

The District has achieved numerous accomplishments over the recent year. This would have never been possible without the continued support of the Board of Fire Commissioners, diligence of support staff, and commitment of those in the field conducting nearly 10,000 life safety inspections and responding to more than 20,000 emergency incidents.

Through it all, the Fire District Staff stands ready for what 2021 will bring. The GNFD members continue to perform in an exemplary manner, meeting these demands while providing exceptional customer service.



Firefighters leaving a training burn site.

MILE MARKER 63 STATION

Fire Rescue on Alligator Alley
Fighting for Funding

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

The Alligator Alley Fire Rescue Station at Mile Marker 63 (Station 63) is a state-owned facility, being managed and staffed by Greater Naples Fire Rescue District (GNFD) and Collier County EMS. The annual operating cost of the Fire Rescue Public Safety Center is \$1.5 million with the Fire District assuming 10% of all associated expenses. Only after services are provided does the Fire District request reimbursement from the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT).

FDOT has been providing funding for the Greater Naples Fire District’s provision of fire, rescue, and emergency medical services to the public on Alligator Alley under terms of the July 1, 2019, Interlocal Agreement between the FDOT and GNFD.

Station 63 exclusively serves Alligator Alley, keeping life safety response times to an average of 14 minutes within the station’s 30-mile primary response area; an 80% reduction since its construction in 2014.

In addition to state funded resources, Greater Naples Fire Rescue and Collier County EMS provide additional fire rescue and EMS units on every emergency incident at no cost to the FDOT.

On November 9, 2020 the FDOT informed the Fire District it would not provide reimbursement for services rendered since July 1, 2020, and into the future. This year the Fire District has spent nearly \$500,000.00 to maintain these life-saving services to the travelers of Alligator Alley. Since January 1, 2019 Greater Naples Fire Rescue responded to more than 400 emergency incidents with only 12.5% of these emergency incidents involve Collier County residents.

The FDOT reports that funding is no longer available due to a reduction in toll revenues resulting from the current public health crisis and an upcoming pavement renewal project.

District Staff presented a draft bill for presentation during the November 20, 2020 Local Delegation and received support from Legislators. District and County staff continue to work collectively to address the intent of the FDOT to cease reimbursement funding for the operations of Fire Station 63.



RED RIBBON WEEK

Firefighters tell us what it means to ‘Be Brave’

SUPPORTING STUDENTS

Red Ribbon Week is the largest drug-abuse prevention campaign in the nation. Schools around the nation participate in this campaign on the week of October 23rd through 31st. In accordance with this year’s theme of “Be Happy, Be Brave, Be Drug Free” GNFD firefighters came together to help make an educational video for Parkside Elementary School. Firefighters delivered education to students about the firefighter profession and covered topics such as the day-to-day life of a firefighter and various equipment on a fire truck. Greater Naples Firefighters continue to help educate the public and act as role models for being brave.

[CLICK HERE FOR THE FULL VIDEO!](#)

Some of our firefighters were asked “What does it mean to be brave?” One of our firefighters said that it means “To be able to stand up for what you believe in.”. Another firefighter said that it means “To overcome fear even when you’re scared.” We pride ourselves on having courageous individuals like these who truly understand what it means to be brave on a daily basis.



Driver Engineer Richards explains how much water a fire truck can carry.



Firefighter Contreras puts on his gear to show students how much equipment they must wear.

CELEBRATING EMPLOYEE SUCCESS

Award Winning Employees

2020 FIRE EDUCATOR OF EXCELLENCE



The Collier County Fire and EMS Chiefs Association hosted the First Annual Service Awards Ceremony. The virtual award’s ceremony was held on October 28th, 2020 to honor local citizens and first responders for their commitment and contribution to the community. Captain Russel “Rusty” Godette was awarded the Fire Educator of

Excellence Award for his compassion for the fire service, dedication to the men and women he trains every day, and his willingness to work across the lines with other first responders. Only one trainer was selected out of the entire county to receive this award. Captain Godette is a model trainer in the county and is well deserving of this award. The District is proud to have Captain Godette represent Greater Naples Fire each and every day. Captain Godette has served the District for 20 years and has exemplified great leadership and extraordinary skills throughout his career. He is highly successful in planning and improvising training programs, and continuously preforms at the highest standard. Captain Godette has been instrumental to training and education, evident through his dedication to hosting, instructing, and attending training events. He exhibits the resourcefulness, reliability, and dependability that results in high quality, progressive training. As a leader, Captain Godette has worked to lead the charge for making training a state-wide initiative, creating training partnerships throughout the county, and operating successful training programs, such as our acquired structure training programs. However, his service to others continues off duty, especially as an advocate for firefighter mental health. He is a key member of the critical incident stress management team and does not hesitate to help those in need. Captain Godette has made a tremendous impact in the District and the community for his undying commitment to firefighter training, mental and physical health, and safety. Captain Rusty Godette has created an inspiring legacy within our organization and the community, and it is our great honor to recognize him as the 2020 Fire Educator of Excellence.

SONS OF AMERICAN REVOLUTION AWARDS

The National Society Sons of the American Revolution (NSSAR) is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting patriotism, preserving American history, and promoting education to future generations. This past week, on November 12th, the Naples Chapter NSSAR recognized two Greater Naples Fire Rescue employees for their demonstration of exceptional work within the community. Captain Matt Trent received the Heroism Award for his unwavering bravery and self-sacrifice that he embodies on a daily basis. Fire Inspector Aaron Stewart received the Fire Safety Commendation Award for his outstanding contributions to the community through his efforts to protect human life and property. We are proud to celebrate Captain Trent and Inspector Stewart for these honors.



Captain Matt Trent has served the Greater Naples Fire Rescue District for 14 years. His role as Captain has lead him to many endeavors that require great strength and bravery. He remains dedicated to his profession and shows compassion for others as a first responder. Captain Trent is responsible for maintaining effective and cooperative working relationships with personnel. He leads by example and ensures the highest quality of operation from himself and the personnel under his command. We celebrate Captain Trent for his heroism that helps make the community a better place.



Fire Inspector Aaron Stewart has served the Greater Naples Fire Rescue District for 6 years. As a Fire Inspector, he is responsible for performing fire and life safety inspections, keeping the public educated on safety, and other duties that contribute to taking preventative measures for the wellbeing of the community. Inspector Stewart embodies dedication and diligence in his work and fulfills his duties at the highest level. We celebrate Inspector Stewart for his contributions to fire and life safety that helps make the community a better place.



CHAPLAIN’S CORNER

Chaplain’s Message

CHAPLAIN JACK STROM

My adult son challenged me with the word BETTER. He said to me, “Dad, you are good but would you like to be BETTER? Why don’t the two of us see how we can do BETTER this year?” So now I have been thinking about one word as I enter the new year of 2021. It is the one word BETTER.

In comparison to last year, I plan to do BETTER. With my Chaplain’s Corner, I am inviting you to join me and my son. Together we can all do BETTER. Ever since I was in High School... each year I have set some New Year’s resolutions. For many years I tried to be specific: Gain 10 pounds. Lose 10 pounds. Make more money. Save more money. Learn to speak Spanish. Learn to walk taller but keep my head at a friendly angle.

In years past, by the end of January I would say to myself, “Well... there is always next year.” Tired of the disappointment, one year I decided to keep it vague, more of a yearly theme like “I’ll just be BETTER!” A BETTER husband, a BETTER father, a BETTER friend. BETTER taking care of my body, BETTER at improving my attitude, my dreams and goals.

Being BETTER it turns out, is big business. According to something I read on the internet, the self-improvement industry is estimated to grow to 13.2 billion dollars by the end of 2022. A lot of money is being spent on trying to make me BETTER.

A comedian of years past once said he went to a bookstore and asked the saleswoman, “Where’s the self-help books?” She said, “If I told you, it would defeat the purpose. If you’re looking for self-help, why would you read a book written by someone else? That is not self-help, that’s trying to get help from someone else. There’s no such thing as self-help. If you did it yourself, you didn’t need help.”

But it seems that a lot of us are looking for help... And all this trying to be BETTER doesn’t seem to be making us BETTER. Or maybe it’s just me. Should I set goals, be more disciplined? Or should I relax, have more recreation... take time to smell the flowers?

Trying for BETTER can be exhausting. And yet I believe I can do BETTER. I can develop a BETTER me! I can read some of my many books just waiting to be read. I’ve found it’s particularly BETTER when I read the Bible and live up to what I read. And I believe that things will be BETTER when paired with someone else. For me, that someone else is my son. I trust you will find “someone else” to join you as you commit to becoming BETTER together in 2021.

