



THE BOTTOM LINE



KEEPING YOU INFORMED.

The COVID-19 Vaccine

FIGHTING COVID-19 TOGETHER

It has been over a year since the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus. However, the pandemic continues to plague our lives today and has certainly changed our world moving forward. In the course of a year, significant progress has been made towards controlling, preventing, and minimizing the effects of the virus. The recent distribution of the COVID-19 vaccines has helped to not only minimize the risk of getting the coronavirus, but also contribute to a feeling of safety for the members of the community. There are currently three vaccines available, Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, and Jassen/Johnson & Johnson. To learn more about the different types and which might be the best for you, you can [click here](#).

The District has been fortunate to have employees fully or partially vaccinated. This has been instrumental in the District's ability to operate in such a way that is both safe for the community and District employees. In accordance with Governor DeSantis' order to boost the number of seniors getting vaccinations in rural areas, GNFD first responders have joined other first responders in administering vaccines to these local rural/remote locations with more limited access. Specifically, first responders vaccinated residents of Everglades City and surrounding areas like Chokoloskee, Plantation, Jerome, and Copeland. To clear up some confusion; however, the District has not been involved in the distribution of vaccines, only the administration of vaccines provided to these areas. Since half of our firefighters are also certified paramedics, they are able to administer the vaccines distributed by the Department of Health.

While the administration of vaccines may be a positive step forward, the Greater Naples Fire Rescue District recognizes that obtaining a vaccine has not necessarily been a positive experience for everyone. The process of getting an appointment has clearly been frustrating, confusing, and hopeless for many. We hear you. That is why we are looking to help out interested groups in the community. The Greater Naples Fire Rescue District will be working with Collier County Unified Command and acting as a receiving point to obtain vaccines for residents who meet the requirements in the current executive order.



GNFD Crews helping administer the Covid-19 vaccine to residents in Everglades City.

HELP US, HELP YOU

If you are part of an interested group or living community looking to obtain a COVID-19 vaccine, it is important you take the following steps so we can help you out:

1. Prepare an organized list of interested individuals.
2. Check to see if they meet the **current** executive orders. [The current executive orders can be found here](#) . It is essential that individuals on the list meet these requirements.
3. Revise your list with **ONLY** the interested individuals who meet the requirements. The list should include name, date of birth, and a working email and phone number of the individuals.
4. Email your list to EMS Division Chief, Kevin Nelmes at knelmes@gnfire.org

It is important to note that securing vaccinations for individuals on the list is based entirely on fulfillment of the information above, NOT upon request. If you are contacted about vaccinations secured for your group, you will receive paperwork that must be filled out, printed, and brought with to your appointment. Please ensure all information above is met so that you and your group have the best chance of obtaining a vaccine. Being prepared with your required information will help operations run more efficiently overall.



IN THIS ISSUE

**THE BENEFITS OF
PRESCRIBED BURNS**

**ACCEPTING &
EMBRACING
CHANGE**

**GRATITUDE FOR
COMMUNITY
SUPPORT**

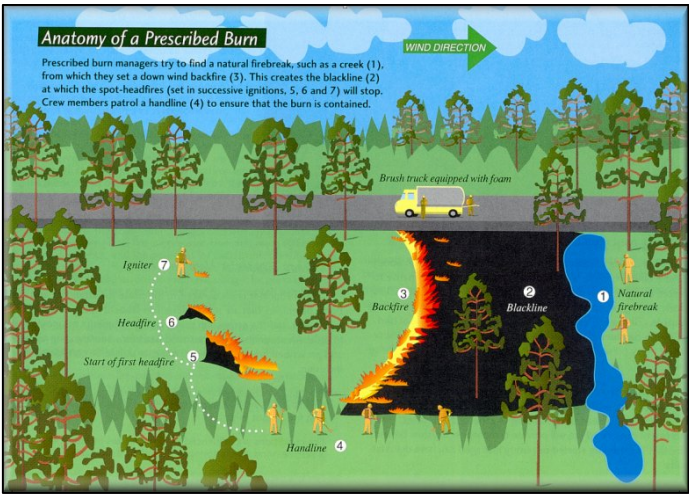
PREScribed BURNS

What’s with All the Smoke?

Addressing Concerns Regarding Prescribed Burns In the Area

PREScribed BURNS

Many people in the community may be familiar with the more frequent presence of smoke in the air during this time of year. However, others may be puzzled or worried by this indication of fire. If you’re an active member on our Facebook page, you might have noticed the surge in burn notices. This way we can alert the community on when a fire is supposed to be happening. But why has this become more relevant recently? Why would burning land on purpose be a good thing? There’s lots of questions and concerns you may have, so we’re here to explain all things prescribed burns.



- 1. Prescribed burns are the best way to protect the community against wildfires.**

Prescribed burns actually work to reduce the chances for a wildfire to occur. Similar to the technique of using vegetation and small sticks or debris for kindling to start a fire, prescribed burns work to eliminate this debris and therefore halt kindling from occurring. It’s normal for branches to fall, leaves to gather, and bushes to grow wild. But, in our natural preserves and other wildlands, there’s no landscaping to keep these plants from accumulating. Prescribed burns provide a natural way to essentially “landscape” our wildlands thus reducing a potential fuel to fire that could start. Clearing this debris makes the difference between a fire getting out of control and fire dying off.

- 2. It’s wildfire season.**

So, prescribed burns are helpful for preventing wildfires, but why are there so many lately? Wildfire season peaks in months May through August. During this time of year, wildland is most susceptible to wildfires because of the increasingly dry and hot weather. That means extra defense is needed to prevent fires in our wildlands from getting out of controlling and potentially damaging the community and putting residents at risk. Prescribed burns provide a vital tool for preparing our wildlands.

- 3. Prescribed burns are good for the ecosystem.**

Florida is known for its diverse wildlife and presence of vegetation. That means that the health of our plants and animals is dependent on the environment they inhabit. Prescribed burns facilitate regrowth and the production of nutrients by overturning soil and instigating growth. While the idea of burning land may seem like it would be damaging, it actually improves environment health by also reducing insect populations and destroying invasive plants which are damaging the land.

- 4. These burns are controlled.**

These prescribed burns are often occurring at natural preserves and conservation areas. Burns are carefully planned. Typically, the fire team will locate a firebreak, like a lake or road, then set a downwind backfire. This creates what is referred to as a “blackline” a point at which ignitions will stop. Fire crews are nearby as backup in case of emergency, but fire-management experts typically plan these burns so carefully that they rarely get out of hand.

If you notice smoke and are curious if a prescribed burn is occurring, you can always follow our social media accounts where we alert the public of up to date information like where and when a prescribed burn is occurring.



COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS

Gratitude for the Community

THANKFUL FOR YOUR SUPPORT

No act of kindness goes unnoticed at the Greater Naples Fire Rescue District. While the past months have been hard on everyone, there is no lack of support from the community. We would like to extend an immense thank you to our community for their unwavering support and generosity. Here are some of our most recent donations from community members and organizations:



Fire Chief Sapp accepts a generous donation from FMGI, Inc. and Walmart at the Walmart Grand Opening on 9885 Collier Blvd.



Winn Dixie delivering bagels to several of our facilities on Random Acts of Kindness Day.



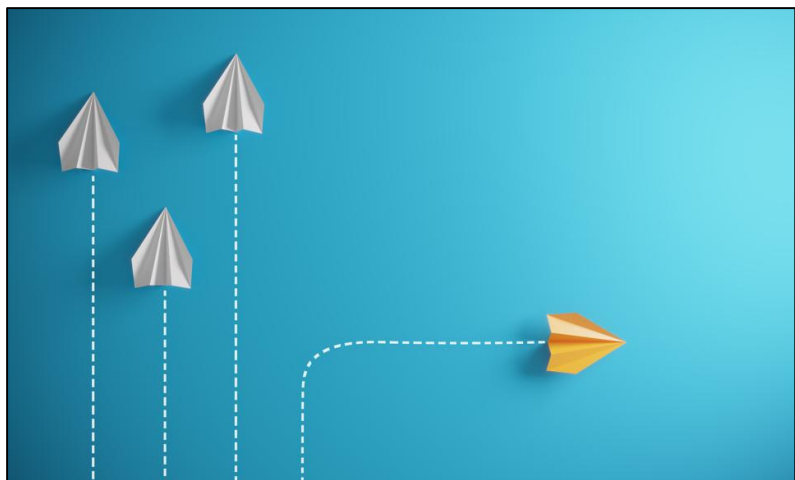
Brian Bower, Scott Johnson, and Kevin Nelmes picking up PPE kits from the Collier CARES Act Program Grant Coordinator, Michelle McLeod.

CHAPLAIN’S CORNER

Some Words on Change

Accepting and Embracing a Changing World

CHAPLAIN JACK STROM



Many of us are not natives to this area. Most of us have come from other cities or states. Some of you, no doubt, have gone back to your old homes for a visit from time to time. And I’m sure the old house is not like the picture you have carried in your memory through the years. The neighbors will have changed, the house itself will have changed... and you, the one who helped make that house a home have also changed.

We pass from youth to middle age and for those like me, from middle age to old age. Is it any wonder that many of us are weary of change?

Some changes are exceedingly upsetting. They shake us out of our comfortable patterns. Many changes compel us to think, “What do I do now?” Some changes compel us to move forward or to get out of the way.

What should be our attitude toward change? It is, after all, something with which we all have to reckon with sooner or later. For some, change is not so much a means to an end as an end in itself. Maybe you would like to destroy the whole past at the close of each day and start from scratch each morning.

Then there is another group that instead of regarding change as the best of experiences, they look upon change as something to avoid at all costs. Their ideal home, their ideal church, their ideal career, their ideal world is one that never changes. I personally feel I need to learn to accept change. Those of us privileged to be a part of the GNFD family know about change and we have learned to accept change. The daily challenge is to always learn to use change for good.

We need to learn how we can make change our friend. While we live in a changing world, we must never forget there are certain things that never change. North is still North and South is still South. The multiplication table has not changed. Two times two still equals four. Principles never change. Rules may change but not principles. *Don’t be misled – you cannot mock the justice of God: You will always harvest what you plant.* (Galatians 6:7) Remember this is true of the “good” as it is of the “bad.” This is a wonderful promise.

Decide to live by FAITH and HOPE and LOVE (1 Corinthians 13:13) and you will begin to reap a wonderful harvest... because God never changes. Since we have an unchanging God, we can face change without any fear.

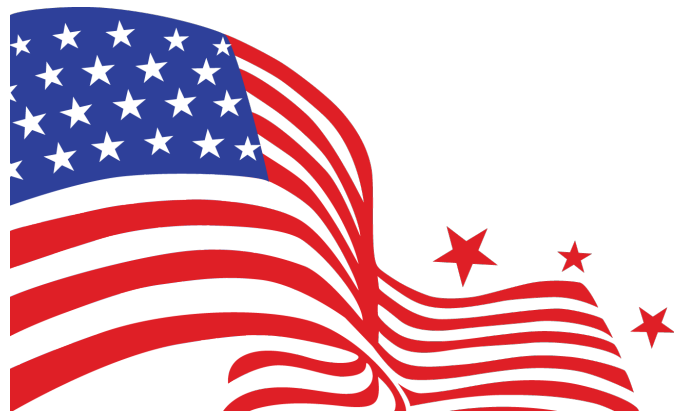
EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Employees of the Year

Celebrating Outstanding Job Performance

FIREFIGHTER MARTA SOTO AND FINANCE SPECIALIST MERCEDES CARRILLO

With 215 members of the GNFD staff, winning the Employee of the Year is a prestigious honor. Employees are nominated for the award by their peers. This year we celebrate two phenomenal employees for their stand out performance and dedication to the community. Congratulations to Marta Soto for being named Firefighter of the Year and Mercedes Carrillo for being named Civilian Employee of the Year. The guidelines for these awards were demonstration of outstanding citizenship, exemplary job achievement, and exemplary performance in the line of duty. These employees have demonstrated far beyond these criteria and have made the District proud over the course of their careers.



Firefighter **Marta Soto**



Finance Specialist **Mercedes Carrillo**

MORE ON OUR AWARD WINNING EMPLOYEES:

Over the course of 2020, Firefighter Marta Soto has exemplified her strive for greatness in many ways. She is reliable, hardworking, and has made a positive impact on the culture of GNFD since her employment. On top of her career with the District, FF Soto has earned her bachelor’s degree this year and is on her way to becoming a Driver Engineer. She embodies exemplary dedication and passion, evident through her innumerable accomplishments over the course of 2020. We look forward to her continued success and we are proud to announce Marta Soto as the 2020 Firefighter of the Year.

Mercedes Carrillo is inspiring to everyone around her. She has managed to make an exceptional impact on the finance department through her punctilious nature, eagerness to learn, and passion for success. Mercedes has also completed her journey to becoming a U.S. Citizen this year, and makes great progress to achieving her degree in Accounting. She indubitably brings a positive energy to the workplace and shows great compassion for her co-workers and members of the community. We look forward to her continued success and we are proud to announce her as the 2020 Civilian Employee of the Year.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Firefighters Participate in Advocating for Summer Reading

SUPPORTING CCPL

GNFD firefighters rarely lack the opportunity to go beyond the scope of their work and engage in community projects. Recently, personnel from Station 22 participated in the Collier County Public Library (CCPL) “Truck Week” project. This project aims to promote summer reading for students. Captain Craig Weinbaum, Lieutenant Derek Jones and Driver Engineer David Perez were thrilled to be a part of this great program. They also helped make a video going over the firetruck and its tools. We are proud to have these first responders who inspire and educate the community on and off duty. Thank you to CCPL for letting us share our knowledge!



Captain Weinbaum and Lieutenant Jones with Irene Johnson for CCPL “Truck Week”.



Lieutenant Jones suited up for “Truck Week”



Captain Weinbaum helping make an information firetruck video.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Minimizing Vehicle Accidents & Being A Defensive Driver

THE IMPORTANCE OF DEFENSIVE DRIVING

There has been a noticeable shift in traffic patterns lately. During this time of year, which the community designates as “season”, our roads experience a significant influx in both traffic and accidents. This is no coincidence. The spike in traffic can cause frustration, confusion, and chaos on the roads, which makes it extremely important for the community to work together to make the roads a safer place. There is no way to entirely prevent accidents from happening, but there are measures we can all take to minimize them from occurring. Defensive driving is defined by a set of driving skills that allow you to defend yourself against possible collisions caused by bad drivers, drunk drivers, and poor weather. Staying alert and being able to spot potential hazards before they happen can make the difference between being in an accident and avoiding one. The following tips from *Nemours* serve as a great reminder of ways to be a “defensive driver”:

- **Think safety first.** Avoiding aggressive and inattentive driving tendencies yourself will put you in a stronger position to deal with other people's bad driving. Leave plenty of space between you and the car in front. Always lock your doors and wear your seatbelt to protect you from being thrown from the car in a crash.
- **Be aware of your surroundings — pay attention.** Check your mirrors frequently and scan conditions 20 to 30 seconds ahead of you. Keep your eyes moving. If a vehicle is showing signs of aggressive driving, slow down or pull over to avoid it. If the driver is driving so dangerously that you're worried, try to get off the roadway by turning right or taking the next exit if it's safe to do so. Also, keep an eye on pedestrians, bicyclists, and pets along the road.
- **Do not depend on other drivers.** Be considerate of others but look out for yourself. Do not assume another driver is going to move out of the way or allow you to merge. Assume that drivers will run through red lights or stop signs and be prepared to react. Plan your movements anticipating the worst-case scenario.



- **Follow the 3- to 4-second rule.** Since the greatest chance of a collision is in front of you, using the 3- to 4-second rule will help you establish and maintain a safe following distance and provide adequate time for you to brake to a stop if necessary. But this rule only works in normal traffic under good weather conditions. In bad weather, increase your following distance an additional second for each condition such as rain, fog, nighttime driving, or following a large truck or motorcycle.
- **Keep your speed down.** Posted speed limits apply to ideal conditions. It's your responsibility to ensure that your speed matches conditions. In addition, higher speeds make controlling your vehicle that much more difficult if things go wrong. To maintain control of your vehicle, you must control your speed.
- **Have an escape route.** In all driving situations, the best way to avoid potential dangers is to position your vehicle where you have the best chance of seeing and being seen. Having an alternate path of travel also is essential, so always leave yourself an out — a place to move your vehicle if your immediate path of travel is suddenly blocked.

FIRE CHIEF

Meet the Fire Chief

J. NOLAN SAPP

After serving as Interim Fire Chief since December 2020, Nolan J. Sapp has been named the new Fire Chief of the Greater Naples Fire Rescue District. He has been a valuable member of the GNFD team since the District formed in 2014. However, his career started back in 1978 when he was both a firefighter and police officer in Taylor County, Kentucky. In 1991 he moved to Naples and began a career with the North Naples Fire Control District, rising through the ranks to Captain. He joined the Golden Gate Fire District in 2002 where he served as the Deputy Chief of Operations and was later promoted to Assistant Chief of Operations in 2008. Assistant Chief of Administration duties were also turned over to him in 2011. Chief Sapp has accomplished a great deal in his career within the fire service, being actively involved with county CAD and radio communications, fire operations, and the Collier County Fire Chiefs’ Association for many years.

After overwhelming support and progress during his recent position of Interim Chief, Nolan Sapp was appointed to be the new Fire Chief at the March 5th Board of Fire Commissioners meeting, where he accepted the role and has wasted no time since his official acceptance of the role. His previous role as the Assistant Chief of Operations has given him an advantageous perspective on the direction the District must go for optimal success within the community. He indubitably represents a leader that demonstrates the professionalism, integrity, and compassion that the prestige role of Fire Chief requires. Chief Sapp’s strong leadership qualities and motivation for District enhancement are what really make him an ideal candidate for this role.

Since Chief Sapp’s appointment to Fire Chief, he has already established a remarkable difference in the culture of GNFD. He promotes employee appreciation and team work, operating with the help and intuition of those around him. He has been focusing on reviewing each area of District operations and making changes brought up by employees who have voiced their concerns. Input was collected by an Employee Satisfaction Survey that he recently distributed, which is already being used to make positive changes. Additionally, Chief Sapp looks forward to further unifying the Greater Naples Fire Rescue District Team to provide the highest level of professional public safety to our Greater Naples Community!



FIRE CHIEF
J. NOLAN
SAPP

