

SOUTH SIOUX CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT



A N N U A L R E P O R T

2018

CLINTON F. MERITHEW
FIRE CHIEF

"I came, I saw, I conquered."
--Julius Caesar

THIS PAGE IS DEDICATED TO THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE SOUTH SIOUX CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT.



FOR THOSE THAT HAVE FALLEN BEFORE US,
AND FOR THOSE THAT STEP UP AND PLACE
THEIR LIVES IN PERILE, TO SAVE OTHERS.

"Greater love has no one than this, that one should lay down his life for his friends"
John 15:13

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"As the past is my history and the future is a mystery, so the present is my time"
Unknown Author

Chief's Message...

It is with great pride and enthusiasm that I lead the men and women of the South Sioux City Fire Department (SSCFD). It is the goal of the Department to provide the highest level of service to each and every one of our citizens and surrounding communities. It is the diversity of our communities, along with the personnel of the Department that make this Department a leader in the fire service. We offer fire services with updated fire equipment, apparatus and superior training of our personnel. We deliver high quality Paramedic Services to our citizens and contracted area communities which need the Advanced Life Support (ALS) quality service.

As Fire Chief, I will continue to embody the core values:

**Prepared for Duty
Serving with Integrity
Responding with Compassion
Committed to Professional Excellence**

With a collaborative culture that has been built, an organization dedicated to superior service and excellence in all that we do. I am committed to our members, fostering our partnership with labor, and collaborating with allied agencies, local businesses, and our schools which ultimately benefit all of our citizens.

Operationally, during 2018, our call volume was once again up and we responded to several noteworthy incidents. Detailed information on incident occurrence and response will be provided later in the report however; I would like to highlight that professional manner in which are services are delivered. It should be self-evident that we are routinely called upon to provide wide ranging emergency response services. This past year we operated at several significant fires one of which at Choke Cherry was hampered by high winds which caused a second adjacent residence to catch fire. Mutual-Aid was called upon as well as the newly agreed 28E with Sioux City Fire and Rescue. The fire was suppressed, however to the cost of two residential structures.

We have been very successful with our Fire Prevention and Public Education programs this past year with an enhancement incorporating the E.D.I.T.H. (Exit Drills In The Home) Program during Fire Prevention Week. Taking to all the schools this year we touched nearly 1,000 K-4th graders. The crews were busy all week educating the school kids.

The Mutual-Aid agreement with area departments was enhanced by a 28E Agreement with Sioux City Fire and Rescue. This enables South Sioux City Fire Department to call upon Sioux City for additional resources arriving in minutes from notification.

Becoming a leader within a cutting -edge fire department requires a great deal more than operational proficiency. In fact, it necessitates abilities in motivation, administration and managerial functions. It also requires the ability to communicate with wide-ranging audiences both inside and outside of the City.

I appreciate this incredible opportunity to serve a great community. It is a great honor to lead the men and women of the south Sioux City Fire Department as their Fire Chief.

Respectfully,

Clint Merithew
Fire Chief
South Sioux City Fire Department



"Don't find fault, find a remedy."
- Henry Ford

COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS

As part of the overall effort to manage a growing fire department and bolstering community, the South Sioux City Fire Department witnessed the swearing in to historical events of the fire department.



As Chief Merithew develops the systematic steps in managing the fire department he also developed the first ever standards of accountability for full time Fire Captains. The development of the job description, notice of position openings available and then the written tests.

Outside alliances were brought in for the oral board consisting of the City's Medical Director; Doctor Rick Colwell, City Council Member Jack Ehrich and Sioux City Assistant Fire Chief Dan Cougill. With an intense written and now grueling oral board, the City's first full time Fire Captains on a professional level were introduced to the City Council and community with a swearing in from City Attorney Mike Schmiedt.



The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) program for SAFER (Staffing for Adequate Fire & Emergency Response) which was approved in early 2017 brought onto the force on February 12, 2018 an additional five (5) full time career firefighters.

Through the Civil Service Agency in testing, physical evaluations and performance agilities, the Council again was front row to the swearing in to another historical benchmark for the City, community and the fire department. Firefighters various skills and abilities and even from within the ranks of the volunteer force created the three person shifts that will take the department into the next dimension of response decisions making

South Sioux City and safer place to work, live and thrive. Firefighter/Paramedic Aaron McCoy, Firefighter/EMT Kevin Ott, Firefighter/EMT Kevin Eischeid, Firefighter/ EMT Brandon McCune, and Firefighter/EMT Zach Daniels. Each new member had their badge pinned to them by their spouses or family member.

With the Fire Captains and these new firefighters the shift scheduling to A-Shift, B-Shift and C-Shift working 24 hour shifts was developed, thus allowing for immediate responses from Fire Station #1 when the tones go out. The response times have made the differing changes in 90-second enroute times from the alert tones than previous 3-7 minutes, and a compliment of 3-4 personnel per call.

"Once you replace negative thoughts with positive ones, you'll start having positive results."

-- Willie Nelson

PERSONNEL RECOGNITION

Department personnel were recognized both statewide and nationally through their timeless efforts in programs and life-saving skills throughout the year.

Fire Captain/ Paramedic Jay Mathis was awarded the 2018 “Friends of Children Award” by the Nebraska School Nurse Association for his part in “Stop-the-Bleed Program”. SSC School Nurse Judi Neswick made the Council presentation for his efforts in building up the “Stop-the-Bleed” Program and bringing it to the South Sioux City School District. Captain took this project on and obtained the funding to teach and obtain the necessary medical kits for each school in the District.



The “JAWS of Life” is an essential extrication tool used for entrapments in both motor vehicle accidents, agriculture and industrial accidents. The Fire Department is lucky to have two sets of devices one is hydraulically powered by a specialty generator and the other set is an electric hydraulic powered by a specially enclosed battery.



Hurst Manufacturing developing the extrication devices back in the early 1970's began giving out awards to those emergency responders to recognize their efforts in 'live extrications' giving accolades for the work performed. South Sioux City Fire Department began recognizing the department members in January 2017 so City government and citizens could see those members in the department making those difficult extrications. Since 2017 there have been nine department members who have been recognized through this program that have received the Green Cross Award.

Pictured to the right for the 2018 Hurst JAWS Awards: L to R, Lt. Kody Keefer, Firefighter Aaron Merithew, Firefighter/EMT Kevin Eischeid, Chief Merithew. (Not pictured is Firefighter/Paramedic Aaron McCoy)



“Firefighters are essential to the safety and security of our local communities. We owe it to these men and women to provide them with better training and equipment so they can do their jobs more effectively and safely”.

--Carl Levin

... RECOGNITION

One of the biggest gifts one can bestow upon another is saving a life. That is the focus to the total operations of all Fire Departments. The South Sioux Fire Department had the fortune to give back life that was taken away one cold frigid night in 2018. Crews from the South Sioux Fire Department, South Sioux Police Department, Dakota County Sheriff's Department and Nebraska State Patrol all were involved in this response to save the lifeless body. Initial tones were of difficulty breathing, but PD Officers arriving on-scene reported the victim was in cardiac arrest which then went to a request for additional assistance.



Pictured: Back row, L to R: Firefighter/EMT Lacey Hallstrom, Firefighter/ Paramedic Aaron McCoy, Lloyd Barker, NSP Sgt. Mobley, Firefighter/EMT Zach Daniels. Front row, L to R: Chief Clint Merithew, PD Chief Ed Mahon, Firefighter Aaron Merithew. Not pictured Dakota County Sheriff's Deputy Martinez.

For these gallant efforts, the State of Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, EMS Division was notified of the incident and began an evaluation into the incident. In December, Brad Harm, Nebraska's Northeast Emergency Medical Services Specialist was present at a City Council Meeting and presented those responders the "Code Save Award" for their actions in saving the life of Lloyd Barker, South Sioux City, Nebraska.

Longtime Volunteer Firefighter Joseph Mildorfer turned in his bunker gear this year to comply with his wife and doctor for reasons of "better or worse" says Joe of his wife Linda. The countless hours in training, stand-by and call responses were always in Joe's best interest in heart. Hating to give it all up was truly a difficult decision, but it was time. The department recognized the years of service to Joe at the August Annual Steak Frye and awarding him with his silver ax mounted on a board with the changing department patches over the years.

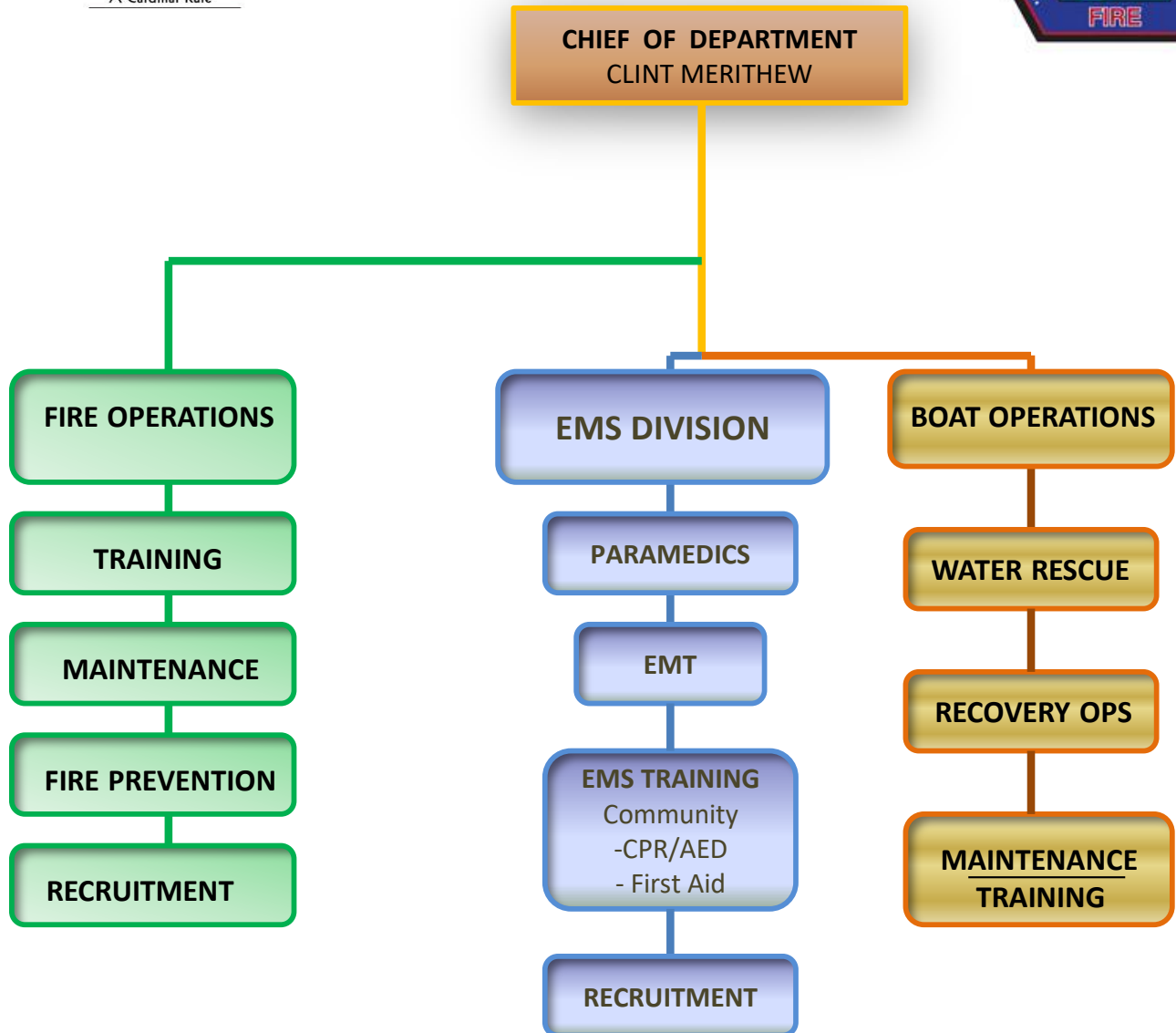


"Death not merely ends life; it also bestows upon it a silent completeness, snatched from the hazardous flux to which all things human are subject".
- --Hannah Arendt

DEPARTMENT STRUCTURE



South Sioux City Fire Department ORGANIZATIONAL CHART 2018



"The secret of getting ahead is getting started."
-Mark Twain

DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL

The Department roster is the culmination of personnel capable of performing the duties requested upon them in the course of a Fire or Emergency Medical call. Having the strength not only in body but in mind so the perils facing them will not affect their task given.

The roster descending in file with the years they have and brought to the department as a whole.

NAME	RANK	YEARS
Clint Merithew	Fire Chief	40
Dwayne Johnson	Volunteer Firefighter/ EMT	41
Payne Allen	Fire Captain/Paramedic	23
Jay Mathis	Fire Captain/Paramedic	22
Joe Mildorfer	Volunteer Firefighter	15
Erick Cruz	Vol. Firefighter/Paramedic	14
Qwinn Wright	Fire Captain/Paramedic	13
Kevin Eischeid	Firefighter/EMT	10
Aaron McCoy	Firefighter/Paramedic	8
Toby English	Volunteer Firefighter/ EMT	6
Lacey Hallstrom	Volunteer Firefighter/ EMT	5
Kody Keefer	Fire Lieutenant	5
Mario Andrade	Firefighter/Paramedic	5
Chris Olson	Volunteer Firefighter/ EMT	5
Kevin Ott	Vol. Firefighter / EMT	5
Shilo Herrmann	Volunteer Firefighter	4
Brandon McCune	Vol Firefighter/ EMT	3
Zach Daniels	Vol. Firefighter/EMT	2
Aaron Merithew	Volunteer Firefighter	2
Esther Howieson	Volunteer Firefighter/EMT	2
Matthew Kaylor	Volunteer Firefighter	2
Lee Roghair	Volunteer Firefighter/EMT	2
Chase Antle	Volunteer Firefighter/EMT	2
Matthew Howieson	Volunteer Firefighter	1
Cole Hofmeister	Volunteer Firefighter	1
Abdirabi Abshir	Volunteer Firefighter	1
Brian Gomez	Volunteer Firefighter	1
Mustaf Guled	Volunteer Firefighter	1



"Gratitude bestows reverence, allowing us to encounter everyday epiphanies, those transcendent moments of awe that change forever how we experience life and the world".

- John Milton

MILESTONES

One of the greatest steps moving forward in 2018 was the acquisition and changing over to the interoperability of newer communications. The department has for decades had only VHF radio frequency in paging, then UHF in radio communications. The department had the capabilities in finances to purchase a dual band pager using the strongest frequency for fire paging in the 800 MHz frequency, and still having the abilities to page out and monitor VHF frequencies. In the advent the 800 frequency goes down, or maintenance, the pagers can select over and back to the previous frequency without any operational interruption.



Handheld radios were also upgraded to the 800 MHz frequency having the capabilities to talk to the tri-state area departments by merely changing channels and banks. The radios have a strong penetration for firefighters deep inside a concrete commercial structure or basement. Again, the interoperability of these radios is non-stop in talking to Dakota County fire departments, law enforcement and Sioux City Fire.

RENTAL INSPECTIONS

One of the other changes in the department operations was the institution of Rental Inspections to residential and multi-family structures. The City Building Department originally ran the inspections for three successful years until 2018 when City Administration determined the Fire Department was the most logical department to run this division. A part-time employee was hire to begin the position and transition the firefighters in their shift assignments. Many meetings and data reviews the fire department began inspecting in May with the larger ramp up in August inspecting from 9AM-12noon then 1PM to 4PM meeting property owners and landlords for access entry. The firefighters working the shifts they do were able to by December 1st accomplish 906 inspections in that time frame. Many occupancies having structural deficiencies mold like surface contamination, infestations and smoke detection issues. The fire crews, working in tandem and multiple simultaneous locations worked with the responsible property owners in the compliance and education field. Why are carbon monoxide detectors required and where should they be located. Natural gas fire furnaces and water heaters and even clothes dryer not vented properly and foundation issues were a larger majority of issues compounded with GFCI (ground fault circuit interrupters) required to be located within 30-inches of a water source.

The crews, many which are new to the area learned the streets of South Sioux City better, and enabled them visual layouts of the buildings and grounds for any future fire or medical responses knowing the physical location and their inherent features.

"Just like waves in the ocean come and go, no challenge is permanent. Problems will come and go too. We must enjoy the Challenges just like we enjoy the Waves".

--Unknown Author

FIRE PREVENTION



Fire Prevention has been established in the fire service for decades as the arena for education to the public, in the community at large and in the schools.



This year in 2018 the education program at the schools was completely changed from the older style of this is our fire gear and a fire truck. A completely new program for the kindergartners, first, second, third and fourth graders was developed. Kindergarten we introduced Stop-Drop-Roll explaining about fires, safety and what to do if the clothes catch on fire. Sparky the Dog made a guest appearance and assisted the firefighters in the program.

The crews talked with the school graders about tools and toys. Things that are dangerous, and yes, we still showed them the fire gear and equipment.

The biggest feat was the instituting of the E.D.I.T.H (Exit Drills In The Home) Program. This was developed by Chief Merithew designing and constructing props. This program instructs the kids the dangers of fire, but what to do if there is a fire at their homes. Where to go, to meet and what not to do. An entire bedroom was brought to each elementary school for the 3rd graders. There was a bed, walls, windows, door and a meeting place. Explaining about how fires start and how fast they grow, students went thru the program individually, experiencing the bed with the sounding of the smoke alarm.



Staying very low, crawling to the door, then directing them to the windows and picking the style they might have at their homes. Escaping safely and going to the designated meeting place, waiting for the rest of their family members. All the programs we conducted we touched 966 school kids, 274 of which had participated in the E.D.I.T.H Program this year. The programs built strong for educational durability will continue through the years, and improving everything as we go along.

"Children are likely to live up to what you believe of them."
— Lady Bird Johnson, Former First Lady of the United States

TRAINING



Following the guidelines of the National Fire Protection Association 1001 the department stepped up this year assuring the staff receives quality training. Utilizing in-house subject matter experts and bringing in outside trainers and speakers, the crews were given great training in many facets regarding the fire service. Working with BNSF the crews received first-hand the working intricacies of a train puller, connections, cars and railroad safety with the Nebraska State Patrol.



Working with one of the newest props in the department, crews gained experience forcible entry to commercial doors in varying ways and means of securing and entry. Using the "irons" in tandem and rotary saws for metal barrier entry.



Water supply and attack line deployment are skills that sharpen every time a crew member goes through the evolutions. Also gaining experience and job knowledge from apparatus to apparatus.



A skill that is all most often overlooked is that of a vegetation fire. To have the ability to understand the weather conditions that a vegetation fire can create, reading the vegetation stand, the topography are all 3 paramount to firefighter safety and proper suppression.

The department was requested to burn the waterway at the College Center which was conducted in November assuring conditions were correct. Crews were instructed on the three involved parameters: wind-weather-topography making this a safe burn.

"I've seen and met angels wearing the disguise of ordinary people; they are actually firefighters living ordinary lives".
---Holly Zimmerman

FIRE and EMS INCIDENTS

The year for 2018 was one for the history books with the call volume increasing for yet another year, and the complexity of the EMS and fire calls for the crews.

There were motor vehicle accidents (MVA's) with entrapments that required using extrication tools, the JAWS of Life to remove victims for medical transport to the hospitals. Vehicle fires and structural fires both time consuming and real time exhaustion of the crews and utilization of mutual-aid and Sioux City Fire for resources.

2018 Incident Totals:

Fires Responses	307
EMS	1,168
Working fires	49
Hazardous Conditions	11
Medical Assist	165
Good Intent	15
False Alarm	45
Miscellaneous	22

TOTAL INCIDENTS: 1,475

WHO WE ARE:

- 10 Allocated sworn positions:
- 1 Fire Chief
- 9 Firefighter/EMT/ Paramedics
- 15 Volunteers



ChokeCherry Lane incident requiring Mutual-Aid and Sioux City Fire & Rescue due to two residential houses on fire.



As the crews work the fires, perform salvage and overhaul operations additional resources required due to the staffing levels and the acceleration of the fire and adjoining structure beginning to ignite.



Some members capture the exactness of firefighting as the light coming through the open roof above depicting the images of working in dangerous environments.

"Unsuccessful people make decisions based on current situations. Successful people make decisions based on where they want to be."

--Benjamin Hardy

... FIRE and EMS INCIDENTS



Working the fires is not always from the ground using attack hose streams. Many fires need the most water possible to cool and finally extinguish the larger fires. The Chokecherry Lane fire in October 2018 was a warm day with slight southerly winds, which aided in the spread of the initial fire to the second, also being in closer proximity to combustible materials aiding as well in the spread of the fire.



There were many MVA's (Motor Vehicle Accidents) this year, some of which required the use of the mechanical tools, "JAWS of Life" to remove the trapped victims.



The March 2018 accident on the by-pass with a passenger car and a semi-tractor trailer. The collision resulted in major passenger space intrusion which required some accessibility difficulties getting to the patient for not only assessing the injuries but for removal. The JAWS were used to breach the passenger door and slid the injured victim out for transport to the hospital.



In some cases **Angels** were watching over victims of these accidents where there were only minor injuries were suffered. With respect to the amount of vehicles damage and being trapped and surrounded by metal, to just step out was amazing on this December 2018 accident from a passenger car and sliding under a grain trailer.

"The highest of distinctions is service to others."
--King George VI

ANDERSON GRAIN ELEVATOR

On the afternoon of May 29, 2018 at 12:59 PM the tones alerted the fire station of a possible grain elevator explosion with fire at Gavilon. The newest crews of the department were on, shift B-Shift with Captain Allen, Firefighter/EMT's Brandon McCune and Kevin Ott were just finishing their lunch, gearing up and responding to the reported area. While responding they could see black smoke billowing from the elevator at 25th and 5th Ave. Turning down 25th the crews could definitely see a large gaping hole on the east side of the 230 foot grain elevator.

Chief Merithew only second away radioed Engine-1 to spot and evaluate, Chief Merithew posted at 5th and 25th setting up a Command Post (CP) and beginning to make evaluations. A concrete monolith at 260 foot tall, major structural damage, a raging natural gas fuel fed fire at the base of the building with a grain dryer in front. Within 2-minutes of arrival Mutual-Aid was requested of Dakota City, Homer and additional alliances to respond to the scene.

As resources arrived, the complexity of the incident increased, which caused the CP to go from an Incident Command (IC) to a Unified Command. Having the Fire Chief, Police Chief, Dakota County Emergency Management then City utilities, Mid American Energy, NPPD and other entities with purpose and jurisdiction. Area fire departments with Chief Officers, staff, equipment, and Nebraska Emergency Management working the CP on a daily basis.

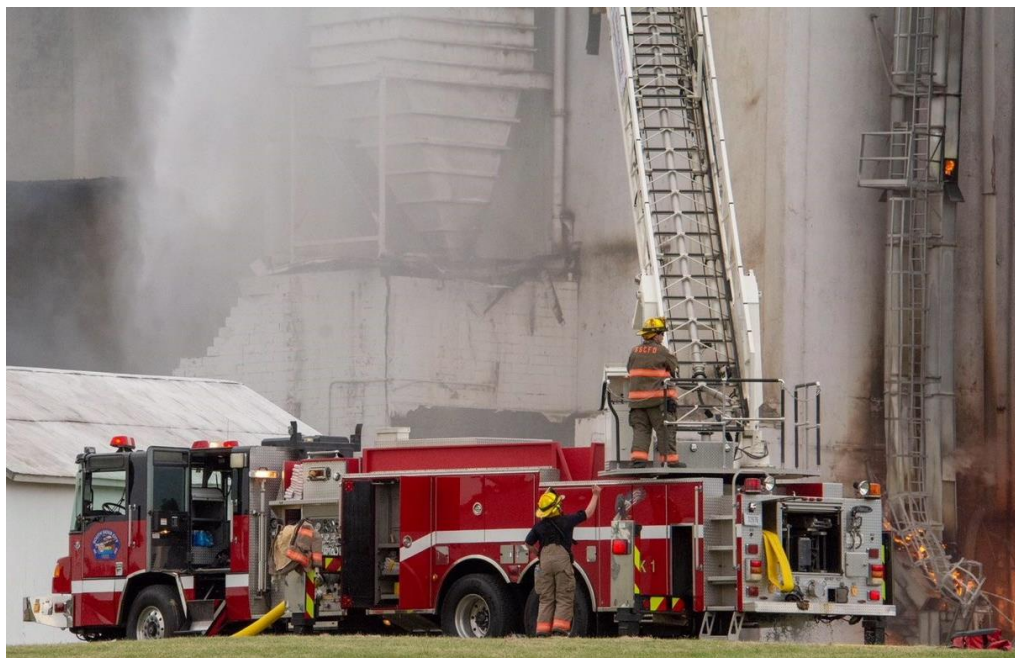


Photo at left: Fire crews making strides to put all smoldering fires out so an evaluation of the structure could be accomplished for demolition crews. Getting to the seat of the fire proved difficult, having to pull out one of the damage semi-trucks and fallen debris.

"Be sure you put your feet in the right place, then stand firm".
--Abraham Lincoln

ANDERSON GRAIN ELEVATOR... 13 DAYS



The days of the incident grew longer and straining the residents and first responders. At the height of the initial days of the incident, there were 92 personnel working in tasks orientated in gaining access to residents houses to feed animals, even mow the lawns. In all there were more than 35 residents displaced until the monolith could come down by the demolition crews on June 11, 2019.

There were daily briefings conducted at the CP at 0800 and 1600 for the crews then disseminated to the media by Police Chief Mahon. Conducting morning briefings at the CP gave detailed information of the last 12 hour overnight operational period. Activities for the day, weather conditions and next briefings for media and crew personnel.

Crews working 24/7 for 13 days were tiresome, by working the fire grounds to make the suppression, working the CP assisting with tasks for citizens, NEMA and the IC's.

Night time operations involved using a light tower to observe the building for any concerns or issues. The lighting brought the building to life as in daylight for all personnel to observe as operations during the last phases of the incident drew closer to bring down.

It was determined that the upper 100 feet of the structure was required to reduce down to eliminate potential pre-demise in the opposing direction. The demolition contractor Travis Remsburg of Terminal Solutions (Ames, IA) brought in heavy equipment, stretching cables from the tower to anchor point west. Making precise cuts on the building to weaken the building even more too eventually pulling the tower down.

Crews from South Sioux City Fire Department, Dakota City, Homer, and Winnebago were all on watch for three separate evenings in hopes of bringing down the building. All crews were geared during the pulls in the event there were mishaps or other needs during the pulling phases.



"There are risks and costs to action. But they are far less than the long range risks of comfortable inaction".

--John F. Kennedy

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

There were plenty of activities the department participated in throughout the year. With parades, picnics, fire prevention, hydrant soakings and popsicles for the kids on hot days.



"A man should look for what is, and not for what he thinks should be".
--Albert Einstein

DEPARTMENT ASSETS

Take a tour around town and visiting each fire station and see the City's fire apparatus.



Station #1 located at 1501 Dakota Avenue was dedicated on 9-11-2017. The two story 22,000 sqft station is the main headquarters for the department. Houses the on-duty personnel, offices, dayroom, kitchen weight room and sleeping quarters. There are five drive-thru bays.

Station #2 is located at 3203 Dakota Avenue. Built in 1984 house Engines 3 and 30, with Medic-2.

This is an unmanned station.



Truck-1 is a refurbished 2003/2017 105' aerial with 2,000 gpm and 500 gallon poly tank. Outfitted with Amkus and Haz-Mat tools and equipment. Seats 5 firefighters

This Quint is assigned to Station #1



Engine-1 is a 2006 E-One, 1,250 gpm with 500 gallon poly tank. Seats 5 firefighters.

Assigned to Station #1



Engine 3. 2006 E-One, 1,250 gpm with 500 gallon poly tank. Seats 5 firefighters.

Assigned to Station #2

"The finest steel has to go through the hottest fire."
--Richard M. Nixon



Engine 30. 2006 International Smeal is a 1,250 gpm and 1000 gallon poly tank. Set-up for Rural/mutual-Aid response. Seats 2.

Assigned to Station #2



Engine 32. 2017 Freightliner Rosenbauer. 1,500 gpm, 1,250 poly tank. Set up for rural/Mutual-Aid response. Seats 5.

Assigned to Station #1



Medic 1, 2009 Ford E-450 MedTec Ambulance. Fully equipped ALS unit with LoadPro gurney lift.

Assigned to Station #1



Medic 2, 1999 Ford E-450 Road Rescue Ambulance. Fully equipped ALS unit with LoadPro gurney lift.

Assigned to Station #2



Medic 3, 2006 Ford E-450 LifeLine Ambulance. Fully equipped ALS unit.

Assigned to Station #1

"A dream doesn't become reality through magic; it takes sweat, determination and hard work."

--Colin Powell



Chief's Unit: C-1, 2006 Chevrolet Tahoe. Complete with Emergency lighting and Command package for ICS and fire investigations.



Unit-2, 2013 Ford F-150 with Topper. Used for Paramedic Intercepts, training and essential department needs.

Assigned to Station #1

1977 Lowe, Jon boat with 40 hp Mercury outboard motor.

Assigned to Station #2



2001 Safe-Boat with a history from New York Harbor. This boat has twin 115hp outboards.

Berthed at the Sioux City Marina



Burn Trailer that is specially built for live fire training. With heavy metal flooring, accompanying fires in small proportion are set for V-E-S and tactics training.

Set-up at Station #2

"Great works are performed not by strength but by perseverance."
--Samuel Johnson

MEMORIAL HALL



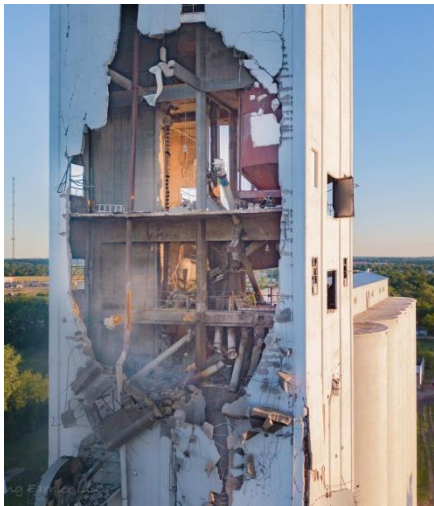
Memorial Hall was approved by Council understanding this is the embodiment for historical memorabilia and still a purposeful building used regularly for training. The Jr. Fire Patrol Program, large group seminars and meetings. Yet still functioning for pancake breakfasts, dinners, Christmas Party and annual Firefighter Awards Dinner.



"When people see a legend, they call it a legend. But to be a legend, it's a lot of hard work and patience. You can't play for five or ten years and be a legend. It takes longer than that."

--Author Unknown

CORNUCOPIA



"Work hard, stay focused, and surround yourself with good people".
--Tom Osborne

RESILIENCE



"If we ever forget that we are One Nation, Under God, then we will be a nation gone under".
--Ronald Reagan