Message from the Chief

Fire Chief David Hall

During the past 12 months, the department has continued to work on issues identified in the strategic plan to better prepare itself for the future. The two most notable areas were: firefighter health and safety and departmental staffing and deployment.

Safety - In 2016, the fire department became the first organization in the state to host an Incident Safety Officer course through the Missouri Division of Fire Safety that allowed the participants to become certified Incident Safety Officers to the national standard. Thirteen members of the department completed the course. By the end of 2017, all members of the department working at the level of Battalion Chief or above will be required to maintain this certification.

The department was also approved to fill a Training Captain position that had previously been frozen. This allowed some of the duties of the Battalion Chief's Special Operations to be transitioning to the Training Captain. The Battalion was then tasked with Safety being his primary responsibility.

Staffing and deployment - During 2015 and 2016, the department spent a considerable amount of time collecting and analyzing data on how to most effectively utilize the resources it has available. In January the department took steps that would not create much fanfare in order to address critical needs as they were identified. It included moving Rescue 8 to Station 4, Engine 10 to Station 6, and Truck 6 to Station 8. This provided dual companies in the four busiest districts: 1, 2, 4, and 8. As more data and information was collected, it culminated in a presentation to City Council that demonstrated there is a zone in northwest to northeast Springfield that is significantly under-resourced. The “red zone,” as it was termed, has the most fires, most EMS incidents, most vacant building fires, most fire deaths, most fire incidents where the first unit did not arrive within five minutes and twenty seconds, the most EMS incidents where the first unit did not arrive within five minutes, and the most incidents where the total effective response force did not arrive in nine minutes and twenty seconds on fires. To address this problem, the department briefed the Council that it was considering relocating resources to the red zone. Specifically, the department was considering relocating the resources from stations six and twelve because they could be adequately covered by adjoining stations. The Council asked that the department consider other alternatives as well. The department developed a total of eight alternatives ranging from maintaining the status quo to the addition of stations, personnel, and equipment to fully provide fire safety throughout the community. These recommendations will be considered and any changes will be implemented in 2017.

I believe the department continues to provide the citizens the highest quality of service. The continuous identification of gaps and the subsequent work to address those gaps, puts the department in a great position for the future.

On a personal note, this will be my last annual report as I will be retiring at the end of January, 2017. However, I have full confidence in the strength of the organization and its leaders and look forward to seeing it continue to grow and evolve.

Vacant House Fires

Create Concern

In 2016, Springfield Firefighters were called to 28 fires in vacant structures, highlighting an area of concern. More than 10% of all Springfield fires occur in vacant structures. And of those, 45% are unsecured, often making fire fighting tactics more challenging. In November, the Fire Department implemented an awareness campaign in hopes of encouraging owners of vacant properties to adequately secure them. Citizens were also encouraged to contact the City if they are aware of vacant buildings.

SFD Coordinates 1st City-wide Fire Drill

In December, the City of Springfield held the first ever city-wide fire drill, in coordination with the implementation of a city-wide Emergency Evacuation Plan. All city employees were first asked to watch a safety video, highlighting emergency procedures, followed by a knowledge quiz. The Fire Department then coordinated a fire drill in all city buildings, to ensure employees are properly prepared for an emergency.
Division Highlights: Operations

Assistant Chief of Operations: David Pennington

In 2016 The Fire Department was fortunate to have the opportunity to design and construct several fire apparatus to replace those in our fleet that had reached the end of their service life. Included in this replacement were three fire engines, all of which include advanced design and technology for diesel emissions, safety for the firefighters, and to a greater effectiveness on the fire scene through the use of compressed air foam systems. These fire engines went into service throughout the City at Fire Station 5 on West Kearney, Fire Station 7 on East Sunshine, and Fire Station 8 on South Scenic. Three additional fire apparatus are currently in the process of construction, to include a heavy rescue that responds to all fires and major emergencies, and a hazardous materials response unit. These two apparatus will be received in the spring of 2017. A new aerial ladder truck has begun the production process and will be received in the spring of 2018.

SFD Career Development

The Operations Division continues its focus on development of its responders to ensure the highest level of customer service delivery to our community. During 2016, the Division developed and implemented standards for qualifications for our members to perform the duties of those directly above them in rank. These requirements are the capstone of our professional development program that begins at our Fire Academy, and continues at each rank up to the rank of Fire Captain, to ensure our members are well trained and equipped to provide exemplary service to the City of Springfield.

Departmental Trends

**2016 Cause of Residential Fires**

- Cooking: 15%
- Intentional: 12%
- Undetermined: 12%
- Electrical: 11%
- Gas and Smoldering: 9%
- Other: 4%
- Homing Heating: 0%
- Structure: 11%
- Contents: 11%
- Special Cases: 11%
- Wind: 1%
- Other: 0%

*These figures have not been adjusted for inflation.
**Total calls include structure + variable + all other fire types.
***Total calls include total fire + 6096 + all other call types

The Fire Department continues to explore ways to continue to provide excellent service despite a growing number of emergency calls.

Yearly EMS Comparison

Yearly Fire Comparison

**Yearly Call for Service**

- 2012: 14,087
- 2013: 14,102
- 2014: 15,042
- 2015: 16,301
- 2016: 16,301
Division Highlights: Prevention

Assistant Chief of Prevention: Randy Villines

In 2016, the Prevention Division continued its focus on reducing the number of preventable fires in our community. With the help of a donation from Walmart, grant dollars from FEMA, and partnerships with organizations like Parents as Teachers, we met our goal of installing 1,000 smoke alarms in Springfield homes in 2016. In fact, fire crews installed a total of 1,452 smoke alarms—that’s a 205% increase over 2015!

The aforementioned FEMA grant also gave us the opportunity to provide training and free residential fire extinguishers to 250 Springfield families with young children. Fire marshals had another extremely busy year. In addition to investigating 186 fires, they made 116 bomb calls. Fortunately, residential fires continue to trend downward, down 15% over 2015 and down 14% since 2012. Fire-related injuries have also fallen significantly—down 58% in 5 years.

However, our work is not done. Five people were killed in fire-related fatalities in 2016, above our average of around 3.2. We look forward to working with the community to continue to find ways to reduce these unnecessary deaths.

SFD Contributes to Zone Blitz

In October, the Fire Department contributed to the City’s efforts to revitalize west central Springfield and its “Zone Blitz” campaign. Firefighters canvassed Springfield’s Woodland Heights neighborhood, knocking on doors and offering free smoke alarms to families without. Firefighters also participated in “curtain canvasses” at four area schools. Parents were surveyed while waiting to pick up students. Those who expressed a need for smoke alarms were contacted by crews who installed them at a later date. These efforts resulted in nearly 100 smoke alarms being installed in west central Springfield.

Fire Department Promotes Residential Sprinklers

In March, the Springfield Fire Department partnered with the Missouri Fire Sprinkler Coalition and hosted the 2nd annual Missouri Home Fire Sprinkler Summit. Seventy participants from various backgrounds including City Utilities, the development community, fire service, Building Development Services, Public Works, and the Homebuilders Association learned about the 30 year success of Scottsdale, Arizona’s fire sprinkler program, as well as NFPA’s 13D requirements for installing a cost-effective system in residences. Springfield also received funding to purchase an install a residential sprinkler prop to use at the 2017 HBA Home Show to demonstrate the ease and low-cost of installing 1stD system in newly construction homes. The Department also announced certain incentives could be offered to developers who choose to install residential sprinklers in homes.

Side-by-side Burn Demonstrates Dangers of Excessive Clutter

In May, the Springfield Fire Department partnered with the Safe and Sanitary Homes Collaborative to demonstrate the dangers of hoarding. For the demonstration, two rooms were build side by side. The rooms were identical except while one was neat and tidy, the other was excessively cluttered. Fires were lit in each room in exactly the same way.

As expected, the additional fuel load in the cluttered room had a dramatic impact on the time it reached flashover. The cluttered room reached flashover at just 1 minute and 40 seconds. The tidy room took 6 minutes to reach flashover. The burn was the first of its kind in the nation and was attended by dozens of people and was covered by all four major Springfield news television stations.

The goal of the demonstration was to encourage people who may be suffering from a hoarding disorder to reach out to the Safe and Sanitary Homes Collaborative for help. To watch the burn in real time, visit https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qv1h-vbnd78.
Division Chief of Training: Olan Morelan

The year 2016 brought some new and welcome changes to the Training Division. The Division experienced a near complete turn over of staff and filled the previously frozen third Training Captain position. Realignment occurred with the departure of Assistant Chief of Training Andy Woody and the appointment of Division Chief of Training Olan Morelan. Training Captain Kelly Cardin was promoted the Special Operations Battalion Chief after the retirement of Richard O’Connor. Kelly was assigned the duties of the department Health and Safety Officer. Within this position, he will now serve as the department’s Health Safety Officer, manage the workers’ compensation program, and be a safety advocate. This position will spend 80% of its time on improving the safety within the department and 20% of its time on administering the Special Operations program. Training Captains were assigned to act as reigners to each of the Special Operations teams. Training Captain Justin Merritt was assigned the role of Fire Academy Director and Training Captain Steve Swaney oversaw the Department’s EMS training program.

Also in 2016, the Training Division hosting the largest recruit academy since the 1970’s. On, December 16th, 22 firefighters and one intern graduated from the program. The addition of EMT school to the basic fire academy has stretched that academy from 18 weeks (630 hrs) to 24 weeks (960 hrs). Additionally, the Fire Department hosted a record number of classes at the Springfield Regional Police and Fire Training Center (SRPFTC).

SFD Reintroduces Proficiency Training

Proficiency training drills were reintroduced to the department via the Training Division. The drills were conducted for all members of the department to determine proficiency of the members working on their assigned apparatus. The data collected from the drills was used to demonstrate the effectiveness of standardization of equipment and renewed the drive forward for standardization of all department apparatus.

City Clerk Anahi Gutierrez stands in Springfield’s 22 newest firefighters during their graduation ceremony in December, 2016. This was the largest graduating class in 30 years.

SFD Receives EMS Training Entity Accreditation

Training Captain Steve Swaney worked to expand the Department’s medical training by earning EMS Training Entity Accreditation from the State of Missouri, to better meet the needs of Department members and well as city staff. Training Captain Swaney was able to secure EMT-B Training Entity status and has again taken up the management of the city wide CPR and AED training.

SFD Hosts Missouri Valley Fire Chief’s Conference

The training division hosted the Missouri Valley Fire Chief conference welcoming over 100 Fire Chiefs from 8 states to the city of Springfield. The three day event provided training classes from national speakers Kurt Yarone, Kelvin Cochran, Brian Cummings and Eric Rosoff. The conference also hosted a two-day fire and EMS product expo for participants to attend. The Missouri Valley Fire Chiefs conference is in part a fundraiser for the organization; the 2016 conference yielded nearly $15,000 in revenue paid directly to the Missouri Valley Division of the IAFC.

During its Equipment Operator Academy, the Springfield Fire Department delivered four consecutive classes, including driver, core, aerial, pumper and water supply. This is the first time a Missouri department has delivered all 4 driver operator courses consecutively.

Training Tower Design Underway

WHP Training Towers in Overland Park, KS was awarded the $555,000 bid to build and erect the new four story training tower. This tower will consist of a 44 foot tall tower with a two story residential building prep to be constructed next to the tower. The tower and training structure will feature roof and attic cut props, repelling anchors, standpipe/sprinkler system as well as interior and exterior stairs.

City Clerk Anahi Gutierrez stands in Springfield’s 22 newest firefighters during their graduation ceremony in December, 2016. This was the largest graduating class in 30 years.
Awards and Recognition

SFD Honors by the Numbers

- # of Special Ops: 10
- Life Save Awards: 7
- Fire Life Save Awards: 29
- Medical Life Save Awards

SFD Firefighters Recognized for Heroic Acts

Throughout the year, Springfield Firefighters were recognized for heroic acts that took place during the flooding of 2015. In September, Rescue Specialist Marc Becker and Firefighter Michael Kuss, along with Logan-Rogersville firefighters Grant Peters and Roy Harris, were recognized by the International Association of Water Rescue Professionals for a swiftwater rescue incident to which they responded on May 29th, 2015. During the incident, the emergency responders helped rescue a family of 5 swept away during a major storm and flooding in the area.

In November, Firefighter Michael Kuss received the distinguished Governor’s Medal of Valor for the same incident. The Medal of Valor is Missouri’s highest award recognizing public safety officers who exhibit exceptional courage, extraordinary decisiveness and presence of mind, and unusual swiftness of action, regardless of his or her personal safety, in the attempt to save or protect human life. The Medal of Valor is awarded annually by Missouri’s Governor. FF Kuss received his award in Jefferson City on November 28, 2016. Kuss and Becker, along with RS Jeff Elliot and FF Jeff Weeks were also honored as Everyday Heroes by the American Red Cross of Southern Missouri.

Crews Receive Recognition for “Fire Life Save”

On October 15, 2016, Springfield firefighters were called to South Fairway for an apartment fire. Upon arriving, the crews discovered heavy fire showing from a 2nd floor bedroom window. They also saw a person with his head out the window in need of immediate rescue. Captain Tom Beckenholt and Rescue Specialists Marc Becker, Geoffrey Hammer and Gerry Koenerman immediately placed a ground ladder and rescued the endangered occupant. Upon completion of that rescue, Captain Beckenholt, Rescue 1 and Truck 10 began searching the structure for other possible victims. As they searched the floor above the fire, Acting Captain Lonnie Stockdale, EO Brad Karr and FF Jeff Weeks located a victim in an apartment. Smoke conditions were moderate and the victim was very disoriented. The crew was able to successfully rescue the victim who survived a very dangerous incident. For their actions, Capt. Beckenholt, RS Becker, RS Hammer, RS Koenerman, Acting Capt. Stockdale, EO Karr and FF Weeks were honored with a Fire Life Save award during the Department’s Annual Awards Ceremony.

2016 Fire Officer of the Year

James “Jamie” Frieze is 2016’s Fire Officer of the Year. Jamie has been with the Department for 12 years and was promoted to Captain in May of 2016.

According to his Battalion Chief, Steve Sinnott, Jamie is a great asset to the Department. In his nomination form, he wrote, “Capt. Frieze has a naturally amiable personality that makes others want to work with him and be around him. He is thoughtful of those around him and shows genuine concern for the well-being of the firefighters he leads and the community he serves.

In Memoriam

James Thomas Jeffries
Died May 10, 2016

Lonnie Robert Jump
Died May 20, 2016

Bradny Orville Chandler
Died August 12, 2016

Lawrence “Lenny” J. Abshire
Died August 23, 2016

Jackie Gene Crawford
September 5, 2016

Leslie James McMasters
Died September 9, 2016

Dannie Lee Royster
Died October 30, 2016

Sonny Ray Coutrell
November 25, 2016

James Lee Norton
Died December 3, 2016

2016 Firefighter of the Year

Brad “BJ” Jones is 2016’s Firefighter of the Year. In his nomination form, BJ’s Captain Chad Davis wrote, “The simple completion of his daily duties may not seem like much to some, but everything BJ does is done with an unbelievable level of pride and professionalism. Making sure the simple things are done to perfection is a sign of his skill and the joy he takes in being a firefighter. BJ is a man who, to put it simply, gets the job done right the first time, every time.” BJ has been with the Department for 14 years. He is currently assigned to Station 7, Engine 7C.

Civilians Honored for Saving Woman’s Life

During the Department’s annual awards ceremony, it was more than just firefighters who were honored. Tim and Tom Penn each received a Civilian Life Save award for their actions to save a woman from a burning car. On October 7, 2016, a woman crashed through a fence and into a play ground at Messiah Lutheran Church. Tom and Tim Penn live across the street and witnessed the accident. As soon as the car burst into flames, the two brothers rushed to the scene. The two broke in the back windshield and pulled the driver to safety. When fire crews arrived, the driver was sitting uninjured in a chair on the Penn brothers’ driveway. The victim expressed great gratitude to the Penn brothers for giving her what she calls a “second chance at life.”

Captain Heath Aldridge
Graduates from EFOP

In June, Captain Heath Aldridge graduated from the National Fire Academy’s (NFA) prestigious Executive Fire Officer Program (EFOP). EFOP enhances the professional development of students through a series of four graduate and upper-division-baccalaureate equivalent courses taken over a four-year period. Each course is two weeks in length and an Applied Research Project (ARP) must be completed after each of the four courses. Captain Aldridge’s research papers included the use of Compressed Air Foam, the community impact of hoarding, post incident analysis and training objectives for probationary firefighters.
Springfield Fire Department’s Mission

*We are the Springfield Fire Department, a professional organization dedicated to serving our community.*

Springfield Fire Department Values:

- **PROFESSIONALISM**
- **INTEGRITY**
- **COMPASSION**
- **SERVICE**
- **VALOR**