OUR country has been described as the Great American Experiment. Proof that our society has the flexibility and nimbleness to change and evolve as we move forward through history. Our industry must move forward as well. Our department will. We support public discourse on how to improve the lives of everyone. We support the men and women who dedicate their lives to public safety and public health. We stand with those who have been disenfranchised and forgotten. We vow to always unite with our community.

Albemarle County has recently adopted a new core value

Community: We expect diversity, equity, and inclusion to be integrated into how we live our mission.

This value speaks to more than just the awareness and acknowledgement that everyone is part of our community, it establishes and recognizes there is work to be done to make that positive change. ACFR fully supports local and national efforts to ensure that every member of our community feels accepted and welcome and every employee has the right to a harassment-free work environment.

To promote a culture of acceptance and diversity in our department, ACFR executive staff has been committed to the Diversity Plan created in 2017. There have been some improvements: increased training for ACFR members, assessing individuals’ knowledge and experiences related to diversity and inclusion in our hiring and promotion processes, and a comprehensive recruit school.

As a department, and an industry, there is still work to do—we will do. We intend to integrate our new community value into the performance evaluations and expectations of department leaders. All ACFR chief officers will be participating in the Office of Equity and Inclusion’s nine-month diversity program. This program will explore topics around race, racism, and racial equity as well as local racial history. Please take the time to ask any chief officers what they’ve learned and experienced through this program.

We understand the need to update our plan to progress our department further. To that end, throughout this summer, our executive staff will be reviewing and assessing our Diversity Plan, with an expected relaunch by the end of the summer. Our team takes this plan seriously, as it will guide our department through the next phase of creating a culture that welcomes all walks of life, experiences, and backgrounds. Change is scary and uncomfortable, but necessary to be the community and culture we aspire to be. We encourage everyone to be open to conversations, trainings, and directives. Inclusion of one does not mean exclusion of another. There is room enough for all, especially at ACFR.
At some point in their career, a habit that can first responders have suppressed their feelings for our peers back in the station. As a result, many incidents, but to maintain that stoicism among the job, but have been less aware of the mental and physical demands of the job, even long been aware of the physical demands of the fire service. Folks have gathered in the fire service. The behavioral health and well-being of firefighters is gaining much needed attention in the fire service. While these factors are great, they are not enough on their own. The best treatment for behavioral health conditions is evidence-based care delivered by skilled providers. There is no sense of gratitude and respect from the public. These factors include a sense of belonging and often miss important family events such as birthdays, anniversaries, and holiday gatherings.

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Despite these risk factors, the stigma associated with behavioral health issues means few individuals feel comfortable talking about their struggles. In this environment, it can be easy to feel alone if you are struggling. However, the statistics indicate that those experiencing behavioral health challenges are far from alone. According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), approximately one in five adults experiences mental illness per year, and approximately one in 25 adults experiences a serious mental illness per year. Those rates can be even higher among firefighters.

It is critically important that behavioral health is taken as seriously physical health – after all, the brain is part of the body too. Conditions such as depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and anxiety can be just as debilitating as serious physical ailments if left untreated. Fortunately, the fire service has several built-in factors that promote resiliency among firefighters. These factors include a sense of belonging and support from one another; an enduring sense of gratitude and respect from the public.

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Why Does Nutrition Matter?

Just as the upkeep of a fitness regimen can be overwhelming, good nutrition can be equally daunting. As we mix that together with a busy shift, success can prove to be difficult. Healthy meals are often challenging at a busy house and are typically the excuse for poor nutrition choices.

The firehouse is known for lip smacking comfort foods. The camaraderie of eating with the crew is part of the brotherhood and sisterhood of the fire department. We tend to go back for seconds or thirds and don’t forget dessert. Delicious cakes, cookies and candies are brought to us as a “thank you for your service” from supportive communities. The building may not be all day but fast food becomes our meal pick of convenience. Off duty alcohol is an accepted choice for this social community as it is the norm.

Poor sleep quality both on and off shift plays a large role when it comes to good vs. bad health choices. Continued fatigue is one of the contributing factors for poor health within the first responder community. Long nights and interrupted sleep takes its toll as 40% of first responders suffer from some type of sleep disorder.

Most firefighters are overweight, and the studies show it. Over 70% of first responders suffer with obesity. Turns out our first responders aren’t quite the picture of health as imagined by most. We also have a lower life expectancy and over 49% of first responders who suffer from a LODD do so at the hands of cardiovascular disease.

The first step in any process for health is to do your research. Here are some practical tips to get you pointed in the right direction. Workout on a frequent basis. Know what’s best for you and your health. Eat lean meats or other protein sources and plenty of vegetables. Limit your sodium, sugar and processed foods.

Eat whole foods that don’t come prepackaged in a box or paper takeout bag. Fats are not your enemy but steer towards healthier fats (nuts, avocados, healthy oils). Limit your portion sizes. A helpful rule of thumb that’s a quick reference guide is; palm size for protein, fist size for carbohydrates and a thumb for healthy fats. Drink plenty of water!

Nutrition can be a tough obstacle in the first responder community, and it helps to have other people on board. There are so many resources available. Pick the most appropriate for you and your lifestyle. Remember, the most successful eating plan is the one you can stick with! Be patient with yourself and your choices. If you fall off, get right back on. You have to educate yourself on your health and well-being and become your own advocate.

CAMPFIRE SAFETY

Campfire mishaps can cause injuries. With a few safety tips, you can prevent these accidents.

- Clear away dry leaves and sticks, overhanging low branches and shrubs.
- Avoid burning on windy, dry days.
- Never let children or pets play or stand too close.
- Attend to the campfire at all times.
- Keep the fire small and easy to control.
- Have a plan to put it out—oxygen, bucket of water, dirt or sand all work.

Emergency Management Coordinator

Nichole R. Matthews has joined Albemarle County Fire Rescue to serve as the county’s first Emergency Management Coordinator, effective Monday, April 20, 2020. The emergency manager works to prepare and implement plans and procedures and will lead emergency efforts on behalf of the county.

Nichole brings experience as an Army veteran to this position. She is trained in hazardous material (HAZMAT) incidents; chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive (CBRNE) material incidents; operational coordination; and exercise validation. In her free time, she enjoys traveling, exploring, and taking photos with her two daughters, Jackie and Audrey.

“We are thrilled to have Nichole join our team,” said Deputy Chief John Oprandy. “Her background and skills align perfectly with the needs of this position. We are confident that Nichole’s leadership will strengthen our emergency response and add to our community’s safety.”

We stand strong when we stand together.

SUMMER 2020
Compliance Corner

- HIPAA should NEVER negatively impact the quality of patient care or impede the ability of provide care!
- The appropriate communication of PHI with other health care providers directly involved in providing patient care does not constitute a violation of HIPAA.
- Keep in mind Minimum Necessary? Only broadcast a patient's information that is needed to accomplish the intended purpose of a particular use, disclosure or request.

Any questions about HIPAA or the information above, please contact Christina Davis, EMS Billing Specialist, at (434) 296-5833, ext. 3102 or by email cdavis@albemarle.org.

Rapid Fire Recruit Schools

(Wars, June, July 2020)

5 YEARS
Chase Melander .......................... 5/14/2014
Christopher Simpson .................. 7/27/2014
Henry Austin .............................. 5/5/2014
Herberto Valtierra ....................... 6/30/2014
Jason Wilson .............................. 5/5/2014
Joseph Plumb ............................. 7/15/2014
Matthew Hill .............................. 4/26/2015
Timothy Kerr II ......................... 5/14/2014
Tomas Cannon Sullivan ............... 6/5/2014
Tyler Cersley ............................. 6/29/2014
Wait Davis ............................... 7/1/2014
Zachary Robb ............................ 7/22/2014

10 YEARS
Charles Lawson ......................... 7/12/2009
Colin Pitchard ............................ 5/9/2009
James Wyatt .............................. 4/12/2010
Jason Mercer ............................ 5/18/2009
Robert Schottenmeier ................. 4/12/2010
Roger Wilkins ........................... 4/12/2010
William Gentry ......................... 6/12/2009

15 YEARS
Philip Burkett ......................... 4/26/2005
Stephen Elliott ......................... 7/14/2004
Thomas Willeman ..................... 4/18/2004
William Tatton ......................... 5/17/2004

20 YEARS
Kevin Carter ......................... 5/3/1999

25 YEARS
Evon Bryant ............................ 6/16/1994

30 YEARS
Ista Poindexter ....................... 7/1/1989

40 YEARS
Warren Davis ....................... 7/1/1979

I n the past several months the need for additional career Firefighters has become more and more apparent. With approval from the county executives, Recruit School 17 was put into action sooner than anticipated. The decision was made to find candidates who already possessed the certifications needed to take part in an abbreviated 8-week school, much like the old recruit school format. Of the last hiring pool, four candidates possessed the minimum certifications needed and had already accepted the job offer to start in July as planned. These gentlemen were asked to start two months earlier than expected and were all able to make the quick transition.

A mere 11 days separates the conclusion of Recruit School 17 from the beginning of Recruit School 18. The school begins in early July and is a large group, 15 total candidates have been offered positions. This class will be back to the 24-week duration, starting with the basics and building from there. The class graduates in late December leaving less than a month before the next batch of recruits begin in mid-January. The hiring process for Recruit School 19 is underway and planning is in progress to ensure another successful run.

This influx of new Firefighters into the system will be both challenging as we work to get so many folks up to speed and a breath of fresh air in gaining new perspectives and back grounds. As always, we face it as a unit, stronger together, each watching out for the other. Many thanks go to the instructional staff, the hiring staff, and most importantly, the recruits for making this possible in a short timeframe. Welcome aboard, Recruit School 17, and we look forward to meeting the next recruits in rapid succession!
Budget Update

On Thursday, May 14, the Board of Supervisors approved a $396.9 million budget for fiscal year 21. Due to revenue projections decreasing as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the FY 21 budget is about $59.7 million smaller than the current-year budget, and almost $54 million shy of the plan County Executive Jeff Richardson proposed in February.

Due to the timing of COVID-19 in the midst of the annual budget development process, the County Executive’s office submitted a revised recommended budget for the first time that any of the Executive and Management & Budget staff have experienced. This budget was built on five principles:

- Adherence to Albemarle County’s responsible financial policies
- Position our organization to lead recovery efforts
- Continue to respond to the essential service needs of our community
- Remain flexible and adaptable
- Maintain strategic reserves

The FY 2021 Recommended Budget confronted two challenges facing the Fire Rescue system – a decline in volunteers at Crozet Volunteer Fire Department (CVFD) and in Advanced Life Support (ALS)-certified volunteers at Charlottesville-Albemarle Rescue Squad (CARs). The budget addresses these issues by providing 12 positions funding of 75% of salaries and benefits for the first two years of the Recruit Chief staffing. These positions will be part of the Recruit School beginning in 2016 and was a member of Recruit School 11. Clinton was the “Voice of ACFR” on our recruitment radio ads that he created and narrated. Between his radio efforts, his work on our recruitment website, and his overall fun personality, Clinton will truly be missed. He will be remembered for his strong work ethic, his love of baseball, and his desire to serve the public.

On Saturday, May 2, we honored Clinton throughout the system with a moment of silence and last call. Rest easy, Clinton.

WE’LL TAKE IT FROM HERE, BROTHER.

In Memorium

On April 28th, Firefighter Clinton Showalter passed away while off duty, leaving a hole in our ACFR family. Clinton will be greatly missed by the many people he worked alongside, spent time with, and shared smiles with.

Clinton served the residents of Albemarle County as a firefighter/EMT beginning in 2016 and was a member of Recruit School 11. Clinton was the “Voice of ACFR” on our recruitment radio ads that he created and narrated. Between his radio efforts, his work on our recruitment website, and his overall fun personality, Clinton will truly be missed. He will be remembered for his strong work ethic, his love of baseball, and his desire to serve the public.

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New hires

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACFR</td>
<td>Aaron Putney</td>
<td>5/4/2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACFR</td>
<td>Jeriel Samuels</td>
<td>5/4/2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACFR</td>
<td>Kenneth Malloch</td>
<td>5/4/2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACFR</td>
<td>Nichole Matthews</td>
<td>4/20/2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACFR</td>
<td>William Heywood Jr</td>
<td>5/4/2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Rivanna</td>
<td>Kaitlyn Wyatt</td>
<td>2/5/2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Garden</td>
<td>Terry Whiteman</td>
<td>2/5/2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottsville</td>
<td>Tyler Fewell</td>
<td>2/13/2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seminole Trail</td>
<td>Benson Easley</td>
<td>2/17/2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminole Trail</td>
<td>Kirby Bragg</td>
<td>2/17/2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WARS</td>
<td>Abigail Phillips</td>
<td>2/6/2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WARS</td>
<td>Philip Althuser</td>
<td>2/6/2020</td>
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</table>

Releases

| FF Jean Balderas-Baca | DAO |
| FF Chelsea Cedeno | ALS, EVOC II, FF |
| FF Justin Spanka | BLS, EVOC II, FF |
| FF Justin Lloyd | BLS, EVOC II, FF |
| FF Wajdci Gear | BLS, EVOC II, FF |
| FF Christopher Hein | FF, BLS, EVOC II |
| FF Wayne “Jay” Adams | FF |
| FF James Mason | DPO |
| WARS | |
| Michael Mehnert | BLS |
| Sam Anderson | Ambulance Driver Release |
| Louis Brown | Ambulance Driver Release |
| Anna Wasserman | Ambulance Driver Release |

Mobile Burn Unit

As expected, the mobile burn unit was delivered in March and is currently located at the Training Center. Before the unit can be loaned out or used in any way, the manufacturer, Fire Training Structures, will come out and provide a TTT session. If you are interested in participating in the training, contact Chief Scott Lambert at slambert2@albemarle.org. Please know that space is very limited and not all requests can be accommodated.

Once the necessary in servicing is complete, the Training Division and the Training Committee will work to set a rotation schedule that will allow all stations a chance to throw ladders, force doors, and in general provide a space for completing any and all JPRs for the Firefighter I curriculum.

The Multi-Trainer System is fabricated from a 53’ container which has been modified to create rooms, hallways, low crawl, high crawl, ventilation. A 40’ fully reconfigurable steel maze system is included and has been designed for repeated live-fire training. Fire behavior can be altered (from basic to advanced) by varying fuel loading and ventilation. A 40’ fully insulated burn room is included and has been designed for repeated live-fire training. Fire behavior can be altered (from basic to advanced) by varying fuel loading and ventilation. A 40’ fully insulated burn room is included and has been designed for repeated live-fire training. Fire behavior can be altered (from basic to advanced) by varying fuel loading and ventilation. A 40’ fully insulated burn room is included and has been designed for repeated live-fire training. Fire behavior can be altered (from basic to advanced) by varying fuel loading and ventilation.
Grilling Safety

There’s nothing like outdoor grilling. It’s one of the most popular ways to cook food. But, a grill placed too close to anything that can burn is a fire hazard. They can be very hot, causing burn injuries. Follow these simple tips and you will be on the way to safe grilling.

SAFETY TIPS

- Propane and charcoal BBQ grills should only be used outdoors.
- The grill should be placed well away from the home, deck railings and out from under eaves and overhanging branches.
- Keep children and pets at least three feet away from the grill area.
- Keep your grill clean by removing grease or fat buildup from the grills and in trays below the grill.
- Never leave your grill unattended.
- Always make sure your gas grill lid is open before lighting it.

CHARCOAL GRILLS

- There are several ways to get the charcoal ready to use. Charcoal chimney starters allow you to start the charcoal using newspaper as a fuel.
- If you use a starter fluid, use only charcoal starter. Never add charcoal fluid or any other flammable liquids to the fire.
- Keep charcoal fluid out of the reach of children and away from heat sources.
- There are also electric charcoal starters, which do not use fire. Be sure to use an extension cord for outdoor use.
- When you are finished grilling, let the coals completely cool before disposing in a metal container.

PROpane GRILLS

Check the gas tank hose for leaks before using it for the first time each year. Apply a light soap and water solution to the hose. A propane leak will release bubbles. If your grill has a gas leak, by smell or the soapy bubble test, and there is no flame, turn off both the gas tank and the grill. If the leak stops, get the grill serviced by a professional before using it again. If the leak does not stop, call the fire department.

If you smell gas while cooking, immediately get away from the grill and call the fire department.

Do not move the grill. If the flame goes out, turn the grill and gas off and wait at least 5 minutes before re-lighting it.

Summer is the peak time for grill fires. Roughly half of the injuries involving grills are thermal burns.

County Residents: 434-296-5833 | City Residents: 434-970-3240

SIRENS is the official newsletter of Albemarle County Fire Rescue and is published quarterly. The newsletter is available online at acfirerescue.org with hardcopies distributed to each station.

SUBMISSIONS: Articles, feature stories, cartoons, photographs, upcoming training, station news, and station events and functions are welcome at any time and can be submitted to ACFRSirens@albemarle.org.