



Frontline

Westerville Division of Fire Newsletter

Station 111
400 W. Main Street
Station 112
727 E. Schrock Road
Station 113
355 N. Spring Road
Emergencies
9-1-1
Non-emergencies
(614) 901-6600

Fire Division Awarded FEMA Grant

The Westerville Division of Fire has been awarded \$323,316 from the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) program. Administered by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the grant will assist with funding to replace the Division's Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA). The AFG is designed to help fire departments obtain critically needed equipment, protective gear and other resources. The Division's planned replacement of our current, outdated SCBAs could have taken several years. This grant allows for the immediate replacement of old units with new equipment, which is more than 13 years old and does not meet updated National Fire Protection Association standards. The new SCBAs will be equipped with a feature called Pak-Tracker, which allows firefighters to locate a lost or unconscious firefighter in a building. It also will have ergonomic features that reduce total weight, increasing firefighter mobility and reducing fatigue and back injuries.

The AFG application, which was filed last year, was a joint effort between Westerville, Genoa Township Fire Department and Harlem Township Division of Fire. Not only will the grant provide new SCBAs for each department, it will also ensure equipment is compatible in the event of a mutual aid response. The grant covers 80% of the cost for the new equipment, while the City and Townships are required to match the remaining 20%.

"This grant better enables us to secure the level of readiness and innovation our residents have come to expect," said Westerville Division of Fire Chief Bernie Ingles. "By providing updated, more advanced equipment, we significantly enhance the safety of our firefighters and better prepare them to serve the residents of Westerville and Blendon Township."

Health and Fitness Critical to Firefighting Success



Lieutenant Tim Neja

Health and fitness are everyday commitments for firefighters. Our job is a physical one, necessary for essential job functions such as climbing ladders, pulling hoses and searching for victims, all while wearing turnout gear and a self-contained breathing apparatus. These physical tasks may not occur every shift, but the expectation is that staff may be called on to perform extremely physical work in hazardous environments on any given day.

We face a dangerous combination of stress, high body temperature and dehydration while fighting a fire. In stressful situations, research shows the body responds with a number of physiological changes. Adrenaline is released into the bloodstream, muscles contract, breathing quickens and heart rate and blood pressure rise. Studies also demonstrate that physically fit individuals tend to take these physical responses in stride, with less stress to the body and a shorter recovery time.

Health & Fitness Priorities

A fitness program is part of the training calendar, and a high priority for improving wellness. In cooperation with Westerville Parks & Recreation, we have adopted a program focused on five core components of health and safety.

- 1. Medical evaluation**
- 2. Health and fitness assessment**
- 3. Exercise program**
- 4. Injury prevention**
- 5. Behavior modification**

Westerville Division of Fire staff is medically evaluated every year, but our exams are different than a typical annual "check-up." The exam is specific to firefighters and is designed to help identify health problems related to our job. We also use a fitness assessment that measures aerobic capacity, body composition, muscular strength and endurance, and flexibility. In addition to workouts, the program also provides education to encourage healthy habits such as stress management, injury prevention and good nutrition. We view our wellness program as a form of customer service, and we are consistently seeking ways to improve firefighter health and lower rates of injuries.

Today's firefighters must be as conditioned as athletes: skilled at what we do and fit for the demands of the job. A successful fitness program enhances the safety of both firefighters and the public.

Lace up your best pair of sneakers and run for a good cause. The Travis Manion Foundation 9/11 Heroes 5K Run will be held on Saturday, September 7 to benefit wounded and disabled veterans and the families of fallen heroes.

Half of the proceeds go to the Westerville Firefighter's Memorial Scholarship Fund, which supports Ohio students pursuing a career in the fire service. The remaining proceeds support veterans and families of fallen service members through service-based team building events that foster camaraderie and facilitate successful life transitions.

To register or donate to the Westerville 9/11 Heroes Run, visit www.travismanion.org and click on the link to the race.

Opening ceremonies kick off at 8 a.m. For more information, contact Columbus@911HeroesRun.org.

Saturday, September 7
9 a.m.
Alum Creek Park
221 W. Main St.
Westerville, OH 43081
\$25 per person



Division NEWS



Announcements

Deputy Fire Chief Terry Smith retired in July after a 27-year career with the Westerville Division of Fire. Thank you, Chief Smith, for years of dedicated service to the citizens of the City of Westerville and Blendon Township.



Deputy Fire Chief Terry Smith

To replace recent retirees, the Division of Fire has hired three new full-time firefighters: Tom Hart, Dean Ward and Tim Bunyard. All were with the Division as part-time personnel before being offered full-time positions and have previous firefighting experience. Firefighter Bunyard fills the vacancy left by the retirement of Chief Smith.

Luke Downs is the recipient of the 2013 Westerville Firefighter's Memorial Scholarship. The scholarship was established by Westerville Professional Firefighters Local 3480 and is awarded to students pursuing a career in the fire service. A 2013 graduate of Westerville North High School, Downs was a two-year letter winner in football and wrestling. Downs has already obtained his firefighting certification from the Delaware Area Career Center and is working on his EMT-B certification.

New Truck, **Medic 112**, Joins Fire Fleet

Earlier this summer, the Fire Division put new Medic 112 (M112) into service. The Division's plan for managing medic vehicles involves rotating each truck from the frontline to back-up, refurbishing existing trucks and, when necessary, purchasing a new truck. The medics are the City's busiest trucks, with each vehicle completing approximately 3,000 runs a year.



M112 on first run. Photocredit: Bill Bixby

As the mileage count ticks upward, wear-and-tear takes its toll on emergency response vehicles. Ultimately, routine maintenance cannot keep up with the degradation borne by the chassis (the underbody of a motor vehicle consisting of the frame, wheels and machinery). The ambulance box, on the other hand, often remains in good condition. This is why the Division includes refurbishment as a primary component of fleet management. When a medic vehicle is refurbished, the chassis is replaced while the ambulance box is preserved and mounted on a new chassis. With a diligent management plan in place, the Division is able to exercise greater resource efficiency by getting 16-18 years of reliable service out of ambulance boxes, resulting in significant cost savings.

Frontline Feedback

It is our goal to maintain an ongoing dialogue with our residents by sharing the latest news and updates, providing important fire safety information and promoting upcoming community events. If you have a comment or a suggestion, please email editor Gretchen Sutton at Gretchen.Sutton@Westerville.org.