

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2010

# TRUMPET

A PUBLICATION OF THE MOBILE FIRE-RESCUE DEPARTMENT-ESTABLISHED 1888

## 2009 Year in Review!

### INSIDE FEATURES

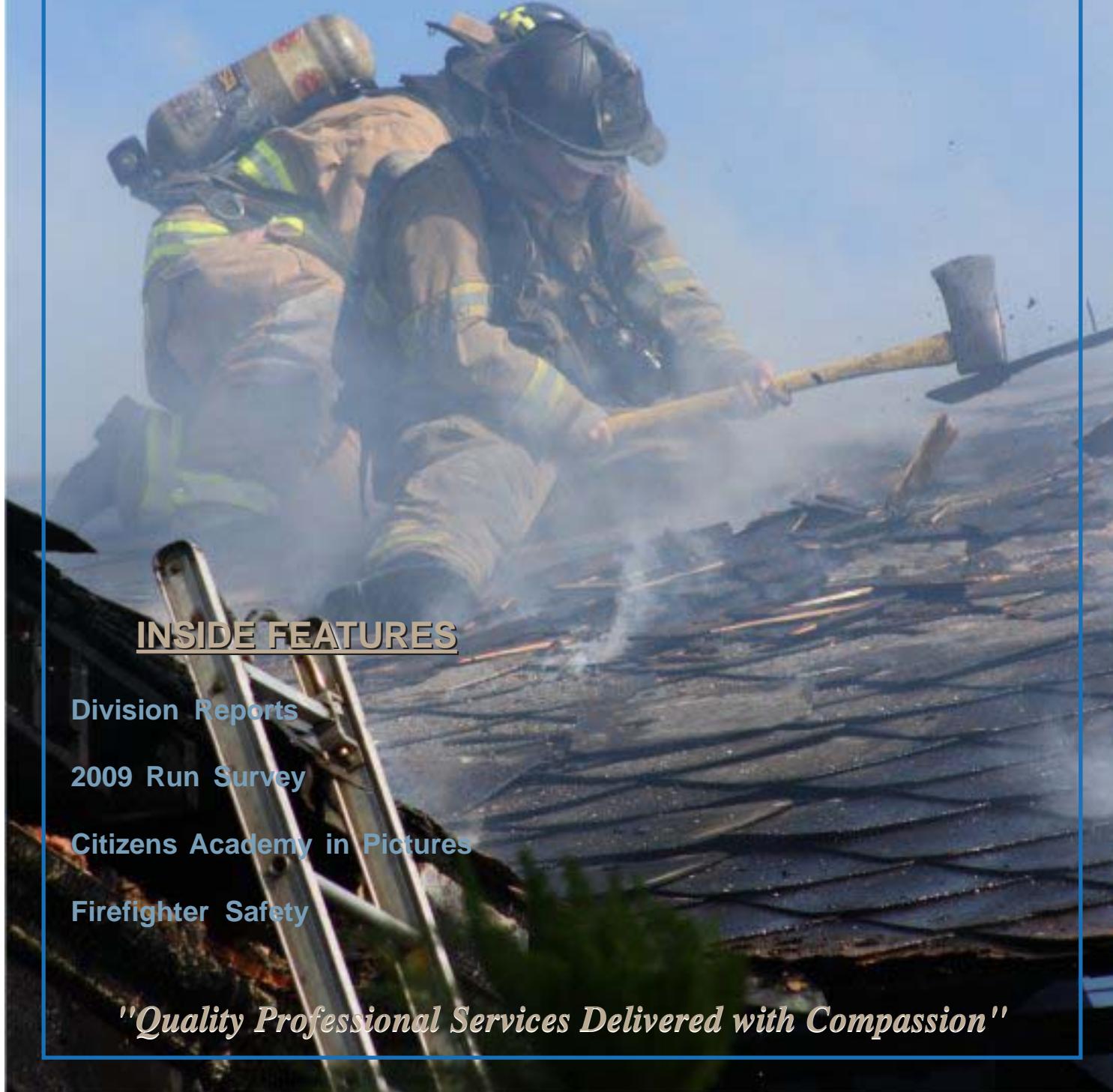
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*"Quality Professional Services Delivered with Compassion"*



# TRUMPET

An official publication of the Mobile Fire-Rescue Department.

**Stephen A. Dean, Fire Chief**

Editor & Publisher

**Steve Huffman**

The Trumpet welcomes your questions and/or comments. To submit photos, articles or comments call (251) 208-2857 or e-mail: [huffman@cityofmobile.org](mailto:huffman@cityofmobile.org)

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## Our Mission

**The Mission of the Mobile Fire-Rescue Department is to identify and respond to community needs in order to deliver an effective and efficient system of service which minimize risk to life, health, and property from fire, trauma, acute illness, and hazardous conditions.**



**On the Cover**  
Firefighters opening the roof of a 2-story historic house located at 910 Government Street on May 20, 2009

**Cover Photo By:** Steve Huffman

**Visit Our Website:**  
<http://www.cityofmobile.org/fire/>



**By RICHARD BRANNON,  
Deputy Chief**

The Operations Division is the largest division within the Mobile Fire-Rescue Department and consists of uniformed firefighters, firemedics, firefighter/drivers, Captains or Company Officers, and District Chiefs. These are the crews that make up the city's fire and rescue companies and respond to more than 30,000 calls per year.

The Operations Division is responsible for combating and controlling fires both on land and the waterfront, property conservation measures, mitigation of fire and hazardous material threat through annual inspections and preplanning in commercial and public buildings, and inspecting and maintaining fire hydrants; providing the delivery of extrication, rescue, basic and advanced life support, early defibrillation and related emergency medical services; providing delivery support systems to include hazardous material teams, high angle

## Training's Better Thanks to You

**BY MELVIN  
STRINGFELLOW,  
District Chief**

Over the last couple of years the Training Staff has attempted to create an atmosphere of cooperation and innovation in how we conduct training on the Mobile Fire Rescue Department. By in large we have been successful in providing a quality educational experience in both fire suppression and EMS training. There is always room for improvement and we will continue to search out ways to get better. The key to any training, be it classroom or a field exercise, is with those participating in the activity. You have been the difference in the success of MFRD's training.

Most everyone has activity participated in training and have shown an interest in their professional development. All the certification classes, Swing-Driver

rescue, heavy extrication, EMT-P and EMT-D.

Aside from the day to day responses to emergency and other calls for service the operations division performs tasks that are necessary to perform the day to day functions. Annual call stats can be found on page 5 of this publication. Below is a list of the "extras" that are performed by the Operations Division.

Hydrant Inspections	13,578
Business Inspections	1,477
Target Hazard Inspections	464
School Inspections	467
Public Relation Events	152
(scheduled by the Deputy Chief of Operations)	
Monthly Station Inspections	198
Probationary Grade Sheets completed	480
Station Maintenance	14,711 hours
Apparatus Maintenance	11,799 hours
Hose Maintenance	3,341 hours
Ladder Maintenance	2,436 hours

class, Center Learn Program, Multi-Company drills and all the other training activities have been met with energy and enthusiasm. The Training Staff and I want to thank you for your interest. Working together we can continue to provide a quality service for the citizens we protect.

In 2010 we plan on offering a number of certification classes including Fire Officer II, Fire Instructor II, Haz-Mat Tech and another Pumping Apparatus Operator class. There will also be a class on High Rise fires including sections on command, strategy and tactics and unique considerations in mitigating emergencies at multi-story buildings. There will also be the less enjoyable task of hose testing and pump testing to complete as well.

Our number one goal is to provide you with the skill sets necessary to accomplish your mission as efficiently, effectively and safely as possible. Together we can maintain the highest level of emergency response capabilities and ensure that we all go home afterwards.



## TRAINING DIVISION

BY RANDY SMITH,  
Deputy Chief

As we close out 2009, I would like to present a quick snapshot of what the Training Division was able to accomplish this year. The year started out with a bang. On the first day back to work from the holidays, Recruit Class 2009-01 began their 20-week long training process, consisting of over 800 hours training. Over 800 hours of Fire Service Con Ed was conducted in areas such as; ISO Training (Officer, Driver and Fundamentals), Swing Driver basic training, Haz-Mat A&O, Rail Road Safety, Ship Board Firefighting, forcible entry and ventilation.

In-service training on the Center Lean Program, SunPro Training data entry, and Hydrant Inspections data entry was conducted at the newly established Computer lab at the Festival Center. Additional in-service training was conducted on the New Ambulances, Helicopter safety, and LZ's, Drive Cam and an Admin of Center Learn course for the District Chief's. The division initiated over 160 hours of Multi Company Drills, live fire house burns and participated in other exercises with outside agencies / facilities such as Austal Marine, RSA and Government Plaza.

The staff attended a Live Fire Burn Certification Course with the Alabama Fire College in preparation of new state requirements on live fire burns and attended the Basic Public Information Officer Course. The division assisted the Mobile County Personnel Board by proctoring test and in coordinating the Driver's Practical Exam. Along with the numerous rehire evaluations conducted this year, the division participated in recruiting efforts and assisted the MPD Tactical Team with forcible entry training.

In 2009, we completed to sign up

and orientation sessions for the CPAT and ran the CPAT for two weeks, 12 hours a day. This event could not have taken place without the assistance of personnel from the EMS and the Operations Divisions. State Certification courses held this year included an Aerial Apparatus Operator and Pumping Apparatus Operator Course. The staff completed the annual pump and hose testing along with PPE checks.

A new Leadership Series program was launched late in the year, which brings in outside speakers to provide different viewpoints and leadership styles. These programs last approximately 90 minutes and are open to all City employees. With assistance of the EMS Division, the staff completed the Incident Rehabilitation (Rehab) OG. The Training Division staff also serves as the Accident Review Committee and has recently been tasked with the Drive Cam program.

On the EMS side of training, EMS Practical Evaluations were conducted for all personnel. Several Pediatric Advanced Life Support and Advanced Life Support Courses were held for the advanced practice EMT's, in addition to the annual CPR refresher. The division is tasked with oversight of the Center Learn Program and provides technical support and tracking of participating and completion rates for every EMT within the department. A Burn Treatment class was provided to Teledyne by the staff. At the end of each year, the staff with the assistance of half of the EMT's in the department completes a mountain of paperwork to renew the State Licenses and National Registry Certifications of those expiring.

Through the diligent efforts of Chief Stringfellow, the Veterans Administration approved the Mobile Fire Rescue Department as an "On-The-Job Training Program" and our Recruits are eligible for the benefit. Last year, he was able to get the VA to recognize the Training Academy as a Veterans Administration approved Training Facility, with recruits receiving over \$27,000 worth of VA benefits. Now, new hires will continue to draw VA benefits until their probation period ends.

In 2010, we look forward to accomplishing a list of projects, including the completion of one possibly two-recruit classes and a few new courses and

programs currently being developed. If you have a topic of interest for training, we strongly encourage you to pass to us. Even though we can not cover every topic presented to us, we will continue to do our best to provide quality training to accomplish the departments every expanding mission and to provide for your safety.

We hope that you and your family had a safe holiday season and wish you the best of luck in 2010.



BY RANDY SMITH,  
Deputy Chief

In 2009, the Communications Division underwent several changes and the addition of several new employees. In February, seven new Public Safety Dispatcher I's were hired. CO Evelyn Daniel and CO Theresa Van Driessche worked countless hours providing the roughly six months of basic training. In August, when they graduated, the number of on duty personnel went from three a shift to four per shift. In addition to the staffing increase, the shift schedules also changed to 10's and 8's. The day shift works a 10-hour shift, from 0800 to 1800 hours. The evening shift works an 8-hour shift, from 1400 to 2200 hours. The night shift works a 10-hour shift from 2200 to 0800 hours. With this reorganization of the shifts, the division now has six to eight personnel available during the peak hours between 1400 and 1800 hours and has built in training time.

The Firefighter Program, which was developed to provide relief and coverage during personnel shortages, has been a tremendous help to the division. Prior to the addition of this program and the graduation of the seven new employees, the personnel were working numerous 18-hour shifts. I personally would like to thank those personnel who volunteered to work and those who received mandatory assignments to cover shortages during the year.

Please see **COMMUNICATIONS** Page 10



# Homeland Security Division

BY SHERRY CRUSH,  
Captain

***“Greatness is not in where we stand, but in what direction we are moving. We must sail sometimes with the wind and sometimes against it—but sail we must, and not drift, nor lie at anchor.”***

**Oliver Wendell Holmes**

— Homeland Security is a change, it is the future...until another change comes along...and one will.

The Homeland Security Division has once again had a very productive year. We trained 961 fire department personnel in 26 different subjects. When this number is added to the 187 people from local hospitals, fire departments and industries that we educated in such subjects as WMD Decon, Confined Space Awareness, Search Tactics, etc we were quite busy. But it's not

just about us; it took initiative by people on these teams to want to better themselves. Because of these motivated individuals they got to attend training out of town in places like Florida, Mississippi, New Jersey, Tennessee, Nevada, New Mexico and other parts of the country.

The personnel assigned to Lathan attained a 73% percent in the over all training in HazMat Technician. Which is an accomplishment considering they were not even in a station together for awhile. The next step for a WMD Team is the final approval from Management to continue moving forward with mandatory training and movement of equipment from Gus Rehm.

HazMat personnel have been on a roller coaster ride in trying to get their equipment updated with more modern technology and meet their required training as dictated by NIMS.

Technical Rescue is still moving forward with the US&R team as they keep gaining the eye of FEMA and other State and Federal Agencies that have called them several times for various reasons. The K9 team attained another NIMS typing that makes them 1 of 30 teams in the country with such a designation. US&R Logistics received the best gift yet in that of a structure to hold the teams equipment needs.

The Airport Fire Fighters retooled the way they do their monthly training in that it meets both FAA and NIMS requirements. It seems to be working, but we will know more after the next FAA visit in February.

The marine sector has kind of been on autopilot for a while, but as with everyone else, NIMS standards are affecting them as well. They may see monthly training and/or standardized training among shifts so all three shifts do the same thing, both in house and with the “back-up” boat companies.

Technical Rescue	Fixed Facility	Transportation	Machinery Entrapment	Structure Collapse	Other	Marine	Total	Outside City Limits
TR25	4	23	4	1	3	9	44	1
SQ 26	2	10	1	1	2	7	23	0
SQ 27	3	48	1	1	17	3	73	37
SQ 28	0	25	1	0	25	0	51	11

HazMat 15	Fixed Facility	Transportation	Other	TOTAL	Outside City Limits
Level A	4	1	0	5	1
Level B	1	4	0	5	
Level C	0	3	0	3	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>28</b>	

Marine	Fixed Facility	Other	TOTAL	Outside City Limits
FB02	3	12	15	5

ARFF	Brookley	Bates
Alert 1	2	4
Alert 2	3	18
Alert 3	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>22</b>



## Annual Report of Calls

The following is a breakdown and total number of calls and call types made by the Mobile Fire-Rescue Department for the year 2009. You will also find a Historical Review of the annual service demand of the department.

### Fires

Fires Other	69
Fires Structures	296
Fires Vehicles	287
Fires Trash, Grass, Woods, Rubbish	900
Fires Cooking	120
Fires Misc.	177

**Total Fires: 1,849**

### EMS

Rescue EMS Emergency	164
Rescue EMS Other	165
Medical Assist EMS Crew	410
EMS Excluding Vehicle Injury	15,234
EMS Vehicle Injuries	1,588
EMS Calls Misc.	746

**Total EMS Calls: 18,307**

### Hazardous Conditions

Gasoline Spills	38
LPG-Natural Gas	69
Chemical Spills	7
Carbon Monoxide Incidents	7
Power Lines Down	83
Electrical Other	80
Hazards Misc.	129

**Total Hazardous Conditions: 413**

### Other

Service Calls	1,340
Good Intention Calls	3,708
False Alarm Calls	3,789
Severe Weather or Natural Disaster	10
Special Type of Incident	44

**Total Other Calls: 8,891**

**Total Number of Incidents: 29,460**



## Historical Review of Annual Service Demand

FY-00	28,812
FY-01	25,475
FY-02	26,037
FY-03	25,302
FY-04	26,831
<b>FY-04 Actual</b>	<b>26,978</b>
FY-05	29,445
<b>FY-05 Actual</b>	<b>29,553</b>
FY-06	30,260
<b>FY-06 Actual</b>	<b>25,888</b>
FY-07	31,074
<b>FY-07 Actual</b>	<b>30,579</b>
FY-08	31,888
<b>FY-08 Actual</b>	<b>28,297</b>
FY-09	32,702
<b>FY-09 Actual</b>	<b>29,460</b>



### 2009 Total Responses By Unit

E01 - 1,611	T04 - 374	R01 - 1,125
E02 - 970	T05 - 539	R03 - 2,217
E03 - 1,986	T10 - 509	R04 - 20
E06 - 2,311	T17 - 404	R05 - 45
E07 - 2,026	T24 - 494	R06 - 1,885
E08 - 1,264	TR25-23	R07 - 1,376
E09 - 2,059		R08 - 26
E11 - 1,028		R10 - 7
E12 - 1,186		R14 - 1,828
E14 - 1,516		R18 - 1,585
E15 - 1,847		R22 - 8
E16 - 1,045		R23 - 2,294
E18 - 1,689		R24 - 2,342
E19 - 1,964		R29 - 1,071
E20 - 961		
E21 - 433	District 1 - 567	
E22 - 2,012	District 2 - 378	
E23 - 1,813	District 3 - 333	
E29 - 1,715	District 4 - 290	



By **MYRON KING**,  
District Chief

The year 2009 has been a very productive year for the Emergency Medical Division of Mobile Fire-Rescue Department. We have been able to achieve many over our overall goals and meet most of our major objectives for the year. I would like to first of all congratulate the EMS billing staff for their efforts and hard work. With their help we are continuing to increase our collections as it relates to EMS billing. Ms Tamara Nelson and her staff are doing an outstanding job and I would like to encourage them to continue the pace and keep up the good work.

Captain Tillman is currently in charge of the Special Events schedule and has staffed over 300 individual events for the year. His efforts have not gone unnoticed as he is constantly working to meet the required deadlines for those events. He is also responsible for the Health and Wellness program that so many of the members of the department enjoy on a daily basis at the YMCA. He is also tasked with tracking and maintaining the data for the department's immunization and inoculation program. To date he has recorded over 700 immunizations for the year. Captain Tillman is also doing an outstanding job and should be commended for his efforts.

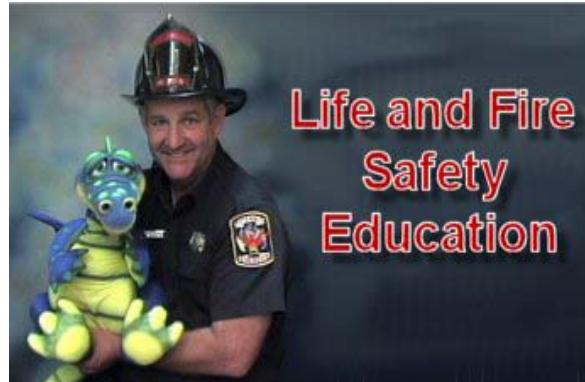
Captain Hicks and Captain Gilliland are the overseer's of our Quality Insurance/Quality Improvement Program and Risk Management Programs. Captain Gilliland's primary focus is EPC-R compliance with the State of Alabama as well as random, monthly, review of advanced life support categories. He is also heavily involved in EMS training as well and he also should be commended for doing a remarkable job. Captains Hicks primary focus is Quality Assurance and Quality Improvement of all Cardiac related incidents and major trauma, as well as EMS equipment maintenance and upkeep. His duties also include EMS training issues as well as EPC-R compliance with the state EMS Office. Captain Hicks also deserves to be commended for his outstanding performance of his duties.

Captain Busby has been tasked with Quality Assurance and Quality Improvement over the departments Basic Life Support responses as well as trauma and he is also coordinator for the Cadet program. He also carries out his duties in an outstanding manner and should also be commended. Captain Busby was also very instrumental in assisting the department with in Centre Learn Program. He is also tasked with overseeing the department's 12-lead program, as well as the STEMI program.

I am proud to say we have conducted well over 10,000 hours of training during the calendar year to include but not limited to, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition Protocol classes, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition Protocol update classes, H1N1 Swine Flu classes, basic and advanced airway management classes, Assisted with ACLS and PALS, Lucas CPR

devices classes, RAD 57 classes, documentation of patient care classes, HIPPA Policy revision classes, CPAP training, Alabama Trauma Systems training, New Drug training for Zofram, and assisted with EMT Skills classes, to name a few. I am also proud to report the potential of 6 new medics by the years end as we patiently await their registry results.

I would like to send a special thank you to Deputy Chief Mark Hansberry, Deputy Chief of EMS for providing his guidance, wisdom and support as we continue to try to move forward and better our division and our service delivery to the community. With that I would like to extend to each and every one of you wishes for a joyous and safe holiday season and a very prosperous new year.



## **Public Education Division Completes a Four Year Project**

By **KENT LANDSBERG**,  
Public Education Officer

The positive complements continue to pour in about the informative fire station visits. The parents that I have talked to are very impressed by the fire safety messages that are being mentioned during fire station tours with their children. This opportunity to teach families the importance of testing their smoke alarms and the knowledge that most children do not wake up when the smoke alarm sounds is the best way to improve the chances of fire survival for the citizens of Mobile.

Due to your efforts no children have died in fires this year in Mobile County. It has been another great season for the public education division; over 450 presentations have been given to an estimated 34,000 citizens in the Mobile area. We have been able to place educational fire safety packets for teachers, in over 1500 elementary school libraries in both Alabama and Mississippi (Funding provided by grants from Target, FM Global, State Farm, Met Life & MFRD). We are currently working on an additional grant from Farmers insurance and fire alert to place interactive computer fire and life safety learning programs in all Mobile county elementary schools. Dusty the smoke smeller Dragon puppet program is now being used by fire departments in over 18 states and a new robot dragon has been created for use in the fire service.

Please see **EDUCATION** Page 10



**By DON MEYERS,**  
Deputy Chief

The following is a snapshot of the Logistic Division's performance and significant accomplishments.

### **Facilities**

1. Service Request Orders (SRO's) is the method we use to route request for repairs and maintenance of our buildings. In addition they allow us limited ability to track the progress of our requests for assistance. Service Request Orders are routed to Public Buildings, Public Works, Mechanical Maintenance and the Electrical Department after submission. Last year over 350 SRO's were submitted to the various departments in the City.
2. Replacement of roofs at Fire Stations H.H. Edwards Station, Willet Station, Station 14 and Springhill Station 18 has been completed and roof replacement work has begun on Stations 20, 21 and 23.
3. Fire Station 18 and 20 have been closed and relocated while they are undergoing extensive remodeling and repair. The scope of work for Fire Station 18 shall consist of but not necessarily limited to the following:
  - Power wash the building exterior
  - Clean, prep and paint the building exterior
  - Remove and replace all existing vinyl floor tile
  - Insulate exterior walls with fiberglass insulation
  - Remove existing fur down around existing A/C ductwork
  - Apply 5/8" gypsum board to interior wall surfaces
  - Provide new manufactured metal wardrobe lockers, locker to be 12" wide by 24" deep
  - Provide new manufactured metal wardrobe lockers at captain's quarters different configuration from the forgoing
  - Provide new energy efficient florescent lighting fixtures
  - The contractor shall review the bid documents to insure a full understanding of the scope of work.

- Paint walls and ceiling of all interior rooms
- Repaint interior of engine bay
- Replace all exterior doors with new hollow metal doors and frames
- Replace all existing interior doors with new solid wood doors with hollow metal frames
- Replace air conditioning compressors and air handlers complete, in-place and fully functioning
- Rewire the building's electrical system
- Provide gypsum board returns at all interior windows, (interior windows by others).
- Provide new "Alerting System" as used by Mobile Fire-Rescue.
- The contractor shall review the bid documents to insure a full understanding of the scope of work.

1. The City's has received a grant and has begun to replace all of the old inefficient windows at the Fire Stations.
2. Lathan Fire Station renovation was completed on July 15, 2009.
3. The Public Safety Complex is scheduled to be completed sometime in July 2010. The facility is state of the art with five bays that will house (2) Quints, (2) Rescue Trucks and a District Chief. One half of the Complex is dedicated to the Fire Rescue Department and the other half is for the Police Department and MIS. It is spacious, at over 25,000 square feet and includes a large work out facility, training props, fuel depot, and many other amenities. This will be the first time Police and Firefighters will be housed under one roof and we are looking forward to many more similar facilities.
4. We have received a 1.9 million dollar grant for the construction of the Tillman's Corner Fire Station and expect the Station to have three bays but slightly larger to accommodate a small area for the Police Department.
5. The recent purchase and renovation of a 25,000 square foot warehouse was completed in November 9, 2009. Our Central Supply, USAR and Inspection Bureau are housed at the warehouse located at 2851 Old Shell road near UMS School.

### **Equipment/Apparatus**

1. Roy Metzger retired with over 22 years of dedicated service.
2. The Mechanical Repair and Maintenance Division received and processed 750 requests. Items ranges form a simple brake inspection to complicated pump repairs.

Please see **LOGISTICS** Page 8

## Logistics

Continued from Page 6

3. Four additional ambulance remounts were completed with the Chevy Kodiak series and we are hoping to have at least (2) more done in 2010.
4. Two new District pick-ups were added to the fleet
5. Drive Cams were added to 23 additional Department vehicles for a total of 33. It seems there is a universal distaste for the units but most large Cities are finding them a necessity. Take into consideration last year the Fire Service has over (40) vehicular accidents with a repair cost of over \$25,000 dollars. That amount does not include damage to other vehicles, property damage, drug test (\$45.00 each), workman's compensation and loss time from work.

## Supplies and Computers

1. MIT has just completed the replacement of all of the printers at every station and hospital with a more efficient and less expensive printer. This will add a standardization feature we were unable to achieve in the past.
2. For those of you who haven't realized it yet Data Point has been replaced by Outlook.
3. Traker Inventory is a new software system that has implemented at Central Supply. Stations are being trained to use this for ordering their supplies. It will use Microsoft Access for maintaining the orders and inventory.
4. Over 400 requests for repairs and software installations were sent to MIS

## Air Mask Shop

1. The Air Mask Shop repairs and maintains over 300 Air Packs, 800 High and Low Pressure Cylinders, 42 Zoll Monitors and AED's, 20 AED Pro, and 15 Auto Pulse Devices.
2. 25 More Auto Pulse Devices will be ordered as soon as funds become available.
3. Assist in deployment and maintenance of new cell phones
4. Maintenance on nozzles, intake valves, Cascade Systems, Deck gun, Monitor, Wyes Siamese, Manifolds, LDH, Foam Eductors, and basic tools - axes, shovels...
5. Established economical and strategic plans on parts and equipment for further development.

With most men, unbelief in one thing springs from blind belief in another.

--Georg Christoph Lichtenberg 1742-1799



By STEVE HUFFMAN,  
Public Information Officer

In addition to the usual media and public relations requests throughout the year, two FEMA Basic PIO Classes were taught, one in Mobile and one in Baldwin County. Also two Citizens Academy's were held in the Spring and Fall. Thanks to everyone that participated and helped make it a success.

The next Citizens Academy will start on March 8, 2010, applications can be found on the departments web site. If you know of anyone that may be interested please pass the word along. It's a great way for the citizens of Mobile to learn about what you do everyday and it certainly gives them a better appreciation.

Here are the number of media requests, by month, that was received by this office this past year.

## Media Requests 2009

January	350
February	408
March	308
April	233
May	320
June	336
July	227
August	400
September	116
October	240
November	377
December	185
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>3,500</b>

## CITIZENS ACADEMY CLASS 5 - "CALIENTE CINCO"

Graduated November 18, 2009



Communications



C.P.R.



P.P.E.



Fire Boat/Harbor Tour



Rappelling



Special Ops/Extrication



## KUDOS

### Firefighter of the Month

OCTOBER - Steve Ganus - Firefighter, EC20

#### Retirements



Fire Equipment Supervisor Roy Metzger  
Over 22 Years Service  
Retired 11/30/2009  
Logistics Division

Firefighter Driver James B. Harden  
Over 27 Years Service  
Retired 12/31/2009  
Bates Field

Congratulations and We Wish You Good Luck  
upon your much earned retirement and future  
endeavors!

Firefighter appreciation  
isn't just a once a year  
affair because  
firefighters are there for  
each of us everyday.  
--Byron Pulsifer

#### Communications

Continued from Page 3

The Emergency Fire Dispatch Program was purchased by the Mobile County Communications District thanks to the E911 Board and has been incorporated into the division / department operations. This program, like the Emergency Medical Dispatch Program we have been using for years, provides detail instructions to the callers and standardizes the way we do business.

In November, the division started researching new Fire Station Alerting Systems. This has been a huge undertaking. When the City of Mobile completes its re-banding negotiations with Sprint-Nextel, we will make the transition to the County / Harris Radio System, leaving the current alerting system inoperable. Funding by the E911 Board is pending.

As of December 9, 2009, the Communications Division has processed 35,383 calls for service. Of this number, 7,177 were fire related, 23,566 were EMS related incidents and 4,640 for BLS ONLY responses. By the end of 2009, the Communications division will process over 37,500 calls for service. This number does not include the administrative calls answered.

For 2010, we plan to hire approximately five new PSDI's, which will include filling the vacancy of retiring CO Cheryl Schaffer. In addition, we are planning the migration to the new Fire Station Alerting System and the Harris Radio System, along with a few new programs.

We hope that you and your family had a Safe Holiday Season and with you well in 2010.

#### Education

Continued from Page 6

The Mobile Fire Rescue museum on the second floor at Central (Old alarm room) has received multiple new contributions. Fire grenades, fire marks, and newly discovered photos from the past are on display. Guided tours for the child care groups (8 years old and up) will begin this summer from 9:00 to 11:00 on Mondays and Wednesdays. To schedule a visit, ask your child care director to call 208-2891 to reserve a tour time. We expect this to be a popular new field trip destination. If any one would be willing to donate a working VCR to the museum, it would be greatly appreciated. All museum items on display are on a temporary loan only basis.

With your continued help, we can prevent even more tragedies and burn injuries to our citizens this year.

Save lives the easy way, teach fire safety every day.



# Firefighter Safety

## Rope Rescue

**By Katherine Ridenhour**—Ridenhour is a battalion chief for the Aurora (Colo.) Fire Department. She is an original member of Colorado USAR Task Force 1. She teaches nationally on strategy and tactics, promotional preparation and leadership. She served as president of Women in the Fire Service and is a passionate advocate for safe fireground practices and fair workplace treatment.



### Case Study: Report No. 09-155

“My assistant chief wanted a few rope rescue team members to go to the training tower and rappel from the top using a couple of different techniques, such as a self-belay and bottom belay ... We had the rope anchored correctly and our harness checked ... Everything was secured properly, so I stood up on top of the wall. When I went over the edge, I had too much slack in the rope and started a rapid descent to the ground. The firefighter on the top yelled, “Belay, belay!” but the firefighter on the bottom let go of the rope. I thought I was going to crater in on top of them. The prusik that I was holding onto started to burn and (my) reaction was to let go of the rope. My prusik did its job and melted to the rope, stopping me 5 feet short of the concrete.”

### Comments

Some of the most exciting training in the fire service involves rope rescue and rappelling; however, all rope training demands a high level of safety awareness and expertise. All participating members must be briefed on operations, and they must review their individual task and function. All members must be clear on signals, communications and who is in charge. All rope systems must be checked and double-checked prior to placing any weight on the lines. And all such operations require the presence of a safety officer.

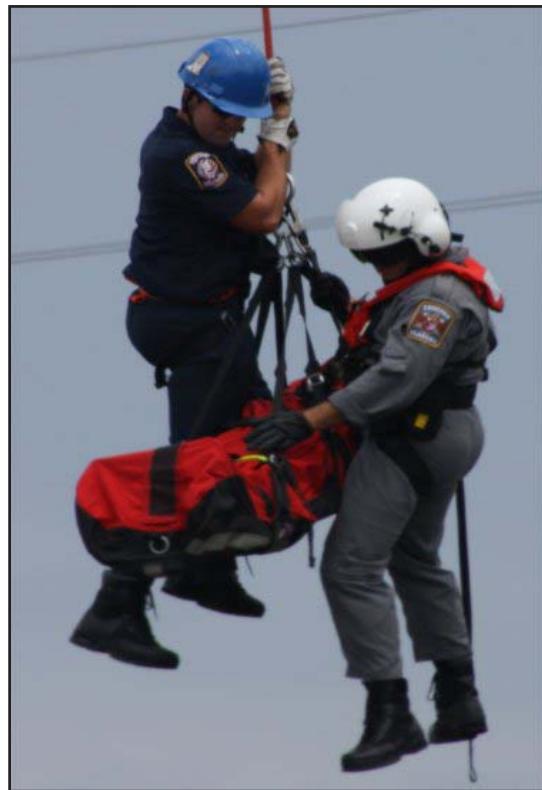
There's no room for mistakes in rope rescue if systems aren't set up properly; however, when they are set up properly, there are safety back-ups within the system that help rescuers achieve a high level of protection, as was the case in this report.

Rope rescue is usually thought of as the foundation for technical rescue. Other disciplines, such as confined space, swiftwater and ice rescue, use rope systems as an integral part of procedures.

Understanding the uses and limitations of rope is imperative for safe operations. When was the last time you tied knots, set up mechanical systems, rappelled or checked your rope? We call it a “lifeline” for a reason!

### Discussion Points

- How often do department members or tech rescue teams train



on ropes, and does this training allow members to remain proficient in their skills?

- When performing rope training, do you consistently review and follow all required safety practices?
- Do you use clear and concise communication directives that everyone knows, uses and understands?

### Tips

NFPA 1983 spells out minimum levels of performance requirements for life safety rope and equipment. NFPA 1670 and 1006 set forth operations, training levels and qualifications for technical rescue teams. Understanding and adhering to NFPA standards is considered the *minimum* requirements for fire service operations—do you comply?



### Cyanide Poisoning

Never assume that there's “safe smoke.” Cyanide is a poison created by modern-day living, as it's a deadly gas present in the plastics and polymers found in household goods, furnishings and home construction.

Cyanide gas (HCN) is 35 times more toxic than carbon monoxide (CO). HCN is produced via the ignition of either polymers, such as foam, melamine and synthetic rubber, or products made with wool, silk, cotton, nylon, plastic. HCN can enter the body via absorption, inhalation or ingestion, and targets the heart and brain. HCN often incapacitates the victim within a short period of time.

## Dates to Remember

**January 1 - New Year's Day**

**January 19 - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day**

**February 1 - National Freedom Day**

**February 2 - Groundhog Day**

**February 12 - Lincoln's Birthday**

**February 14 - Valentine's Day**

**February 15 - President's Day**

**February 16 - Mardi Gras Day**

**February 17 - Ash Wednesday**



**MOBILE FIRE-RESCUE**

701 Saint Francis Street  
Mobile, Alabama 36602