

# THE SIREN

March/April 2020

## WELLINGTON FIRE/EMS

### Why Are Fire Trucks Red?

Fire trucks today come in a rainbow of colors-red, green, black, yellow, orange, white and purple to name a few. But when you picture a fire truck or see one on television almost every time the fire truck is red. Some people claim fire trucks are red because red was the cheapest color of paint when the first trucks were built. Now on the other hand some claim red paint was the most expensive and volunteer fire companies wanted to show pride in their apparatus so they chose the

expensive red paint. Others claim that fire trucks were first painted red because volunteer companies wanted a flashy color other than the bland black vehicles on the market. There is also another theory that red was chosen because of the invention of a wheeled (no engine) fire truck by an Englishman Richard Newsham in 1721. Newsham built these "fire trucks" in England then shipped them to the United States. All of his fire trucks were painted red. The color red has been studied by scientist to see if it was the

best choice based on night and day visibility. Actually a lime green was considered the best for visibility. Why do we continue to use red for fire trucks if red isn't the best for visibility. Well modern LED lighting, and specifically reflective striping on vehicles are what people see the best on the roadway. You will notice our newest apparatus have full striping on the rear of the apparatus. And yes tradition plays a role in the choice of red fire trucks.

### Kansas Turnpike

Wellington Fire/EMS responds to 26 miles of the Kansas Turnpike from the Oklahoma border to and including the Belle Plaine service area. Incident responses to the turnpike are challenging and dangerous. Types of incidents the department has responded to in the past have been single

and multi vehicle injury/fatality accidents, medical emergencies of all kinds, vehicle and grass fires and hazardous material calls including overturned tanker trucks. Access to incidents are difficult because there are only so many turn around points along the turnpike. Making the turn around in itself is danger-

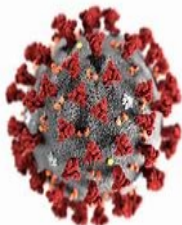
ous due to traffic conditions. We protect crews with apparatus placement on the roadway as one of the main causes of injuries and deaths to first responders is being hit by a vehicle. The next time you see emergency vehicles on a roadway "slow down", move over and keep your eyes on the road not us.

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## Coronavirus-19



Coronavirus-19 has dominated the news and our lives for the last few weeks. This virus is particularly concerning for Fire/EMS agencies as we come into contact with sick people all the time. Exposure to the virus by just one crew could reduce our staffing to a dangerous level. We are used to dealing with a variety of airborne diseases in our every day duties. We take precautions such as always using gloves, and donning gowns, masks and eye protection if

needed. After the patient is transported we not only wash our hands/arms diligently but we also disinfect the ambulance and equipment. Staff members may also take a shower and change clothing if they think there was definite exposure. If we are exposed to bodily fluids on our skin we also ask for testing from the health care provider and may take further steps such as beginning medications until we know a definite

diagnosis. Sumner County 911 has begun asking questions pertaining to the virus to all individuals requesting EMS. If an individual meets the criteria set forth in the questioning the dispatch center will advise staff so further precautions can take place. We urge the public to practice social distancing, wash hands frequently and if you experience the viruses symptoms contact your doctor.

## Preventing Disease Spread in EMS



The advisory committee on immunization practices reported that preventable disease outbreaks and patient mortality have been scientifically linked to unvaccinated healthcare workers. Preventable diseases such as influenza, measles, mumps, pertussis and varicella have been linked to transmission from unvaccinated healthcare workers. Inconsistent and lack of standardized reporting has caused the CDC to consider unvaccinated

healthcare workers to be an "under-recognized problem". In fact, until a particular enactment of the affordable care act in 2013, most healthcare organizations did not submit the mandated vaccination records of health care workers. Prehospital strategies for preventing transmission of infectious disease are based on the EMS professionals understanding about how disease is transmitted. Fire and ambulance personnel have the unique opportunity to acquire

and transfer infections from both hospital and community sources. The role of EMS professionals is to protect others, provide care and do no harm. It is clear that immunizations are effective and safe. Given that EMS providers care for and transport patients with infectious, contagious and even deadly antibiotic-resistant organisms, it is essential to minimize the potential for harm to themselves, their families and their patients.

C shift

## Department Training

Class presentations in house for February/March were stroke, rapid sequence intubation, head injuries, ice rescue, scene size-up and tactics, cardiac arrest, central nervous system injuries, electric transformer fires, vehicle fires, and hazardous materials trailer equipment. Our three fire investigators attended a three day educational conference in Wichita. C shift attended a pipeline emergency response class at the Raymond Frye Center. Cassy Smith attended a meeting with fellow fire department administrative assistants in Andover. B shift attended storm spotter training.



We house and respond to any location if needed a mass casualty trailer provided by a Kansas Region III EMS grant

## Grass/Vehicle Fire

On February 7th at 1:12 PM the department was paged to respond to a grass fire close to a house in the 500 block of S. Seneca. Enroute a large column of smoke could be seen. Upon arrival found a grass fire which had started by the house from burning trash in a barrel. The fire had spread to a vehicle, was threatening two sheds and moving into a pasture. The first arriving

Brush truck was assigned to stop the spread of the grass fire which was moving east and south. As the Tender truck arrived it was assigned to extinguish the vehicle fire and stop the spread of fire into the sheds and to the north. There were several vehicles on the property which fortunately did not burn. The only loss was one vehicle. Crews did a great job of stopping the grass fire

before any further damage could occur.



## Radio Equipment Purchase

City Council approved the budgeted replacement of radio equipment in February. Our existing analog equipment was 5-18 years old. Several years ago the federal government mandated that we "narrow band" our radio's. This resulted in the loss of range and clarity of our radio transmissions. Before the narrow band we could talk back and forth from Oxford and understand the radio message. Now the

messages are garbled and difficult to understand. This is true throughout the county for our radio system. We have purchased a digital radio system which includes all apparatus radio's, portable radio's, radio repeater and accessories. Before the purchase we tried digital radios around the county and the clarity and range was greatly improved. The digital radio's clear up the background noise on the ra-

dio's clearing up the radio transmission. Our new system will be able to transmit and receive both analog and digital messages so we can talk to neighboring Fire and EMS agencies. On scene staff safety is enhanced now that dispatch, our station and other apparatus and personnel will be able to hear clearer emergency traffic.

## Photographs



Luke McCombs is a high school intern this semester



Grass Fire at Hargis Creek Watershed



A shift constructing boat motor dolly

**THANK YOU TO BURLINGTON NORTHERN SANTA FE RAILROAD FOR THE DONATION OF A LARGE HYDRAULIC JACK. THE JACK IS CAPABLE OF LIFTING RAIL CARS AND OTHER HEAVY OBJECTS IN THE EVENT OF A RESCUE. THE JACK IS SETUP TO WORK OFF OUR VEHICLE EXTRICATION TOOLS.**

Let us know what you would like to see in the newsletter by contacting [timhay@cityofwellington.net](mailto:timhay@cityofwellington.net)

If any organization/business would like a "Stop the Bleed" class (30 minutes in length) contact the fire station at 620 326-7443.

Smoke detectors are available from the department through a State of Kansas Fire Marshal grant.

Upcoming Classes & Events

Free CPR Class April 15th

Haz-Mat Symposium April 30-May 2 Wichita

Read past newsletters at [cityofwellington.net](http://cityofwellington.net)

**See the new city website at [cityofwellington.net](http://cityofwellington.net)**



**Around the Station**

Tim Hay and Sam Pacino attended a wildland task force meeting in Hutchinson.

A breakfast was held for retirees of the department. It's always great to get these guys together and talk about the past.

A public CPR class was conducted with 7 in attendance.

Thanks to generous donations from the following county fire departments (Argonia, Belle Plaine, Caldwell, Chiefs Association, Clearwater, Conway Springs, Corbin, Fire District 11, Mayfield, Mullaney, Oxford, South Haven, Wellington) for the purchase of a fit test machine in the

amount of \$9045. A fit test machine is used to test for the proper face piece fitting on a person wearing a self contained breathing apparatus. Several attempts were made to obtain a grant to replace a unit that was no longer operable or repairable.

A shift assisted with the chili cookoff judging at Wellington Health & Rehab.

Helped serve meals at the Senior Citizen Center.

All 18 of the twenty year old mattresses at the station were replaced.

Luke McComb is a high school intern this semester. Luke is presently taking the EMT class and will be attending Hutch or Cowley Community College in the fall.

Attended donuts with kids at Kennedy Elementary School.

Kindergartners from Lincoln Elementary came to the station and read for us and police department.

Assistant Chief Jeff Mraz donated a recliner which he won in a furniture manufacturer contest.

Responded with a Brush truck and two staff along with several other fire departments from Sumner and Sedgwick Counties to a grass fire in Beaver Oklahoma