



## CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION DEPARTMENT REPORT

**TO:** Matthew R. Schmitz, MPA - City Manager

**FROM:** Blake Hayward – Fire Chief

**DATE OF MEETING:** July 7, 2025

**ITEM TITLE:** Department Report – Fire Department

Independence Fire closed out the school year by participating in the Junior/Senior High School Career Fair. We try to use this event to get out to the schools and promote volunteering in public safety, as well as answer questions students have about public safety. Some students asked about Law Enforcement, Fire Service, EMS, and nursing. Although we don't work in all those fields, we were able to answer some questions they had and direct them to avenues that could assist them. We also had gear on hand for students to try on, flyers on the Cadet program, as well as our Crisis K9 Shakespeare, who was a big hit!



Independence Fire also participated in the Annual Careers on Wheels event at West Elementary. Crews took Engine 2 and Ladder 1 to the event and were able to show families the inside of the fire trucks as well as some of the equipment we carry and use. It was a perfect evening to be out with the public, and we had a lot of people stop by and visit.



Independence Fire participated in the Guns & Hoses Bowling tournament. This event helps donate money to the local schools for delinquent lunch balances. IPD Reserve Office Dave Wilson has been instrumental in setting this up and running with it each year. We are always happy to bowl and participate in such a great cause. This year, we raised over \$1500 for St John's, Independence, and East Buchanan lunch programs.



Dogs for Law Enforcement were in town, and IFD was asked to assist with river operations with several officers and their K9 partners. Officers boarded our boats, took a short boat ride upriver, before being deployed on a K9 decoy. This was great training for the officers and dogs, as well as members from IFD. We were able to get a lot of boat operation time for some newer members, as well as a good review for others. IFD was assisted by Iowa DNR officer Dakota Drish for the day as well.



The Independence Fire Rescue Association held its annual Golf Tournament on Father's Day Weekend. The tournament was another great success, selling out weeks before the event, and wasn't even able to be opened to the public as it was full so quickly. We are still waiting for final numbers, but last check, we had broken previous records for funds raised. This continues to be one of our best fundraisers for the year, and we are looking at a couple of changes we can make in the future to help make it even bigger and better!



City Manager Schmitz, along with our Station Committee, has met with Brian from Martin Gardner on several occasions over the past few months. With the decision to stay at our current location, we were able to move forward with design ideas. We discussed several layout options and worked with scale drawings to help give us a vision for where trucks and rooms could go. This was a great opportunity for us to experiment with some ideas and see what works and what doesn't. As we continue to move forward, we are excited to see how things work out.

We have started the process of designing a new Rescue Truck. This goes hand in hand with the station addition as we need to know the size for the future truck, as well as what we are currently limited to, with space in the current station. We had Eric with Reliant Fire Apparatus come in and discuss several options and share ideas. This is also a lengthy and detailed process that our department is working diligently on. This process can take anywhere from 6 to 12 months to design and research, with build times currently as long as 4 years. A couple of things we learned during our conversations with Eric are that they currently manufacture 2,000 fire trucks per year and have 10,000 orders placed, with varying levels of funding. Many towns used ARPA funds to purchase much-needed emergency equipment, resulting in a significant increase in orders for manufacturers over the years.

Our goal is to have a design in place so that when the time comes, we can send out proposals and get bids in a timely manner. Our rescue truck is a very important asset to our fleet and responds to nearly ever call we respond to. It carries specialized gear that we don't carry on our Engines or the Ladder Truck. This is partially due to limited space in our Engines and Ladder, along with the different responsibilities and assignments for the trucks on calls. As with the station addition, we are really taking our time and making sure we do our research in designing this piece of equipment, as most of our equipment serves our community for 20+ years.

