



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION DEPARTMENT REPORT

TO: Matthew R. Schmitz, MPA – City Manager

FROM: Blake Hayward – Fire Chief

DATE OF MEETING: September 2, 2025

ITEM TITLE: Department Report – Fire

The Independence Fire Department is excited to share that we continue to have great success in recruiting for our department, as well as the Cadet Firefighter program. We welcomed our newest Probationary Firefighter/EMT, Landen Hager, to our department in August. Landen comes to us with a degree in Fire Science, along with his EMT certification. We are excited to continue bringing on such great candidates, as well as qualified members. This helps reduce the cost of training new members and allows them to hit the ground running with our department. Along with Landen, we also have 3 Cadets in our program. These Cadets have really impressed us with their professionalism, willingness to learn, and motivation to help around the station and on calls. I'm also pleased by the members' willingness to take their time and show the Cadets different aspects of all the things there are to learn around the station, trucks, and equipment. Of course, the long-term goal is to help demonstrate the importance of volunteering for public safety, such as ambulance services and fire departments, whether it's for our department or a community where they will live after completing their schooling.

You may have seen in the newspaper or on Facebook that we are starting to receive some of the equipment for which we have received grants, such as our Fire Extinguisher Training Prop and Hurst Rescue Tools. We are fortunate to have received the grants we have so far and hope to continue our success in the coming years. This is extremely valuable for our department, as it helps us obtain much-needed tools and equipment without the burden of funding on local taxpayers.



As summer winds down, we continue to maintain our extensive training at IFD. We just finished a joint training course on Grain Bin Rescue. We had members from Winthrop & Hazleton Fire Departments join us as we brought in Professional Rescue Innovations (PRI) and their training prop. Members reviewed SOG/SOPs and submerged themselves in actual corn in a grain bin to demonstrate the pressures that exist, giving them a real feel for what a patient could be experiencing. This helped them become more familiar with how the rescues can go. Victims were also placed in various positions to challenge the rescue teams and to demonstrate different ways we can utilize our tools and equipment. We are very thankful for the training we received from PRI, with the assistance of the Fire Service Training Bureau. This valuable training is provided FREE by the State of Iowa. Grain Bin rescues are high-risk, low-frequency incidents, and having the chance to train with surrounding departments makes us all better prepared to protect our communities.



The Independence Fire Department is proud to announce that thanks to the generosity of our community, we raised \$5,320.32 during this year's MDA Boot Drive!

These funds go directly to support the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) and its mission of helping kids and families living with muscular dystrophy, ALS, and other neuromuscular diseases.

