



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION DEPARTMENT REPORT

TO: Matthew R. Schmitz, MPA – City Manager

FROM: Blake Hayward – Fire Chief

DATE OF MEETING: March 2, 2026

ITEM TITLE: Department Report – Fire

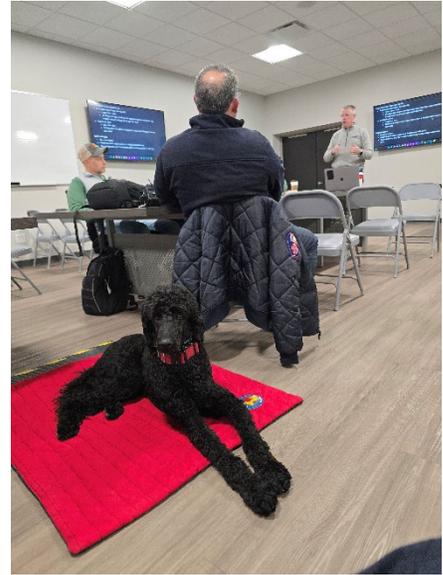
We had 5 members attend the 101st Iowa Fire School in Altoona last month. This was a great opportunity for our members to attend some great training classes on several topics, such as Electric Vehicle Fires, Recruiting & Retaining Firefighters, Motivational Speakers from across the Country, and a great chance to network with firefighters from across the state.



The Independence Fire Department recently took delivery of our Ballistic Personal Protective Equipment (BPPE). As you may recall, this was a grant we received from the Buchanan County Health Trust, which covered 100% of the cost of this lifesaving equipment. We originally wrote the grant for 8 vests, and due to some great discounts from our vendor, North American Rescue, we were able to actually get 10 vests for the cost of 8! These vests will be worn during high-risk calls where IFD members may be responding to assist. This could be a domestic, suicidal subject, law enforcement assists calls, etc. We have noticed an increase in these types of calls and wanted to make sure we provide the best protection for our members, including the new BPPV.



Several of us have started meetings with the RAGBRAI committee local chapter, as well as directors from RAGBRAI (Des Moines). So far, we have had 2 meetings and are starting to get people in place for all the different committees that are needed to help make this event a great success! A lot of hard work and planning is going on behind the scenes in hopes of making this event go smoothly, as well as a great success for our community! We have been fortunate enough to have our Crisis Canine Shakespeare at our meetings to help calm any stress or fears committee members may have.



Lastly Independence Fire Rescue Association held their annual Soup Supper at the Buchanan County Fairgrounds 4H building on February 17, 2026. We had great weather and an even better turnout!! We served over 400 people between drive-thru and inside seating. This was a great opportunity for us to connect with the community members as well as help raise funds for equipment for our department. The funds raised will be going towards a matching grant for EMS jump bags that will have emergency equipment in them to assist during RAGBRAI, as well as be issued to members who are medically trained to assist more quickly on medical calls within the community.



SOUP SUPPER FUNDRAISER

Supporting Life-Saving EMT Medical Backpacks



Prepared for RAGBRAI — Ready All Year

During RAGBRAI in July, Independence experiences increased emergency medical call volume. These EMT backpacks improve rapid response during high-demand events and strengthen daily emergency medical response throughout the city year-round. When seconds matter — organization and speed save lives.

Funds Raised Will Go Toward:

- Durable high-visibility EMT medical backpacks
- Advanced trauma supplies
- Airway management equipment
- AED support tools
- Updated emergency medical gear