



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION DEPARTMENT REPORT

TO: Matthew R. Schmitz, MPA - City Manager

FROM: Blake Hayward – Fire Chief

DATE OF MEETING: March 4, 2024

ITEM TITLE: Department Report – Fire Department

In February, Independence Fire met with several gear vendors to look over the different brands, styles, and options for our Dual-Purpose Gear. As you remember we were awarded a \$24,000 grant back in December along with a \$4,200 grant from the DNR back in October. This Dual-Purpose gear is lighter weight and can be used for approximately 80-90% of our calls. This will not fully replace our full bunker gear but will hopefully help extend its life and help with heat stress during the summer months. After meeting with all the vendors, the department will select and move forward with the purchase of gear for each member.

Our new pickup, Support 1 is back from having lights, sirens, and a radio installed in it down at Racom in Hiawatha. Support 1 has been in service for a couple of weeks but has already made a huge impact for us. Support 1 will be used for Investigations, Inspections, pulling equipment, hauling equipment, transportation to calls, training, meetings, etc. We have even used it as an elevated platform for a rescue call. We really appreciate the continued support from the Council allowing us to have great equipment to help us do our jobs.

Our remodeling of the upstairs bunk room is complete! We officially moved in a couple of weeks ago and really enjoy the separate space for sleeping quarters. Previously we had one space that acted as a living room, bedroom, dining room, etc. By remodeling this space, we have been able to make a separate Bunk Room as well as a separate Day Room. The Bunk Room is a private space for sleeping and has its own bathroom. The Day Room will be used as a living space as well as an office space to allow for reports, small meetings, etc.

Last month we hosted a joint training with Jesup Fire, Jesup Ambulance, AMR Ambulance, and students from our Firefighter 1 class out at the Jr. Sr. High School. Crews toured the campus and got a behind-the-scenes look at the entire building. This was well received not only by public safety agencies but by the school district as well. They welcomed the tour with open arms. This was a great refresher for our members and a great opportunity to have mutual aid departments get familiar with the layout as well. We plan on having a few more joint training courses this year on different topics and locations.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me anytime.

Blake Hayward – Fire Chief