



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION DEPARTMENT REPORT

TO: Matthew R. Schmitz, MPA - City Manager

FROM: Blake Hayward – Fire Chief

DATE OF MEETING: March 17th, 2025

ITEM TITLE: Department Report – Fire Department

The Independence Fire Department has experienced an unusually active winter season. Due to the persistent dry conditions from the fall and the lack of typical winter precipitation, we've responded to a significantly higher than average number of grass and field fires. This has prompted a county-wide burn ban, which has helped to reduce the number of incidents.

Despite the increased call volume, the department has remained committed to training and professional development. We participated in joint training hosted by the Buchanan County EMS Association, in conjunction with the State Fire Marshal's Office, focusing on the recognition of explosive devices for public safety agencies. This valuable training included members from local police, fire, and EMS departments. Additionally, six members attended the 100th Annual State Fire School in Altoona, where they had the opportunity to hear from prominent speakers such as Assistant Chief Dr. David Griffin of the Charleston Fire Department and Deputy Chief Frank Viscuso of Kearny, New Jersey, among others. Our members also participated in hands-on training at Station 42's training center.

We are fortunate to have a college intern with us for a couple of months. He has been an asset, creating quick reference guides for our apparatus, participating in Firefighter 1 classes, assisting with station tours, and contributing to various projects around the station. His technical skills have also been a welcome addition.

We recently welcomed a new member to the department, Alex Sattizahn. He was a high school intern with us years ago and is currently the Fire Chief of Rowley Fire Department as well. Alex and his wife live in town, and we are excited to have him join us. His experience and training will help grow our department as well as help with mutual aid responses to the south of town.

Blake Hayward
Fire Chief
Independence Fire Department