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Firefighters say city sacrificing safety

Sapulpa Firefighters ask citizens to attend the City Council Meeting at 7 p.m., Monday, Aug. 2, at City Hall to voice concerns about the proposed additional cuts to public safety.

By MEGAN McCANN
OPA INTERN FOR THE HERALD

Layoffs are putting a major strain on the Sapulpa Fire Department and leaving Sapulpans and their property in danger, SFD officials said.

The station, which already has five unfilled positions, will lose another four to layoffs on Aug. 19. The SFD needs at least 12 men to operate each station, four on each shift. One station is already being forced to operate with only nine firefighters.

Because the department can no longer staff the four stations after the layoffs, one of the stations will be forced to close. Fire Chief Kevin Lawson told his crew Wednesday that the stations would be consolidated on Aug. 1, according to Local 194 President David Taylor.

SFD medical officer Brady Redus, RN, said they expect Central Station to close.

"It would be easier for the outer sta-

tions to collapse in," Redus said. "The fire stations were placed where they were on purpose."

Relief Captain Chad Tanner said the problem for the SFD is that they need another fire station, not one less.

There have been two studies showing that Sapulpa needs a fifth fire station to properly serve the community, one study in the 1990s and the other in 2000, Tanner said. The International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) is currently conducting another study, but the results have not yet been determined.

"We assume it will say the same thing," Tanner said.

Some firefighters are saying response times within the run area that the closed station covers will be increased dramatically. Tanner said that because a fire's size doubles every minute, the three to four minute expected delay enables the fire to triple in size.

"[The fire] gets a head start on us," Tanner said. "There will be a lot more property damage."

And the slower response time is not just for fire services, emergency medical technicians will also be delayed.

"Time is the enemy," Redus said.

An additional three minute response time could give someone in cardiac arrest a one in 20 chance of survival as opposed to a one in five chance of survival, said Redus. The American Heart

Association recommends a maximum response time of four minutes.

The staff shortage leaves not only the public at risk, but also the firefighters themselves.

The National Fire Protection Agency standards suggest 15 firefighters work on a standard residential fire. SFD does not have the manpower to meet this safety recommendation. Tanner said that there will now be a maximum of nine firefighters on scene in the city if there is a fire, and only six in the county.

If there is a fire outside of the city, only two trucks can be sent. If there is no water plug nearby, one of the two trucks will have to shuttle water back and forth from the source to the fire. That would leave four firefighters on scene, based on current staffing. If two firefighters go into the structure, then two have to stay outside, ready to rescue the firefighters inside if something goes wrong. This means that only two firefighters will actually be fighting fire, Tanner said.

IAFF officials called this "too dangerous to even consider."

And with grass fire season approaching, firefighters worry how they will be able to fight the grass fires without enough staff.

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Photo by JOHN BROCK/Herald

KYLE MCMURRIAN, one of four Sapulpa firefighters receiving a 30-day notice of job termination, walked the streets and knocked on the doors of Sapulpa residents last week to gather signatures petitioning the City to reconsider layoffs due to budget cuts. Lori Fisher added her name to the petition along with over 800 others who signed on the first day.

Celebrations

Happy Birthday Saturday

Sierra Hughes, 6
Greg Beesley

Sunday

Johnny Willingham, 50
Austin Hight, 11

Micah Broadus, 5

Monday

Sue Beach

Happy Anniversary Saturday

Linda & Glen Nichols, 40 yrs

Sunday

Shane & Elizabeth Allen, 2yrs

Daily Scripture

In the simplest of terms -

Love One Another

John 13:34, 15:12, 15:17; Romans 13:8, 1 Thess. 4:9, 1 Peter 1:22, 1 John 3:23, 1 John 4:7, 11

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Monday's Weather

Low 76
High 102

HOT!



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It takes a lot of green to operate the golf course

By MEGAN McCANN
OPA INTERN FOR THE HERALD

The city expected to lose \$265,000 this year on the Sapulpa Municipal Golf Course, according to budget documents. Other documents released to the Herald show the city gave the golf course \$200,000 this year from the Sapulpa Municipal Account to keep it in business.

This information comes the week after four firefighters were notified they would be laid off because the city did not have the \$199,780, according to City Manager Tom DeArman, to pay their salaries and benefits.

The report, compiled by Jolen Boyd of the Sapulpa Fraternal Order of Police in late February, shows the city gave \$200,000 in 2010, \$150,000 in 2009, and \$118,000 in 2008 into the Sapulpa Municipal Fund to fund the golf course.

The estimated revenue for the golf course this year is \$406,050 compared to the estimated \$671,210 in expenditures. While other

departments were experiencing cuts, namely public safety departments, the golf course received minimal cuts to its budget.

The golf course cut advertising by \$5,500, cut the budget for safety supplies by \$130 and cut the fuel budget by \$800. They also cut the salary budget by \$15.

This year, the city council approved the golf course shutting down for three months of the year to cut costs, but salaries have remained the same for a staff that will now work one-fourth less than they did last year. Not only was the salary budget not adjusted to the new yearly schedule, but the golf course also had a \$9,720 increase in insurance budget and a \$5,258 increase in retirement budget.

The budget shows many items that were not adjusted to the actual amounts spent in the 2009-10 fiscal year, either. The staff had a \$1,000 increase in overtime budget than the estimated 2009-10 overtime amounts and the course will

SEE GOLF COURSE, PAGE 6



County Drug Court graduates 10

By JOHN BROCK
HERALD STAFF WRITER

Democratic nominee for governor Jari Askins visited Judge Richard Woolery's packed courtroom to personally congratulate 10 successful participants of the Creek County Drug Court on Thursday.

Askins said she had a personal satisfaction with the program she was on the ground floor of.

"My interest in Drug Court goes back to my time as a judge in Stephens County. There was no community sentencing, no planned program to help with drug defendants," Askins said. "We sent drug defendants to prison and we (as a society) thought they would get treatment. There were no resources in communities and judges really believed that prison was where re-hab belonged."

Askins said when she made it to the State Senate in the late 90's, that she partnered with Senator Dick Wilkerson and worked with district attorneys, defense attorneys and judges to craft a program for the overall design of Drug Court around the state.

A photographer accompanying Askins was imaging a smiling Askins shaking the hand of each of the 10 graduates as she presented every one with a framed plaque.

The press photographers had given prior consent not to photograph the faces of any of the Drug Court participants or graduates while in the courtroom.

Askins with a full schedule for the day and left the courthouse with an entourage of campaign staff and security.

Larry Fugate of Human Skills and Resources spoke prior to Askins' arrival on her contribution to the concept of Drug Court.

"She was in from the beginning on the writing of Drug Court legislation," Fugate said.

He also spoke about the courtroom proceedings about to transpire. "We'll have about 100 on the docket today. We've graduated people from the program this past January, April and this one. There are phases to the program and on phase III we require that these folks get their GED [general equivalency diploma]."



Photo by JOHN BROCK/Herald

Judge Richard Woolery presides over drug court while gubernatorial candidate Jari Askins, one of the original initiators of the program, speaks to the first graduating class.

The positive effect of the Drug Court was revealed by a relative of one of those in the program.

"This has helped [my sibling] tremendously, it really has," said GeorgeAnn Mathis. "It has helped our whole family."

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