

# ON SCENE



FOR AND ABOUT THE EMPLOYEES OF THE JACKSONVILLE FIRE AND RESCUE DEPARTMENT

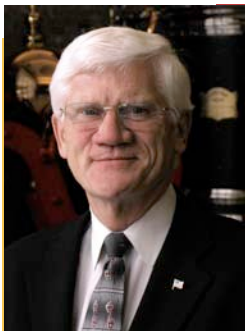
January 2010



WJXT Channel 4's Diane Cho interviews JFRD's Tom Francis following a second alarm.

## Going on Record: How Public Information Works





## DEAR FELLOW EMPLOYEE

City Council's Public Health and Safety Committee has taken interest in how JFRD conducts fire safety inspections and how our department can reduce overtime.

Earlier this month, JFRD's senior leadership gave a presentation to the PHS Committee on inspections at the request of Council Member Michael Corrigan. We also presented at PHS in response to Council Member John Crescimbeni's suggestion of using part-time fire-

fighters to reduce overtime costs.

Division Chief Anthony Roseberry briefed the committee on fire safety inspections, explaining the history, current process and fee structure. His presentation included details about increasing the frequency of inspections using a limited number of fire engine companies.

While the details are still being finalized, we will now establish a pilot project in April which assigns four fire engine companies to conduct courtesy or in-service inspections on smaller businesses at no charge to those businesses. The engine companies will soon be identified.

These pilot project inspections are not a substitute for a licensed inspector's authority and experience, but they will mirror a Fire Prevention inspection. Their purpose is identifying possible risks and violations that need attention from Prevention as well as providing an opportunity for public education and fire pre-planning. We will evaluate the pilot program after six months.

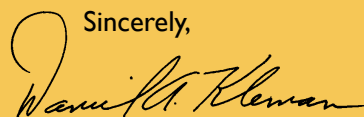
Tri-Data's 2006 report indicates that "Involving fire [engine] companies in conducting code enforcement inspections is a very cost effective approach to increase the proportion of the existing building stock inspected, to increase the frequency with which inspections are done and to increase the fire company visibility and participation in neighborhood-related prevention and education efforts."

During PHS Committee, we responded to Mr. Crescimbeni's part-time firefighter concept, which would involve training and placing into service firefighters who would work only one 24-hour shift per week, either on a Friday, Saturday or Sunday. These days are when the majority of overtime to achieve minimum staffing occurs.

The presentation was also an opportunity to express my numerous concerns about using part-time firefighters. Their skill levels would not be as proficient as a full-timer. The nature of staffing would transfer them often, so they wouldn't have the advantage of training with one crew. Retaining them could also be a challenge since full-time employment is most desirable. Training them would cost the same as full-timers.

I also shared with the committee my belief that a better idea for reducing overtime is establishing a weekend shift using existing full-time staff.

In recent years, JFRD has analyzed overtime trends and implemented a number of overtime cost-savings measures in response to City Hall's direction. It is a challenge that will likely continue as we proceed through a difficult financial period.

Sincerely,  


Dan Kleman  
Director



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Story ideas or suggestions?

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The first W-3 of 2010 occurred just 15 minutes into the New Year. Ladder 4's Eng. Karl Lewis cuts into the side of the vacant and heavily-boarded structure in the 1200 block of Rushing Street.



Tom Francis, senior public information officer, briefs the media following a second alarm fire at an apartment complex on University Boulevard in early November. Francis has been JFRD's PIO for more than eight years.

# Meet the Press. TV, Radio, too.

The media contact JFRD nearly every-day and night.

Their interest in public safety is fueled by a variety of sources: radio scanners, tips from viewers, or reporters being in the right place as an incident is unfolding. No matter the source, the media are determined to report on emergencies, death and destruction, and they rely upon JFRD's Public Information Office to do their job.

"We can't make it to every call, so the input from the JFRD PIO is essential to

helping us make decisions about whether an event is newsworthy," said WJXT Channel 4's Frank Powers.

As WJXT's assignments manager, Powers said he routinely monitors at least five scanners tuned to fire and police activity in Duval and surrounding counties. It's a common practice at all media outlets to cover breaking news.

Sometimes, the media simply wants confirmation that JFRD has transported a victim. Other times, they need all the details that come with a third-alarm

structure fire or they want to interview a firefighter that saved somebody a few tricks earlier.

"We are engaged in a continuous narrative of around-the-clock chapters describing JFRD's interaction and involvement with our city," said **Tom Francis**, JFRD's senior public information officer. "We assist the media in establishing priorities and the allocation of their limited resources to cover newsworthy events in the arena of both emergency response and public safety."

*See next page*



# Public Information

From previous page

The duty of responding to media pages is staffed 24/7. Francis has the spokesperson duty every Monday morning and continuing through midday Thursday. The four-day shift of Thursday afternoon into early Monday – a PIO’s weekend – is rotated weekly among Francis, Training Academy Lieutenants **Jill McElwee** and **Todd Smith** and **John Bracey**, public affairs officer.

“I call the weekend duty ‘My 92 hours of continuous responsibility,’” said Bracey. “What I value about each shift is how every incident I go to is a learning experience about JFRD’s operations.”

Francis and Bracey both have a background in news. Francis was a military journalist before joining JFRD, and Bracey was a *Times-Union* reporter. Francis got the PIO job the day after 9/11. Before former Fire Chief Ray Alfred selected him, Francis worked alongside now-retired “Captain Video” Rob Sorensen for a dozen years. As JFRD’s Video Services Section, the team produced training videos, public service announcements and documented emergency response. That’s now the primary responsibility of Lt. **Mike Peery**, who also has functioned as a JFRD spokesperson or relief PIO.



Lt. Todd Smith



Lt. Jill McElwee



John Bracey

Tom Francis is JFRD’s designated spokesperson every Monday through Thursday morning. But the Thursday through Sunday “weekend spokesperson” duty is shared by Francis and JFRD relief public information officers: Lt. Todd Smith, Lt. Jill McElwee and John Bracey, who each work one weekend shift per month.

During his eight-year PIO stint, Francis has responded to thousands and thousands of media inquiries from his office, on scene, at lunch, dinner, home or wherever he is while on duty. When he’s on scene, Francis, or any JFRD spokesperson, is also responsible for staging the media in a safe location, away from the hot zone. Sometimes, it takes 30, 45 minutes or more to glean all the essential facts from the incident commander before giving a statement to the media. Francis’ spoken words have appeared as front-page headlines, and his accounts of newsworthy emergency incidents have been broadcast on local, national and international television.

“Being on television is just simply part of the job, perhaps the least important of all, as electronic media will arbitrarily decide to what extent the spokesperson for the story will be featured,” Francis said. “The main objective in each interview, however, remains the reduction of public uncertainty by having the spokesperson exercise judicious control over content ambiguity. It’s the only way to achieve an unabridged, accurate account of the department’s activities and reduce the distortion inherently built into that media filter.”

Public information is more than reacting to media calls about emergencies; it’s also proactive. Francis and Bracey pitch feature stories to local media and fire service-related publications. JFRD’s HazMat team and the Emergency Preparedness Division have recently received coverage as has the department’s outpouring of support for Firefighter Sean Seng whose 4-year-old son is battling cancer.

Public information is also a driving force behind JFRD news conferences and numerous special events. Francis organizes promotional ceremonies, fire station openings, as well as the 9/11 and Fallen Firefighter memorial services every September and October. He also writes and has framed every



During a special program about hazardous materials and fire safety, Action News reporter John O’Connor interviews Fire 4’s Chief Jack Griggs. The program was broadcast last spring. Its planning and production were coordinated through JFRD’s Public Information Office.



**Lt. Mike Peery** has worked as a relief PIO and has provided local TV stations with footage of incidents that the media couldn't cover due to limited resources or that otherwise wasn't available because the media cannot access hot zones.

certificate distributed during JFRD's Annual Firefighter Awards. Bracey photographs the majority of events.

Francis and Bracey also manage content contained in the JFRD section of the City of Jacksonville's Web site – [www.coj.net](http://www.coj.net). Francis posts a monthly narrative of the major incidents, and Bracey updates photos and other information like posting JFRD's annual Community Report and Fire Study Report. Bracey recently built a Web page to promote JFRD's Speakers Bureau. The page is generating numerous requests from civic groups and businesses wanting to learn more about JFRD.

The Public Information Office also fulfills public records requests, which can be as simple as copying a financial document for a reporter or as complicated as gathering numerous records, photos and video related to a large-scale event like the Berkman Plaza Garage collapse. Francis also fields numerous outside requests for video footage of JFRD's more unusual emergency responses for use in television documentaries that have appeared on Discovery or The History Channel, for example. Sometimes, it gets more involved, like when a show's producer wants to interview firefighters about a particular incident that happened years ago. Francis connects the members of JFRD to those shows' production crews.

Bracey became interested in JFRD three years ago while working at City Hall and producing the *ON SCENE* newsletter. In addition to newspaper experience, Bracey has worked in public relations for 15 years. When he transferred to JFRD

two years ago, he had an eye-opening experience.

"I was on the job for three weeks when the Berkman Garage collapsed, then T2 exploded less than two weeks later," he said. "I had seen some interesting events as a reporter, but nothing like I've witnessed since joining JFRD."

Though he has media relations experience, Bracey said there is a distinct learning curve to PIO in the fire service.

"It's not like promoting a product or event and smiling for the camera," Bracey said. "I'm representing 1,200 people who risk their lives for others, and I have the task of quickly painting a clear picture of their actions in the face of adversity. Discussing a life saved, the loss of life or injuries with media also has a specific set of rules. You have to understand privacy laws, and Tom Francis' expertise in that area has been a valuable crash course for me. I'm also thankful for all the uniformed personnel who take time to explain either operational details while on scene or how an event unfolded."

And Francis says he's thankful for the weekend spokespersons who serve in the relief rotation.

"PIO duty demands a constant availability, and that can be stressful," he said. "We've got a good team that shoulders this responsibility with the necessary level of expertise, and I appreciate that these people have stepped forward to do so."



Photo by Dan Harris Photoart

**TV interviews aren't just for PIOs.** Services Division Chief Larry Peterson discusses the benefits of thermal imaging cameras with local TV stations following a JFRD news conference to announce the corporate donation of the equipment to the department.



# A Man of Many Talents

Early in his 34-year JFRD career, Capt. **Murray Kramer** took an interesting side road – a whole bunch of them.

He traveled the country and parts of Canada for nine months with a group of diverse students, singers and dancers known as “Up with People.” The inspirational group visited, learned about and performed in 70 cities for a variety of audiences whose members included President Gerald Ford and Queen Elizabeth. Today, the non-profit, study-abroad program continues in its mission of motivating people through music to meet the needs of their communities.

Kramer, who retired from JFRD last month, laughs when asked what his particular talent was in the group, claiming that “I had no talent.” But those who know him today say he’s expert in building relationships and serving others.

“I can always depend on him,” said co-worker Lt. **Broderick Edwards**. “Murray and I are like brothers.”

Edwards and Murray have worked closely as part of JFRD Special Events Section, which Kramer managed for the last decade. But when Edwards’ wife was hospitalized a few years ago, Kramer was immediate in his support through numerous visits and cooking meals. And when Kramer was deployed to Iraq as an Army Reservist in 2006, Edwards escorted Kramer’s family to Emmitsburg, Md. for Firefighter Karl “Klif” Kramer’s inclusion in the National Fallen Firefighter Memorial. Kramer’s eldest son died in 2005, a few weeks before he would have graduated from the Training Academy.

Edwards will now oversee JFRD’s Special Events. He will work closely with the city’s Office of Special Events, which includes some of Kramer’s biggest fans.

“Captain Kramer has been an integral part of our partnership with JFRD,” said Theresa O’Donnell Price, the city’s chief of the Office of Special Events. “He has worked diligently to ensure that safety aspects are assessed, properly staffed



**Capt. Murray Kramer retired last month after 34 years with JFRD. He and his wife Linda are both Lt. Colonels in the United States Army Reserves. Kramer has been deployed twice.**

and efficiently managed during city events.”

“Special Events wouldn’t be where it is today without Murray pushing it,” said Rescue 103’s Battalion Chief **Ray Wade**, who has known Kramer for 20 years.

Wade described how Kramer’s diligence in pursuing the city ordinance to govern how special events are permitted and structured refined JFRD’s role at events. City Council approved the ordinance in 2004. It also led to a documentation process for each event which facilitates improvement for future events.

Over the years, Kramer has worn many hats and uniforms. Following his two decades riding rescue units, he was assigned to quality management at Headquarters for a couple of years. Then he took on the role of health and safety officer for the last 12 years. Meanwhile, Kramer’s been a member of the SWAT medic and USAR teams as well as an officer in the U.S. Army Reserves since 1980.

Kramer’s been deployed in the Middle East twice. Both he and his wife Linda are Lt. Colonels in the Reserves and registered nurses. Kramer’s time in Iraq and the Persian Gulf exposed him to a

level of violence that he said scared him to death. It was his training from JFRD and the Army that shoved fear aside and allowed him to function.

“The scenery’s different. The mechanism of injury’s different, but you’re still taking care of people,” Kramer said. “If you’re not scared, then you don’t respect what you’re doing. You have to respect the danger by using caution.”

His retirement plans include teaching at Florida State College at Jacksonville, working with the Wounded Warrior Project and spending more time with his sons, Matthew (16) and Sean (13). He also wants to continue his roles with SWAT and USAR on a reserve basis.

Last month, during Kramer’s retirement gathering at Headquarters, the health and safety officer in him came out when he urged everyone to remember that the fire service isn’t just about taking care of the public but also taking care of firefighters who become injured. He expanded on that a few days later in terms of JFRD officers.

“The guys have to remember they aren’t just making decisions for themselves. They’re making decisions for the people under them.”

# Changing of the Chiefs



Photo by Dist. Chief Steve Gerbert

**Station 10 C-Shift (L-R):** Firefighter Terrence Simmons, Eng. Charles Dumas, Lt. Clay Hendricks, Capt. Ernest Glover, Battalion Chief John Jarrett, Lt. Tim Culpepper, Eng. Sean Lambert, Eng. Chick DeMedici and Firefighter Eric Weigand.

Back in 1975, **John Jarrett** had just completed four years in the Air Force. Suddenly, his days of the wild blue yonder became a lot of wonder – about his next career choice.

At the same time, **Doug Pilinko** was close to earning his bachelor's degree in biology. He wanted to be a doctor.

Family members and life's twists and turns ultimately steered both men to JFRD. Jarrett in the '70s; Pilinko in the '80s. Fire 5's Battalion Chief Jarrett retired last month, and Chief Pilinko has been selected by Director **Dan Kleman** as Jarrett's successor.

"It's been a fulfilling career," said Jarrett. "For somebody that didn't know what they wanted to do, I sure was led in the right direction."

Jarrett's brother, Don, and his father-in-law, Frank Carter, were both on the job and influenced his decision.

Pilinko can relate, though it took a few career choices and his wife's suggestion before he found his direction. At age 15, he moved out to attend boarding school. He stayed in Union Springs, NY and supported himself by winding industrial-sized brooms. It takes coordination and strong hands to corral hundreds of those straw

whiskers into a cluster fit for sweeping.

"I could wind two-and-a-half dozen to three dozen per hour," he said. "My hands were always dry. All of us had calluses."



**Battalion 2's Chief  
Doug Pilinko**

It was worth it. At a time when the average hourly wage for a teenager hovered around \$1, Pilinko was earning close to \$5. By the time he graduated from the

Union Springs Academy, he had money to spare. The young man who loved to learn followed that passion to California's Loma Linda University in Riverside. Though he studied to become a doctor, family priorities sent him down another road, which led to a teaching opportunity in Jacksonville. The flight to Florida was fine; the interview was unusual.

"They told me to wear a suit on the plane because we'd have somewhere to go," Pilinko said. "It turned out to be a funeral. I kept meeting all these people

from the school during the funeral. Then I asked the school president about when I would interview and who I'd be meeting. He told me, 'You've already met them. You're the man. You've got the job.'"

Pilinko said he was able to motivate "C-D students into A-B students" by tutoring them after school in algebra and chemistry. He was also motivated to earn more money and took a side job as a night manager at a gas station. His students would often show up there for tutoring.

"They'd come inside and their parents would stay parked outside," he said.

After three years at the Jacksonville Junior Academy, he got closer to health care, taking a public relations job at St. Vincent's hospital. In a few years, he was weighing his options. He'd applied to work for the U.S. Postal Service, where his wife Trish was working.

"She told me I probably wouldn't like the post office," Pilinko said. "She suggested I apply to the fire department. Her brother was on the job."

Nearly 30 years later, Trish is still with the Postal Service, having promoted to upper management. And having reached the highest level in the field, Pilinko is glad he took her advice.



## Mindful Eating — Think About It

Nutrition affects your health, energy and sometimes your mood. The right combination of vitamins, minerals, amino acids, fatty acids and fiber helps a person reach ideal health. People also need the right balance of proteins, carbohydrates and fats to reduce the risk of chronic diseases.

Good nutrition can also help your mood. If your body has the nourishment it needs, your brain can function more effectively. Food affects different people in different ways. Excessive amounts of sugar, caffeine, alcohol, or chocolate may be more likely to contribute to mood disturbance. Vegetables, fruits, oil-rich fish and whole grains may be more likely to help with stability.

Eating habits that benefit most people include three meals per day (or more than three smaller nutritious meals spaced evenly throughout the day) at approximately the same times of the day. This keeps your blood sugar from fluctuating too much. It's also important to get enough vitamins and minerals in your diet. Adequate levels of B-vitamins (including folic acid), vitamin C and zinc are considered to help stabilize mood.

Omega-3 fatty acids have been found to improve heart health and research continues to determine if they can also have an effect on mood. They can be found in fish, soybeans, flaxseed, walnuts, and wheat germ or in supplement form.

Crash diets that promise quick weight loss can be very tempting, especially when coping with stress and/or medication-related weight gain. But completely eliminating any one thing, even fat, from your diet can be detrimental to your mood and overall health.

It may be helpful to keep a food journal. Record everything you eat and drink, your physical activities and your moods.

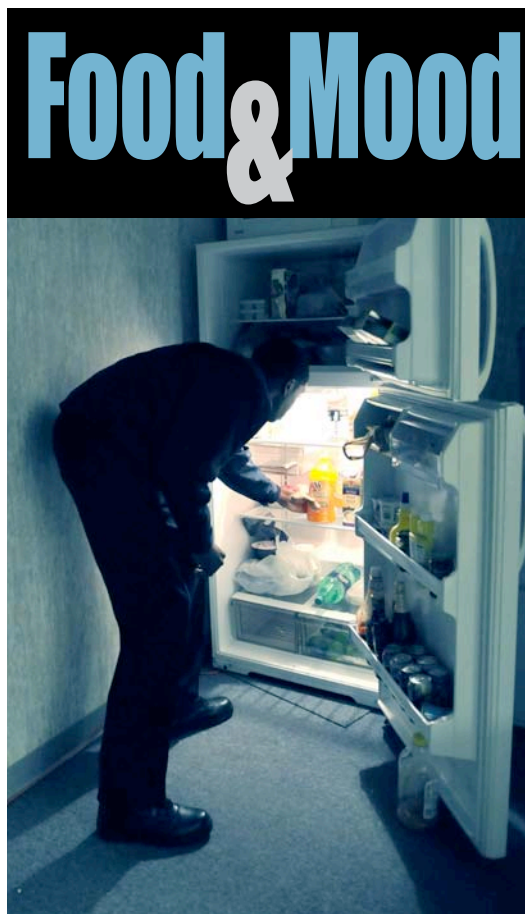
Determine when your stress is most likely to lead to cravings. Anticipate your cravings and have healthy, naturally sweet food such as fruit or yogurt available.

If you notice that certain foods seem to cause mood swings, try to avoid them for a week and see if you notice a change.

What you drink is just as important as what you eat. Too much caffeine can cause anxiety, nervousness and mood swings. Alcohol can worsen depression, interfere with sleep and make treatment less effective.

Eating disorders can co-occur with mood disorders. An eating disorder is a separate illness that requires a separate treatment. If you experience drastic changes in weight and tend to severely restrict your diet or binge and purge, talk to your doctor about treatment for a possible eating disorder.

If you have frequent cravings, distract yourself by exercising (even a short walk around the block), cleaning your home or some other activity. Here are a few more ideas to be more mindful about your eating habits.



### WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Talk to your health care provider about food and mood.
- Take a minute to think about what you eat and how it makes you feel.
- Be aware of the snacks you eat.
- Learn all you can about your illness and how nutrition can help.
- Keep a food journal.



# Congratulations Recruit Class 309



**Class Leader — James Hardwick**  
**Highest Score — Reese Ainsworth**  
**Best Performance — Shawn Fallon**  
**Most Improved — Youry Calixte**

Reese D. Ainsworth	E-18-B	Latisha D. Guinn	E-14-B
Brandon L. Bailey	E-18-C	James M. Hardwick	E-24-B
Brannon L. Blom	E-17-A	Jennifer L. Helsabeck	E-12-A
Steven A. Bowens	E-37-C	Russell V. Ivanov	E-154-C
Jason T. Broemer	E-31-C	Baron Jones	E-44-C
Maurice C. Brown	E-28-C	Jamie T. Jordan	L-28-B
David A. Burke	E-55-C	Willie S. King	L-10-B
Evan G. Burns	E-25-A	Joshua D. McCall	E-18-A
Youry Calixte	E-12-C	Lashawn D. Mitchell	E-152-A
Christopher J. Clark	E-36-A	Philip P. Overby	E-27-B
Revis B. Coltrane	E-4-B	Jean F. Paravisini	L-28-A
James T. Costner, Jr.	E-42-C	Justin M. Pierce	E-44-A
Ivan D. Cruz Cintron	E-12-B	Christopher S. Romanello	E-11-B
Shawn P. Fallon	TL-21-A	Gregory T. Savage, II	E-34-B
Jimmy D. Ford	E-26-A	Brandon J. Shindler	E-51-A
Clark R. Gladden	L-10-C	Elliot V. Watkins	E-13-B

# January's Promotions



**BATTALION CHIEF – SUPPRESSION**  
Douglas J. Pilinko F-5-C

**DISTRICT CHIEF - SUPPRESSION**  
Andrew L. White F-7-A

**CAPTAIN - SUPPRESSION**  
David S. Hart F-1-B

**CAPTAIN - RESCUE**  
Chester J. Clements R-7-A  
Herbie E. Douglas R-22-A  
Bryan S. MacDonald R-30-B

**ENGINEER - RESCUE**  
Clint P. Bridier R-30-C  
Charles L. Brown R-15-B  
Justin J. Morris R-22-C



# From the Field... Evening of January 9



JFRD's biggest fire in January occurred after 9 p.m. on Jan. 9 at a three-story apartment complex off of Hodges Boulevard adjacent to the Windsor Parke community. The second alarm fire punched through the structure's roof and took more than two hours to bring under control. It ultimately affected 20 units in one building and displaced dozens of people. No injuries were reported.



# From the Field... January 3, 2:20 p.m.



Ladder 4's Firefighter Jamie Stone, with help from L4's Firefighter Terrance Holmes, goes after hot spots in the attic of a house on West 9th Street. The homeowner was gone when the fire started about 1:30 p.m. on Jan. 3. More than half of the house was damaged.

## CALL VOLUMES DECEMBER 2009

### ENGINES (Top 20)

E28	.361
E19	.324
E30	.320
E31	.310
E22	.287
E1	.281
E36	.278
E18	.276
E10	.274
E21	.270
E32	.270
E51	.270
E152	.269
E25	.244
E34	.243
E9	.241
E150	.237
E24	.235
E44	.233
E4	.232

### RESCUES (Top 20)

R1	.339
R30	.328
R4	.324

R34	.323
R36	.316
R31	.314
R22	.312
R20	.306
R2	.304
R28	.304
R19	.302
R7	.298
R5	.294
R24	.292
R13	.285
R17	.280
R32	.278
R15	.274
R21	.260
R51	.260

### LADDERS (Top 10)

L30	.174
L28	.163
TL21	.145
L44	.144
L10	.135
L31	.127
L1	.111

L32	.107
L18	.105
L34	.102

### TANKERS (Top 5)

T28	.58
T52	.58
T42	.49
T29	.45
T44	.42

### BRUSH TRUCK (Top 5)

BR50	.80
BR42	.71
BR32	.67
BR35	.57
BR43	.52

### FIELD CHIEFS

F3	.154
R104	.90
F2	.78
F4	.74
F9	.74
F7	.71
R103	.71

F6	.69
R105	.68
F5	.65
F8	.60
F1	.58

### MARINE UNITS

M3	.6
M1	.1

### PLANS REVIEW

Plans Reviewed	.291
Inspections	.262

### SAFETY/INVESTIGATION

SF1	.89
SF2	.71
P7	.8
P10	.6

### MONTHLY TOTALS

EMS	.7,266
FIRE	.1,484
NON EMR	.257

**Total: .9,037**