

District Appoints Full Time Fire Chief

The Johnson County Fire Protection District Board of Directors is pleased to announce the appointment of Larry W. Jennings to the position of full time Fire Chief. Chief Jennings started his volunteer career with the Johnson County Fire Department in June 1976 and was an active member when the Department transitioned into the newly formed Johnson County Fire Protection District with the swearing in of the first Board of Directors in January 1979. He served as a fire fighter until 1988 when he was promoted to the rank of Assistant Fire Chief. In August 1996 he was named the interim Chief where he served until being named as Chief of the District in January 1997 filling the volunteer position. Chief Jennings is being appointed as the first full time salaried Fire Chief of the District and will start his full time duties on June 18, 2007.

In addition to fire fighting duties, Chief Jennings oversees the daily operations of the nine District stations which provide protection to over 26,000 residents in an area of approximately 525 square miles in the eastern portion of the County, not including the City of Knob Noster or Warrensburg, with 36 various fire apparatus and approximately 140 personnel. He advises the Board of Directors on fire related, financial and personnel issues.

Chief Jennings has been involved in the overall planning, budget formation and operations of the District. Under his leadership the District successfully received voter approval for a tax levy increase providing additional operational funds in 2001. Funds allotted were utilized to purchase 6 new industry compliant fire engines and 6 new fire tankers. An additional 3 tankers were later purchased and the fleet of wild land fire vehicles has been nearly all replaced with more modern equipment. In April 2007 a bond initiative was approved by voters which will allow additional apparatus and safety equipment to be purchased and will allow for the renovation of three structures and construction of two other structures. He also participated in the process of securing a federal grant which was utilized to replace or upgrade the outdated personal protective equipment utilized by the District fire fighter's in 2005. In August 2006 he oversaw the transition as the District began providing extrication (rescue) services within its coverage area.

Chief Jennings has initiated the development of written policies and guidelines to provide direction to the fire fighting staff in their daily operations. He implemented regular meetings with the entire officer staff of the District to solicit input from the operational people of the District and to disseminate information. Under his leadership a promotional testing and evaluation process has been developed and utilized. In 1999 he was instrumental in the development of a Junior Fire Fighting program providing an opportunity for youth aged 14-17 to participate in the Fire Service and learn essential skills for application in a future fire service career. The program has maintained members from its inception and remains active today.

Chief Jennings graduated from Warrensburg High School in 1977 and received a bachelor's degree from the University of Central Missouri (UCM) in 1981. He has worked previously for UCM's Department of Public Safety, the Missouri State Fire Marshal and for the past fifteen years as an investigator for American Family Insurance Special Investigations Unit.

Chief Jennings participates in Local Emergency Planning Commission meetings, Central Dispatch Advisory Committee (serving 2 years as Chairperson), is a member of an appointed Fire Service Advisory Committee to the Missouri Department of Public Safety, is a member of the International Association of Fire Chiefs, International Association of Arson Investigators, Professional Fire & Fraud Investigators Association and maintains certification as a Fire Investigator through the State of Missouri.

For more information about the District, visit their website at www.jcfpd.net.