

Norfolk Insider

City of Norfolk, NE

www.ci.norfolk.ne.us

March 1, 2012

“Trenton Howard – Prevention Manager and Assistant Fire Chief”



Besides working as a firefighter and paramedic, Trenton Howard has farmed, ranched, worked in construction, as a part time sheriff's deputy and a crew chief on a cargo jet. Now he is the Prevention Manager and Assistant Fire Chief for the City of Norfolk.

He took over the position when the previous manager, Scott Cordes, became the City of Norfolk fire chief in October, 2011. Cordes replaced Shane Weidner who is now the City Administrator for Norfolk.

Howard entered the US Air Force after graduating from Elkhorn Valley High School in 1993. While in active duty for two and a half years in Texas, Oklahoma, and Delaware and in the Iowa Air National Guard for four years, he received training in fire protection and served as a crew chief on a C-5 cargo jet.

Howard came back to Nebraska to farm and ranch near Meadow Grove and still

does so as much as he can besides working part time with his dad, Merret, and brother, Travis, with Howard Construction based in Meadow Grove.

For the last thirteen years Howard has served as a fulltime firefighter/paramedic and then as the Fire Prevention Officer for Norfolk Fire Department.

All of Howard's experience with heavy equipment, electrical and mechanical work and emergency training is an asset as his current job demands an understanding of a lot of trades.

“It takes a massive amount of skill sets to work in prevention. I'm constantly learning. I am thankful that I work with all of our knowledgeable prevention staff and could not do it without each and every one of them working as hard as they do. It has to be a team effort,” Howard said.

As part of his responsibility as prevention manager, Howard makes sure that safety codes are followed throughout the city and its two mile jurisdiction. Those codes include safety rules pertaining to mechanical equipment, air

conditioning, heating, ventilation, electrical work, fire safety, construction, plumbing and health/sanitary conditions, zoning, flood plain requirements and storm water.

“My job is not to write the rules but to enforce them. Following the safety codes saves lives and property. Even one small fire or incident, because of a violation of a building code, can disrupt lives and have an impact on a community,” Howard said.

He pointed out that insurance rates are based upon the safety rating of a city. As losses go up across an area, everyone’s insurance rates can go up.

Besides enforcing the code in Norfolk, the city also contracts property maintenance code enforcement to Madison, Meadow Grove, Winside, Stanton, Wayne and Battle Creek.

Howard said he is getting more and more familiar with zoning rules, an aspect of safety that he hadn’t had a lot of experience with.

“It’s easier to help someone on the front end rather than tell them after they’re done that it has to be changed. We encourage people to bring in their sketches and plans so we can spot any problems now that they might have. We want them to have a successful project,” Howard said.

Howard, his wife, Stephenie, have two children, ages six and three.

“Enforcing code is for our safety and our children’s safety. That’s what it’s all about. We want to be safe in a commercial environment too. We take it for granted that when we walk into a store or business that we can safely enter and safely exit. It’s easy to ignore until a disaster happens,” Howard said.

If you have questions, concerns, or for answers about safety codes contact the City of Norfolk Prevention Bureau at 402-844-2060. For permits and safety information, go to <http://www.ci.norfolk.ne.us/fire/PreventionBureau.htm>.