## Norfolk Insider

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## "Firefighter Retires after nearly 40 Years"



Randy Vesely remembers the night Kings Ballroom burned down and when Norfolk pretty much ended at 25<sup>th</sup> Street. As a firefighter with the City of Norfolk since 1976, Vesely has seen a lot of events and changes in Norfolk through the years.

"Back then we mostly had on-the-job training. I answered an ad, was hired and went on duty. There's much more intensive training required now," Vesely said.

"Our call load was less but we had way more fires. More smoke detectors in homes and businesses and educating kids in schools about fire safety has lessened the incidence of fires," he added.

Vesely graduated from Verdigre High School and then received an Associates of Arts Degree in Broadcasting from Northeast Community College. He was working in the recreation department at the Norfolk Regional Center before he was hired as a Norfolk firefighter/paramedic.

"Most enjoyable about the job is that I got to help people and that's what being a firefighter is all about. I've seen way too many vehicle accidents, motorcycle accidents and fatalities through the years. We make more ambulance calls than fire calls," Vesely said.

For nearly 40 years, he's worked rotating shifts-24 hours on and

48 hours off- so that alone will take some getting used to in his retirement.

"I plan to eat a lot less cold food and miss a lot less birthday parties and Christmas gatherings," Vesely said.

He also plans to spend more time with his grandchildren. His wife, Susan, and he have two children – Melissa, married to Shawn Seevers and Katie, married to Brock Ferguson- all of Norfolk. Each daughter has three children and both of their husbands serve in the Norfolk Fire Reserves.

A new firefighter has already been hired and trained to replaced Vesely. There are currently 31 firefighters at the Norfolk Fire Division and 30 in the Reserve Division.