Greetings to all Norfolk Fire Division Reserve Firefighters.

After meeting with the morning and evening reserves in November, it was agreed that we can do a much better job communicating about various things that are happening within the division. This may include notice of new hires, either full of part time, notice of internal promotions, notice of upcoming training events, mutual aid meetings, or other meetings of interest, and any other general information about Norfolk Fire & Rescue that often is circulated within the full time staff, but often does not get passed to the reserve staff, at least in a timely enough manner. So as a result of that discussion that occurred in November, we are now going to offer a routine newsletter to share that information. We talked about doing this on a monthly basis, and for starters, that is what we are going to do. If we find that there are periods of time where little new information is available, we may reserve the right to do this every other month or quarterly if need be. But for now, we will plan on sending out an informational email to all reserve staff every month, with the exception of this first one which will serve as the November/December combined edition. The newsletter can also be found on the fire division’s web site- http://www.ci.norfolk.ne.us/fire/fire_reserves.htm. Since we have an officer’s meeting every month on the first Wednesday of the month, it was decided that as soon as possible after those officers meetings, we will formulate any policy decisions or significant news that came from those meetings to also be included in the email notice to all the reserve staff. So starting in January we will work toward getting these updates out by the 2nd week of every month as time allows as we go forward. The goal is simple- improve communication to and from all members of the fire division and share important pieces of information in a timely, organized manner.

3. City of Norfolk Christmas party is Dec. 13th at the City Auditorium. Respond by 11-30-11.
5. December reserve training dates are Dec. 6th & Dec. 20th.
6. Training class coming up on Incident Safety Officer on January 7th and 8th at the Lifelong Learning Center.
7. Notes from officers meeting on Nov. 2nd.

   a. It was agreed that all reserve staff are welcome and encouraged to respond to the station on Level II callbacks immediately upon notice of the Level II. Reserves DO NOT need to wait for a Level III. Full time staff will still be expected to respond and cover the Level II, which in most cases is in anticipation of another EMS run; and dispatch will not cancel request for Level II until appropriate number of full time staff have confirmed their response. The hope it to get more help in the building to assist additional calls that may come in, help support EMS calls as appropriate, and cover station until engaged units come back into service. This can begin immediately.

b. Due to the departure of several key members of the Elkhorn Valley Dive team, decreased interest from some members, time constraints, financial constraints, etc., the dive team is effectively disbanded and non-operational. Staff have been working with dive teams in Yankton, Sioux City, and Columbus to derive a plan for response coverage for the Norfolk area.

c. Firefighter/Paramedic Ryan Goodman is a National Certified Crossfit Fitness Trainer, and as such is in the process of implementing his program into Norfolk Fire. This is an intense program that will challenge all the staff to improve their overall wellness. If reserve staff have the desire and the ability to come in the station to observe this program and want it implemented it into their own personal work out program, you are welcome to do so. The weight and exercise equipment at both stations is open and available to all reserve staff to use as schedules allow. If you have an interest in the Crossfit program, please see Ryan, he is doing an outstanding job.
d. Norfolk Fire is in the process of negotiating a new contract with the Norfolk Rural Fire Protection District. The current contract is 12 years old and expires in June of 2012. As part of this contract, Norfolk Fire is anticipating the purchase of a new rural pumper to replace Engine 4, and a quick-response grass rig type unit to replace Engine 3. Interested reserve staff that would like to have input in the specifications on these new trucks are welcome to serve on the committee. Interested members should contact Chief Cordes or Asst. Chief Dooley.

e. Due to federal law changes, the FCC (Federal Communications Commission) has ordered the narrow banding of all radio communication frequencies, which will force major changes in how Norfolk Fire pages our staff in the next year, and perhaps sooner. The Motorola alpha-numeric pagers that most reserve staff carry will not operate once this new law is in effect, as the devices cannot be modified pursuant to the law. In anticipation of this change, Norfolk Fire is exploring many options to notify all staff of emergencies. One thing in the works that may be available to all staff in the future is the ability to receive alpha-numeric page on your cell phone as a text message. Right now those are limited only to Verizon and Alltel phone carriers. We believe we can purchase the modem and software that will make us able to page all phones regardless of who the carrier is. ATT, U.S. Cellular, Viaero, and others that cannot work today, will work in the future once we make these changes. If this were to occur, your phone could replace the need to carry a 2nd device for fire notification. More information to come on this subject. Any questions, contact Chief Cordes.

This is our first attempt at trying to get more information to all the staff. Each of you deserve to know what is going on with the organization, especially if it has a direct impact on you. If anyone receiving this message has information they desire to share, please offer that information up that we can distribute, we can all learn from each other as we move forward.

At this time, I want to personally thank all of the reserve staff for your outstanding contribution to the department and to the citizens of Norfolk and the surrounding area. The reserve staff are held in very high regard, and are clearly a huge part of any successes that come to Norfolk Fire. Please keep up the good work, thank you again for your service, and best wishes for the Holiday season.

One final reminder. At the Christmas party on December 2nd at the Knights of Columbus, we are going to honor Past Fire Chief Weidner with several items and words of appreciation. If you can find the time to make this event, your presence would be greatly appreciated. Even if you cannot make the social hour and meal, coming just to witness his ceremony and pay your respects to Shane would be great. Best guess is that would occur sometime around 8:00 p.m. Please stay safe at home, work and play.

Chief Cordes