

Fired Up for Payson

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Vince Palandri, Firefighter, Payson Fire Department

FIRES AND FURLOUGHS

The Payson Fire Department along with all of the various Town of Payson departments is experiencing changes to operations due to budgetary restrictions. Hopefully the following will answer your questions.

The Fire Department has been instructed to furlough firefighters and administrative staff. What will that mean to you and your family?

The Mission of the Payson Fire Department

"To minimize the loss of life and property damage resulting from fire, medical emergencies and other disasters through prevention, education, fire suppression, emergency medical services and emergency preparedness. This will be accomplished in the most cost effective manner with maximum utilization of resources never sacrificing the safety of our members"

It means, above all the mission will be carried out. The services you have come to expect are intact. The highest level of professionalism within the Department will continue.

Where the change will be most recognized will be in the amount of personnel arriving at incidents. Twenty one days of the month we will recognize a reduction in people on the truck due to furloughs. Then we still have the issue of people being sick or trying to take their vacations, which will provide for a few more vacancies on a daily basis. We will take care of business, and sacrifice "a lot to save a lot", but we will provide for and maintain the safety of our personnel above all, as in compliance with our mission statement.

Why did the Town and the Department decide on furloughs instead of layoffs?

The Payson Fire Department has invested a tremendous amount of resource into the training and education of its ranks. These companies know Payson and have the fire fighting and emergency medical experience necessary when you or your families need it the most. They are friends, community members and neighbors, people you recognize and know by name; people you trust with everything you own and have.

It would not be good for any of us to waste this valuable resource. Furloughs allow us to continue with out interruption when the hard times ease, providing the town with the type of service it requires. Layoffs create extreme hardships for employees and there families. While furloughs create hardships of their own, they eventually go away.

Some cities and towns are invoking "brown outs" with their fire stations. Brown outs are an option or need if inadequate staffing is available. This leaves some areas short of service and or creates extended response times from other stations. While brown outs are not out of the equation, it is the last of our options.

We will do our part in balancing the budget as best we can while *"never sacrificing the safety of our members"*

What can you do to help?

“An ounce of prevention”.

It is in these times we need to be extra cautious around the home and work place. Smoking, cooking, and heating all come to mind.

Installing smoke alarms if needed, checking and or replacing the batteries in existing units.

Seeing your family doctor when you first feel the symptoms and ill effects rather than waiting until you need 9-1-1.

Making your home address clearly visible as to not delay response times any further than short handed crews would want or need.

Understanding that during times of minimal staffing, calls for service may be triaged or screened for importance. Life safety items would take priority over assisting with non-life threatening issues.

Until next time stay **‘Fired Up’** about prevention in all you do.