

THE SECOND ALARM

BRINGING VALUABLE RESOURCES & NEWS
ONE ALARM AT A TIME

JUNE 2016

THE SECOND ALARM



VALDOSTA FIRE
DEPARTMENT



A Department Without Limits

Editor:
Sgt. S A Miller

BIRTHDAYS:

BC RONALD SKRINE 06/03

FF BLAKE DAUGHERTY 06/08

SGT BLAKE WHITEHEAD 06/14

FF STANLEY DICKSON, JR 06/15

SGT JOE BRUHL 06/19

ALISA COLLINS 06/26

LT JEFFREY TALLEY 06/28

LT BARRY RICHARDSON 06/30

POINTS OF INTEREST

- Submissions to the newsletter should occur before the 20th of each month
- Feel free to submit photos with your submissions
- Have a strong opinion about a topic of concern to our fire department? Feel free to submit a piece for review and possible publication in the newsletter

CHIEF'S TOPIC OF THE MONTH

We received eight resignations in one week. One might ask, what do we do now? The only response is, "we keep moving forward." In the words of Joel Osteen, "You have to come to your closed doors before you get to your open doors... What if you knew you had to go through 32 closed doors before you got to your open door? Well, then you'd come to closed door number eight and you'd think, 'Great, I got another one out of the way'... Keep moving forward."

Some might see losing a large number of employees to another Fire Department as a negative reflection of our current Fire Administration; however, others might see it at face value as a positive reflection of the investment plan the department has implemented. A CFO asked a CEO, "What happens if we invest

in developing our people and they leave us?" The CEO responded by saying, "what happens if we don't and they stay!" For the past two years the department has taken vast steps building a program designed to invest in our employees. We are now offering Georgia Fire Academy and National Fire Academy classes at our own training facilities. We had over 12 employees accepted into the National Fire Academy and implemented a professional development/mentoring program. Our Battalion Chiefs are leading by example by taking more training classes at the Georgia and National Fire Academies.

Our organizational future depends on how we invest and empower our employees to succeed. The day we quit learning is the day we stag-



Freddie D. Broome, Fire Chief

nate our growth. Sorry, but stagnation is not an option. We will continue to move forward as a "united front" as we excel at being "A Department without Limits." We will never know our limits if we are afraid of pushing ourselves to our limits. Thank you for all of your support and commitment to our City, Department, Citizens and Community. Keep moving forward!!!

WELCOME TO THE FAMILY



Welcome to the world, Isabella Faith Stevick! Born to FF Chris and wife, Eden Stevick, on the 3rd of May at 0909hrs, Isabella joins her sister, Kylie Moore, as the newest member of the Valdosta Fire Department Family.

Have something for the newsletter? Feel free to submit articles or photos to Sgt. Miller at:

smiller@valdostacity.com

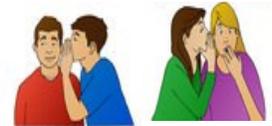
ATTA BOY—DONE DID GOOD



Pictured (from left): AC Boutwell, Mrs Mercer, Sgt Mercer, FF Cummings, LT Shoemake, Chief Broome, Mayor Gayle

Congratulations to City of Valdosta Employees of the Month for May 2016: Lt. Tyler Shoemake, Sgt. Robert Mercer, and FF Lloyd Cummings. Exhibiting the traits of the "VFD Way", C-Shift's Engine 6 crew significantly assisted EMS with saving a life during a Lowndes High School sporting event. Great work guys!

Cindy Hasty sends her thanks to the Valdosta Fire Department and Valdosta Police Department for our assistance during Valdosta State University's graduation ceremony and the ensuing fireworks. She states, "...there were probably some headaches along the way for your departments, but the end results were spectacular!! Thank you again for your part in making such a wonderful event that will be treasured by many."



RUMOR MILL—HAPPENINGS AND GOINGS-ON?

City employees will lose their longevity pay if the city approves the new compensation and pay plan? **False.** City employees will continue to receive longevity. The Consultants recommended eliminating the program; however, the city decided to keep the longevity incentive. The new salary encompasses the current longevity being received by eligible city employees. Under the enhanced longevity program, employees will receive a 3% lump sum longevity payment every fifth year, when eligible.

Due to the recent resignations, the department is forced to reduce the required certifications and educational requirements for eligibility to participate in the promotional process? **False.** The department is

reviewing the current promotional SOGs. However, the only certification under consideration of being eliminated is the Haz-Mat Technician. The department will first consider reducing the years in-service requirement for internal personnel, thereby, reducing the necessity to open positions externally and reducing certification/educational requirements.

The VFD education incentive is going away if the compensation and pay plan is adopted? **False.** The VFD education incentive will not go away. Employees will continue to receive their \$2,000 or \$1,000 incentive in addition to their new salaries, based on the level of higher education obtained.

EMPOWERING BUGLES—NOTES ON LEADERSHIP

8 Things Exceptional Employees Hate (and Toxic Employees Love to Do) By Jeff Haden

The very worst employees don't actually cause the biggest problems. Whether totally incompetent or unbelievably lazy, they're easy to spot -- so, although it's never fun to fire anyone, at least you know there's a problem and you can let that person go.

The biggest problems are caused by employees who appear to be doing a decent job but who in fact are slowly ruining the morale, attitude, and performance of other employees -- and in the process, ruining your business as well.

What do they do?

1. They love to have the meeting after the meeting.

You have a meeting. Issues are raised. Concerns are shared. Decisions are made. Everyone in attendance fully support those deci-

sions. Things are going to happen.

Then someone holds the "meeting after the meeting." Now she talks about issues she didn't share in the actual meeting. Now he disagrees with the decisions made in the actual meeting.

And sometimes those people even say to their teams, "Look, I think this is a terrible idea, but we've been told to do it, so I guess we need to give it a shot." That means what was going to happen never will.

Waiting until after a meeting to say "I'm not going to support that" is like saying "I'll agree to anything ... but that doesn't mean I'll actually do it. I'll even work against it."

2. They love to say, "That's not my job."

The smaller the company, the more important it is that employees think on their feet, adapt quickly to shifting priorities, and do what-

EMPOWERING BUGLES—CONTINUED

ever it takes, regardless of role or position, to get things done.

Even if that means a manager has to help load a truck or a machinist needs to clean up a solvent spill; or the accounting staff needs to hit the shop floor to help complete a rush order; or a CEO needs to man a customer service line during a product crisis. (You get the idea.)

Any task an employee is asked to do – as long as it isn't unethical, immoral, or illegal, and it's "below" his or her current position – is a task an employee should be willing to do. (Great employees notice problems and jump in without being asked.)

Saying "It's not my job" says "I care only about me." That attitude quickly destroys overall performance because it quickly turns what might have been a cohesive team into a dysfunctional group of individuals.

3. They love to act like they've already paid their dues.

An employee did great things last year, last month, or even yesterday. You're appreciative. You're grateful.

Still, today is a new day. Dues are never paid in full. Dues get paid. The only real measure of any employee's value is the tangible contribution he or she makes on a daily basis.

Saying "I've paid my dues" is like saying "I no longer need to work as hard." And suddenly, before you know it, other employees start to feel they've earned the right to coast too.

4. They love to think their experience is all that matters.

Experience is definitely important, but experience that doesn't translate into better skills, better performance, and greater achievement is worthless. Experience that just "is" is a waste.

How many years you've put in pales in comparison with how many things you've done.

Saying "I have more experience" is like saying "I don't need to justify my decisions or actions." Experience (or position) should never win an argument. Wisdom, logic, and judgment should always win – regardless of in whom those qualities are found.

5. They love to gossip.

Before a meeting, some of us were talking about supervisors in another department when our new boss looked up and said, "Stop. From now on we will never say anything bad about anyone unless they are actually in the room. Period."

Until then, I never thought of gossip as a part of a company's culture – gossip just was. We all did it. And it sucked – especially because being the focus of gossip sucked. (And in time, I realized people who gossip suck too.)

If an employee has talked to more than one person about something Mark is doing, wouldn't everyone be better off if he stepped up and actually talked to Mark about it? And if it's "not his place" to talk to Mark, it's definitely not his place to talk about Mark.

Saying "Did you hear what he did?" is like saying "I have nothing better to do than talk about other people."

Not only do employees who create a culture of gossip waste time better spent on productive conversations, but they cause other peo-

ple to respect their co-workers a little less—and anything that diminishes the dignity or respect of any employee should never be tolerated.

6. They love to use peer pressure to hold other employees back.

A new employee works hard. She works long hours. She's hitting targets and exceeding expectations. She rocks. And she eventually hears, from a more "experienced" employee, "You're working too hard and making the rest of us look bad."

Where comparisons are concerned, a great employee doesn't compare herself with others – she compares herself with herself. She wants to "win" that comparison by improving and doing better today than she did yesterday.

Poor employees don't want to do more; they want others to do less. They don't want to win. They just want others to make sure they don't lose.

Saying, "You're working too hard," is like saying, "No one should work hard because I don't want to work hard." And pretty soon very few people do – and the ones who keep trying get shunned for a quality you need every employee to possess.

7. They love to grab the glory.

OK, maybe he did do nearly all the work. Maybe he did overcome almost every obstacle. Maybe, without him, that high-performing team would have been anything but.

Probably not. Nothing important is ever accomplished alone, even if some people love to act like it is.

A good employee and good team player shares the glory. He credits others. He praises. He appreciates. He lets others shine. That's especially true for an employee in a leadership position—he celebrates the accomplishments of others secure in the knowledge that their success reflects well on him, too.

Saying "I did all the work" or "It was all my idea" is like saying "The world revolves around me, and I need everyone to know it." And even if other people don't adopt the same philosophy, they resent having to fight for recognition that is rightfully theirs.

8. And they love to throw others under the bus.

A vendor complains. A customer feels shortchanged. A co-worker gets mad. No matter what has happened, it's someone else's fault.

Sometimes, whatever the issue and regardless of who is actually at fault, some people step in and take the hit. They willingly accept the criticism or abuse, because they know they can handle it (and they know that maybe the person actually at fault cannot).

Few acts are more selfless than taking the undeserved hit. And few acts better cement a relationship. Few acts are more selfish than saying "It wasn't me," especially when, at least in part, it was.

Saying "You'll have to talk to Martha" is like saying "We're not all in this together." At the best companies, everyone is in it together.

Anyone who isn't needs to go.

Excerpted from: <http://www.inc.com/jeff-haden/8-things-exceptional-employees-hate-and-toxic-employees-love-to-do.html>