



# The Fire Wire

Cherokee County Office of Fire & Emergency Services

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## Ann and Jim Segers Recognized at Safe Kids Luncheon

*Story on page 8*



## The Fire Wire

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Cherokee County Office of Fire  
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**Tim Prather**

*Fire Chief*

**Tim Cavender**

*Editor*

**Eddie Robinson**

*Assistant Fire Chief*

**Shane West**

*Field Operations Chief*

**Danny West**

*Division Chief*

**Dean Floyd**

*Division Chief*

**Chad Arp**

*Fire Marshal*

**Jill Mabley, M.D.,FACEP**

*Medical Director*

**Cherokee County Office of  
Fire and Emergency Services**

150 Chattin Drive

Canton, GA 30115

Phone: [678] 493-4000

Fax: [678] 493-4034

[www.cherokeecountyfire.org](http://www.cherokeecountyfire.org)

Office Hours: Monday through Friday  
8:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.

Closed Saturday, Sunday and Holidays

**ABOUT THE COVER:** Cherokee County Fire Marshal, Chad Arp, recognizes Ann and Jim Segers for their commitment to Safe Kids Cherokee.

**Photo and story on  
page 8**

## Outdoor Burn Ban Starts Now in Effect



The burn ban went into effect of May 1st and will go until September 30th.

The Environmental Protection Division (EPD) ban on open burning resumes May 1 of each year. The latest release from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Environmental Protection Division, Air Protection Branch lists 54 counties that are subject to following the annual burn ban.

According to Cherokee County Fire Marshal, Chad Arp, "The burning ban is an important part of the state's plan to improve air quality during smog season, which runs from May 1 through September 30 of each year."

Citizens and businesses in the affected 54 counties are not allowed to burn yard and land-clearing debris during the burn ban season. Some actions, such as campfires and agricultural activities are exempt.

For more information about alternatives to burning such as composting and chipping, please call the Department of Community Affairs at 404-679-4940. Debris can also be hauled to a commercial processing/grinding/composting operation or to an inert or construction and demolition landfill. For a list of landfills in your area, please call EPD's Solid Waste Management Program at 404-362-2692.

Cherokee County Citizens can get more information on the open burning ban by calling the EPD Mountain District Office: 770-387-4900 or EPD's Air Protection Branch at 404-363-7000.

# Cherokee County Fire Chief, Tim Prather, Receives Certification



*GAFC President Charles Wasdin presents Cherokee County Fire Chief, Tim Prather, with his Fire Chief Certification.*

obtained their certifications through the GAFC and we will encourage, and at some point, require all candidates for Chief Officer to obtain.”

The Georgia Association of Fire Chief’s (GAFC) held its 2019 Spring Executive Session during the first week of April in Savannah, Georgia. The event offered several executive training/education sessions along with a couple of days where vendors showcased their fire service products.

Members of our executive staff attended the conference that included Fire Chief Tim Prather, Asst. Fire Chief Eddie Robinson, Division Chief Shane West and Special Operations Chief Darrel Mitchell.

On Tuesday, April 2nd, GAFC President Charles Wasdin presented Cherokee County Fire Chief, Tim Prather, the Georgia Fire Chief Certification for his continued commitment to education and training in Georgia fire service leadership and management. The certification process involves a cumulative scoring process that includes meeting pre-requisites, service time and higher education credits. “I am honored to receive the GAFC Fire Chief certification,” says Chief Prather. “I believe this program was started about 4 years ago. The GAFC recognized the need to establish this program and to my knowledge, this is the only program within the state to credential our fire service leaders. Although I’m near the end of my career, I believe it is necessary to lead by example. To date, we now have four of our Chief Officers that have participated and obtained their certifications through the GAFC and we will encourage, and at some point, require all candidates



*Also attending the event with Chief Prather were Assistant Fire Chief, Eddie Robinson (left) and Field Operations Chief, Shane West (right).*

## Paramedic Program Becomes Accredited



*Attending the announcement of the paramedic accreditation were (left to right), Assistant Fire Chief, Eddie Robinson, Sgt. Jonathan Gottfried, Sgt. Mark Alexander, Sgt. Nate Sullivan, Capt. Sarah Love, Lt. Tony Simmons, Sgt. Dwayne Barbee, Lt. Chris Ginn, Capt. Scott Gwinn, Lt. Jason Williams, Clinical Coordinator, Kristi Wigington, Training Chief, Scott Deal, EMS Program Director, Randy Pierson, Medical Director, Dr. Jill Mabley, EMS Chief, Danny West and Fire Chief, Tim Prather.*

During the regular meeting of the Cherokee County Board of Commissioners, it was announced that the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education on Programs (CAAHEP) voted on Friday, March 15, 2019, to award "Initial Accreditation" to the Emergency Medical Services-Paramedic Training Program at Cherokee County Fire & Emergency Services.

The Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs is the largest programmatic accreditor of the health sciences professions. In collaboration with its Committees on Accreditation, CAAHEP reviews and accredits over 2100 individual education programs in 30 health science occupations. CAAHEP accredited programs are assessed on an

ongoing basis to assure that they meet the Standards and Guidelines of each profession.

"This is a process that has taken over three years to obtain," says Fire Chief Tim Prather. In August 2015, Instructor Randy Pierson was hired as a Paramedic Program Director to initiate an "in house" Paramedic Training Program. This was a decision to not only maintain a good pool of paramedics to overcome attrition, but to gain more paramedics for the department. "It is a long range goal to eventually have our engine companies provide Advance Life Support (ALS). Currently, we have a good number of paramedics to provide relief for ambulances. We are very busy service and we strive to ensure that no one paramedic with ride an ambulance consecutive shifts and reach "burn out". We will need a greater number of paramedics to commit to Engine ALS delivery on all apparatus. But, with our numbers increasing, there are days that some of our engines are ALS capable. So, we are getting closer each year," added Prather.

Randy Pierson, the EMS Program Director, said that the process is detailed but puts in place a system where the fire department can continue to meet national standards and at the same time look for opportunities to improve the program. "We've been extremely fortunate to have the support from our department's leadership and the Board of Commissioners. The training staff, adjuncts and field preceptors have all bought into the program and what it means for growth and staffing as well as the quality of care we can offer," added Pierson.

"The value of national accreditation of our paramedic training program will be realized by the citizens of Cherokee County, including me, for decades to come. Compassion and medical skills are what these med-

**(continued on page 5)**

## Paramedic Program Becomes Accredited (continued)

ics deliver,” stated Dr. Jill Mabley, the agency’s Medical Director.

Pierson gave praise to Dr. Jill Mabley and EMS Chief Danny West who have been huge supporters of the program as well. According to Pierson, “Both of these individuals have been actively involved in the program and provided valuable input and resources. It can’t be overemphasized, what a huge effort by so many individuals on so many different levels this process took.”

Congratulations to the EMS Leadership of Medical Director, Dr. Jill Mabley, Paramedic Program Director Randy Pierson and EMS Chief Danny West as well as all the Paramedic Instructors, Training Chief Scott Deal, Battalion Chief Shannon Gibbs, Capt. Scott Gwinn, Sgt. Dwayne Barbee and Clinical Coordinator, Kristi Wigington. Also, many thanks to all the adjuncts Capt. Clay Cloud, Capt. Sarah Love, Sgt. Nate Sullivan, Sgt. Mark Alexander, Lt. Jason Williams, Lt. Tony Simmons, Lt. Chris Ginn, Lt. Matt Richter, Lt. Kevin Davis, Sgt. Joel Scrianko, Sgt. Jon Gottfried, Sgt. Jon Montague and Matt Bagley. Cherokee County Fire & Emergency Services is now an Accredited Paramedic Training Center until the next review in 2024!!

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## Fire Department Presents Check to Goshen Valley Boys Ranch

Cherokee County Fire and Emergency presented a check on March 27th for \$5,364 to Zach Blend, Chief Executive Officer, at the Goshen Valley Boys Ranch located in the Salacoa area of Cherokee County. The fire department donated their winnings from the recent Guns and Hoses 5K Run that was held on February 23rd at Hobgood Park.

The fire department had 437 runners sign up for the Hoses team, while the sheriff’s office (Guns) had 239 runners. Cherokee County Fire & Emergency Services has been donating their winnings to Goshen Valley since 2014. Since then, the fire department has donated a total of \$25,580 to support the boys ranch.

Goshen Valley Boys Ranch provides hope and a family-model home for boys who do not have either. This was the 13th annual Guns and Hoses Run that was presented by the Cherokee County Recreation and Parks Agency.

The fire department wishes to thank everyone who came out and participated in the run to help the Goshen Valley Boys Ranch.



*Cherokee County Fire Chief, Tim Prather (left), presents the check to Zach Blend, Chief Executive Officer of the Goshen Valley Boys Ranch, as others look on.*

# Cherokee County Fire Donates Fire Safety House to Gilmer County



*Cherokee County Fire Chief, Tim Prather (left), and Gilmer County Public Safety Director, Keith Kucera, sign the paperwork to transfer the Fire Safety House to Gilmer County Fire Department.*

Cherokee County Fire & Emergency Services donated the department's Fire Safety House earlier this month to the Gilmer County Fire Department.

When Cherokee County consolidated with Canton Fire Department, the fire department was able to obtain the city's Fire Safety House. According to Chad Arp, Cherokee County Fire Marshal and former Fire Educator, "Canton's Fire Safety House was a newer model than the one the county had, plus, it had a new style design for class seating and it's all on one level, too. It has been repaired, painted and new graphic lettering has been applied."

Once the changes and repairs were complete, Cherokee County Fire Chief, Tim Prather, began searching for a new home for the old Fire Safety House. Prather contacted the Fire Chief of Gilmer County and asked if they had a Fire Safety House and quickly learned that they didn't have one, but they had been trying to acquire one without any luck. On February 19th of this year, the Cherokee County Board of Commissioners approved the transfer and the old Fire Safety House was delivered to the Gilmer County Fire Department on March 13th.

On March 21st, Chief Prather received this email from Keith Kucera, Director of Gilmer County Department of Public Safety, "On behalf of the Gilmer County Board of Commissioners and Gilmer County Public Safety, we would like to extend our sincerest gratitude for your generous donation of the Fire Safety Training Trailer. Our Fire/Life Safety team here at Gilmer County has already used this wonderful gift at Ellijay Primary School which saw over 50 first graders pass through and learn about home safety. With several more requests for educational opportunities in the que, this new facet of our Life Safety Educators would not be possible without your thoughtfulness and generosity.



## Three Cherokee County Firefighters Recognized for Completing Training Courses

Three Cherokee County firefighters were recognized in March at Fire Headquarters for their completion of the Georgia Flames and Georgia Smoke Divers courses that were recently held.

Cherokee County Fire Chief, Tim Prather, presented the firefighters with a “Letter of Commendation” for completing the course. Justin Dobson and Jacob Gunter were recognized for completing the Flames course and Nathan Pelletier was recognized for being a new Smoke Diver.



*Jacob Gunter (right) completes Flames course.*



*Justin Dobson (right) is also recognized for completing Flames course.*



*Nathan Pelletier (left) becomes the latest Smoke Diver.*

safe but stressful realistic conditions. The course is continually updated to stay on the leading edge of firefighting technology and firefighter safety while the core mission remains the same as developed in 1978.

Chief Prather presented the firefighters with a Letter of Commendation and congratulated all the firefighters for a job “well done.”

Counting the firefighters who were recognized this week, Cherokee County Fire & Emergency Services now has 25 who have completed the Flames training and 43 firefighters have completed the Smoke Divers course. “We have certain qualifications that our firefighters have to meet in order for them to go through these courses,” said Chief Prather. “Once they have met the requirements, we assign them a mentor to help prepare them for the course. Because of this, we have seen this to be a plus in helping our firefighters complete the Flames and Smoke Divers courses,” he added.

The Flames course is three days of training that will test an individual firefighter's personal limitations when working in high stress situations with limited recuperation periods. It is also designed to test the individual's ability to function as part of a team. Teambuilding is a focal point of the course. The successful fire company must function as a team.

The Georgia Smoke Diver course is a six-day, 60 hour program designed for the experienced firefighter who desires realistic training in self-survival, firefighter rescue, advanced search & rescue, thermal imaging, emergency procedures, teamwork, discipline, team leadership, situational awareness and decision making as well as how to function within the elements of the Incident Command System.

The program condenses and replicates the extreme demands that may be placed on firefighters at any incident. Emphasis is placed on the day-to-day challenges firefighters face at structure fires, multiple-alarm fires and multiple fires within a single shift. These same principles can be applied to the performance of duties at natural disasters, catastrophic events and acts of terrorism. Its design allows each candidate to understand and manage their physical and mental limitations under

## Safe Kids Hold Annual Appreciation Luncheon



*Fire Marshal, Chad Arp, presents to proclamation to Ann and Jim Segers.*

Safe Kids Cherokee held their annual Appreciation Luncheon on March 20th at the Cherokee County Administrative Offices at The Bluffs in Canton.

Chad Arp, Cherokee County Fire Marshal and Lead Advisor for Safe Kids Cherokee, welcomed everyone to the event and, after a prayer, a delicious lunch was served.

After lunch, Arp invited the attendees to watch a slide show showing all of the accomplishments that were made through the Safe Kids Cherokee organization during 2018.

After the video, Chad introduced Kathi O'Brien, as the event's featured speaker. Kathi has shared her story with thousands of high school students during the annual Ghost Out events that are held at area high schools in the county each year. On Dec 5<sup>th</sup>, 2008, Kathi's son, Tyler, was involved in an automobile accident that took his life. According to Kathi, Tyler broke every rule in the book regarding driving safe. At the time of his accident, he was speeding, not wearing a seat belt and texting. Kathi shares her horrific ordeal with students hoping they will take driving an automobile seriously and play it safe while on the highways.

After the speech, Tim Cavender, PIO for Cherokee County Fire & Emergency Services came forward and spoke about the importance of volunteerism. He also announced that the members of Safe Kids Cherokee have proposed a new award honoring a member(s) for their service to the organization. The first recipients of the award were Ann and Jim Segers of Woodstock, Georgia. Ann and Jim have been involved with Safe Kids Cherokee since its inception and previously worked with Cherokee County Fire & Emergency Service for numerous years before retirement. After they retired, they continued to support Safe Kids Cherokee with their events and activities. It also was

announced that the award would be named in their honor and will be known as the Ann and Jim Segers Volunteer of the Year award.

Safe Kids Worldwide is a nonprofit organization working to help families and communities keep kids safe from injuries. Most people are surprised to learn preventable injuries are the #1 killer of kids in the United States.

Cherokee County Fire & Emergency Services is the Lead Agency for Safe



*The guest speaker for the event was Kathi Obrien who lost her son in an automobile accident in 2005.*

