



# HOT TOPICS

Volume 9, Issue 11

Delray Beach Fire-Rescue Department

May 2010

## Station 1 Open House Saturday, May 8th

### Mission Statement

The Delray Beach Fire-Rescue Department is resolved to provide the highest quality of emergency services to residents and visitors of our community; effectively mitigating all types of incidents threatening life or property; educating the public in specific aspects of health and safety to assure a superior quality of life.

### Vision Statement

“Our vision is to provide Fire-Rescue, Emergency Medical and Special Operations Services at the highest level of excellence, professionalism, and commitment to the community. Proud of our past and embracing our future, the members of Delray Beach Fire-Rescue will work as an effective and integrated team, dedicated to continuous improvement and maintaining a positive environment. The Department will be a model to others and the pride of the community”.



*“Preparing for the worst.....Delivering the best”*

## From the Desk of Cecelia Shade

### Cross-Training 101: The Mack Truck Theory

How often do you stop to ask yourself what are the chances of losing Employee X and Employee Y from the office? Whether you think about it or not, reality is that eventually we all exit the organization.

As Administrative Assistant Gloria Marsh proudly announced her impending retirement next year, January 2011, I began to reflect on the vast amount of knowledge she possesses and decided that now is the time to begin the cross-training process to prepare for her “big-day”.

Gloria has coined the phrases, “If I die” and “If I get hit by a bus”; someone needs to always know where to look for the work she has completed. Once I accepted the idea that she is definitely leaving us one day, we began to put the plan into motion to secure a back-up for this vital role Mrs. Marsh plays on a daily basis.

An employee’s departure can be particularly painful for the organization if that individual plays a key role in the day to day operations. During my Masters program, we had to take a course in model-netics, which are “models in action”. The course consisted of 151 models that function as guides to thought and action. These models represent key concepts that have wide application for both organizations and individuals. These models translate these concepts into practical, operational tools. Now, each model has a precise meaning. Once the models are learned, they enable managers to organize and control their accumulated knowledge and experience, and then apply them to the practice of management in real time.

The model I chose to discuss today is the Mack Truck Theory. The basic principle of this theory is that the services of anyone can be gone at anytime. Their departure could be planned like retirement, sudden like death or sickness, or unexpected like just because I don’t want to work anymore.

As managers, the plan is to be prepared by cross-training, succession planning, and through job documentation. Not all employee roles are indispensable; however, it is still crucial to prepare for the loss of each and every employee.

By taking an incremental approach and devising an action plan to cross-train and document our most critical roles first, followed by other roles there after.

We develop someone who can step into a vacated position that is able to take over, with job documentation in hand, which helps take the sting out of losing a key contributor unexpectedly. Every manager must implement a contingency plan to offset the loss of an employee hit by a Mack truck, while maintaining a continuity of resources as employees come and go.

As a leader, I try to communicate to each employee how valuable they are to the organization and that each is a vital link in the chain. If any of us hold a part of the organizational memory in our hands, we have a duty to document what we know, what we do, and how we do it. Documentation and cross-training is a necessity to capture knowledge and avoid having indispensable employees. Holding on to what you know for fear of it being taken away keeps you from moving forward. Cross-training not only allows you to see what your co-workers job functions are, but it allows you to learn a new set of skills for the next position, or will make you more marketable for a highly competitive environment.

For me, it’s about leaving a legacy of transparency. What’s for me, no one can take it away. I am willing to give it away, through training and job documentation. I want my workplace to be in a better position than when I arrived. I want to prepare the next generation to succeed, and be willing to take our organization to the next level. This must be an ongoing process. Job documentation is a priority for me. I don’t want to be left holding the bag following an employee turnover. Management is tied to the art of skillful delegation. The question then becomes, how will you manage if there is no one to whom to delegate?

Properly documenting our job functions will keep us from having to take on another piece or the organizational pie each time we are faced with a vacated position. So, whether you are the Fire-Chief, or an Administrative Assistant, my question to you is, what will your legacy become?

A Chinese proverb says, “*The man who removes a mountain begins by carrying away small stones*”. Employees will leave. And it will happen sooner as opposed to later. Don’t just stand in the middle of the road waiting to be hit by the truck. Be prepared to get out of the way when you see the Mack Truck coming down the road.



Congratulations *Gloria Marsh*  
for taking second at the  
Spirit Bake Off Contest.  
Her winning entry was a  
Key Lime Cake!  
Yummy

## BRING YOUR CHILD TO WORK DAY!



*Shakeema Gaskin* with her daughter *Camryn*



*Mary Black* with her daughter *Meredith*

## HURRICANE SEASON 2010 BE PREPARED – STAY INFORMED

Hurricane Season begins June 1<sup>st</sup> and the time to prepare is now. Residents are urged to take action before a hurricane strikes. For information on hurricane preparedness, visit [www.delrayfirerescue.com](http://www.delrayfirerescue.com)

**In Case of Emergency:** 911

**Delray Beach Emergency Operations Center:** (561) 243-7400

**Delray Beach Emergency Radio:** 1620 AM (official source of information during and after emergencies operated by the City of Delray Beach)

**Hurricane Information Line:** (561) 243-7840 (provides updated messages from the City of Delray Beach during a potential storm impact)

**City Website:** [www.mydelraybeach.com](http://www.mydelraybeach.com) (information on preparing for hurricanes & weather links)

**County Website:** [www.pbcgov.com](http://www.pbcgov.com) (important information including locations of generator-equipped gas stations and grocery stores)

**My Safe Florida Home Website:** [www.mysafefloridahome.com](http://www.mysafefloridahome.com) (information on how you can make your family and home safer)

**Office of Insurance Regulation Website:** [www.floir.com](http://www.floir.com)  
(information on Florida consumer insurance issues)

**American Red Cross Hurricane Shelter Delray Beach location (upon activation):**  
Atlantic Community High School, 2455 West Atlantic Avenue

## ***BIRTHDAYS***

May 2nd  
**Shawn Beckowitz**

May 11th  
**Kevin Saxton**

May 13th  
**Ilene Rose**

May 14th  
**David Wyatt**

May 16th  
**Craig Mahoney**  
**Howard Spain**

May 21  
**Luis Armada**

May 23rd  
**Michael Wise**



**MAY**



## ***ANNIVERSARY***

May 8th  
**Michael Wise**  
23 yrs.

May 14th  
**Eric Kovacs**  
**Laura Deckers**  
**Daniel Marullo**  
**John Staab**  
20 yrs.

May 20th  
**Joseph Falcone**  
**Travis Klemann**  
**Daniel Waldrep**  
8 yrs.

May 12  
**Ryan Walker**  
**James Bunnell**  
**Justin Caruso**  
**John Wagner**  
**Sean Gibson**  
7 yrs.

May 31st  
**Conor Devery**  
5 yrs.

The distribution of our next newsletter is June 15, 2010. All news articles should be turned in to Debra Nastasi, Administrative Assistant in Fire Safety on or before, June 12, 2010. Thank you once again for your contributions and we look forward to the next issue of "Hot Topics."

May Flower of the month: Lily of the Valley, Hawthorn.

Zodiac Signs: Gemini / The Twins / May 21 - June 21

The name for the Moon in May is Planter's Moon, Milk Moon.

See when it's the Full Moon in May

May Birthstone: Emerald, agate. Meaning: Love, Success

### **About May**

May is the fifth month of the year in the Gregorian Calendar and one of seven Gregorian months with the length of 31 days. May begins with the sun in the sign of Taurus and ends in the sign of Gemini. Astronomically speaking, the sun begins in the constellation of Aries and ends in the constellation of Taurus. The month may have been named for the Greek goddess Maia, who was identified with Roman goddess of fertility, Bona Dea, whose festival was held in May.

### **Significant Dates:**

Spring: Spring Time runs from March 20th to June 20th.

May Day: May 1 refers to any of several public holidays. In many countries, May Day is synonymous with International Workers' Day, or Labor Day, which celebrates the social and economic achievements of the labor movement.

Mothers Day: Mother's Day is celebrated all over the world to honor our Mothers, although the dates and months of Mother's Day differ from country to country. Mother's day is the occasion to pay tributes to our Mothers.

Cinco de Mayo: ("5th of May" in English) is primarily a regional and not an obligatory federal holiday in Mexico. The date is observed in the United States and other locations around the world as a celebration of Mexican heritage and pride.

Memorial Day: is a United States **Federal Holiday** that is observed on the last Monday of May (observed in 2008 on May 26) (observed in 2009 on May 25). It was formerly known as Decoration Day.