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MUSCATINE FIRE DEPARTMENT NEWS RELEASE

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MUSCATINE FIRE: WHO WE ARE – DAVID GRAFTON

Series examines why members of the MFD chose to work in Muscatine

(NOTE: The following is one of a series of articles highlighting members of the Muscatine Fire Department and examining why they chose to work and live in Muscatine.)



MUSCATINE, Iowa – When David Grafton decided to make the switch from law enforcement to firefighter/ems, he made it a point to do station tours in communities that he was interested in.

“I honestly did not know much about the Muscatine Fire Department but saw an opportunity,” Grafton said. “I did a station tour and immediately felt that it was where I was meant to be.”



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Grafton is 35-years-old, originally from Silvis, Illinois, and currently living in Davenport with his wife (Stephanie) and three children (Jameson, Killian, and Julie). He is certified as Firefighter 1 and as a Hazmat Technician and has been with the Muscatine Fire Department for 18 months. He earned his EMT Basic a year ago and is currently enrolled in the paramedic program at Scott Community College. He is also a member of the MFD peer support group.

What brought you to the Muscatine Fire Department?

Grafton worked with the Rock Island County Sheriff's Department for 10 years before deciding that it was time for a change.

"I always felt that being in the fire service industry was my end goal," Grafton said. "One of my good friends, who works in the fire service as well, always seemed happy to go to work and enjoyed every aspect of it. I thoroughly enjoy working in the public sector and felt that I needed to make the move. So at the age of 34 I decided to go back and get my EMT basic and begin the testing process. It has been the best career decision I have ever made."

As for coming to Muscatine, it was the team mentality that sold him on this department.

"There is a true team mentality on each shift and everyone plays a vital role in the daily operations," Grafton said after touring the Muscatine fire station.

What do you like most about MFD?

"At MFD, everyone plays a role in the daily operations of the department. You become a well-rounded firefighter and EMT/paramedic. You get all aspects of the industry, from hazmat, medical, fire, public education. You name it, you will do it or learn it at MFD."

You are not just a number at MFD according to Grafton, you are part of the team.



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"You won't be sitting in the background, or be able to fly under the radar," Grafton said. "You get tasked with duties and are expected to know how to fulfill those duties. It's a sense of pride that all members carry on MFD."

What recommendation would you have for someone thinking about getting into this industry?

One of the harder aspects of the job for Grafton was starting over in his 30's.

"I left a stable job to become the probie and have firefighters 10 years younger than me telling me what to do," Grafton said. "It was tough but these firefighters are here to make you a well-rounded member of the team."

For someone thinking about getting into this industry, Grafton suggested that you first have to be humble.

"Know that you start at square one and move up from there," Grafton said. "You have to put in the work. Nothing will be handed to you in this industry. When you do succeed, it's your shift, your department that succeeds with you."

Grafton also suggests that you have to have a drive for the job, and a passion or thirst for knowledge not only from the fire side, but also the medical aspect.

"The majority of our calls are ems, so have a passion for going and helping people," Grafton said. "When you do get on a department, make sure you are a productive member of the team. Always be willing to jump in and help on all calls, and don't be in the background. Your fellow firefighters will see it and appreciate it."

Becoming a firefighter:

If you are interested in becoming a member of the Muscatine Fire Department, visit www.muscatineiowa.gov/jobs to fill out an application. Applications for this year's testing class



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are being accepted through September 23. Applications are also available in the Human Resources office at Muscatine City Hall, 215 Sycamore Street.

About the Muscatine Fire Department:

The Muscatine Fire Department provides fire and emergency medical services, rescues (high angle, rope, water, etc.), building inspections, and public education for the City of Muscatine, and the surrounding unincorporated areas of Muscatine County with a combined population of 43,000 across 145 square miles while also providing HAZMAT for Muscatine, Louisa, Washington, Keokuk, and Henry counties. MFD firefighters and paramedics responded to 5,238 calls in 2019. The Muscatine Fire Department began as a volunteer fire company on January 7, 1875 and was established as a full-time department in January 1916. The Muscatine Fire Department ambulance service received the 2012 Career Ambulance service of the Year Award from Iowa Emergency Medical Services.