

# CITY OF MUSCATINE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
SEPTEMBER 26, 2025

## 50 YEARS OF SERVICE: MUSCATINE FIRE DEPARTMENT HONORS TWO RETIRING BATTALION CHIEFS NEXT WEEK

**MUSCATINE, Iowa** – More than half a century of combined experience will walk out the doors of the Muscatine Fire Department (MFD) at the end of September. Battalion Chiefs Joe Timmsen and Ted Hillard are preparing to sign off for the final time, marking the end of long and impactful careers in fire service.



*Ted Hillard*

The community is invited to celebrate their service at an open house from noon to 2 p.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 30, at Fire Station 1, 312 East 5th Street. Also being honored Tuesday is Firefighter Lanny Creamer who is retiring after 22-plus years of service with the MFD.



*Joe Timmsen*

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## Finding a Calling

Timmsen joined MFD on June 19, 2000, as a paramedic. From his very first ride-along as an EMT student, he knew firefighting was his path.

"The very first time the alarm went off and I hopped in the engine, I knew this was it," Timmsen recalled. "It just felt right."

Over the years, he served on nearly every shift—training, EMS, public education, and most recently as Battalion Chief on the Green Shift. Fire Chief Mike Hartman said Timmsen's dedication has always been clear.

"From day one Joe has been driven to provide excellent customer service," Hartman said. "He has always had an understanding of the needs of our patients and fire victims."

A champion for firefighter wellness, Timmsen encouraged physical fitness and even helped launch several intramural teams, including the well-known "En Fuego" Dek Hockey squad. He also found meaning in prevention, working to keep emergencies from happening in the first place through public education.

"When I see my guys—girls included in that—step up as leaders and support each other, that's the top of the mountain for me," Timmsen said.



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## A Legacy of Leadership

Hillard's journey began in December 1992, when he was hired as an EMT. He had been a football player at St. Ambrose University, where late-night conversations with a teammate sparked an interest in fire service. The two tested with multiple departments and, after earning their EMT certifications, both landed jobs with MFD within six months.



Hillard quickly made his mark. One of his most vivid memories is from "Hell's Night" in 1993, when a string of arsons hit Muscatine. Responding to a fully engulfed home, Hillard climbed a ladder to a second-story window where a victim was trapped. The man leapt into his arms, nearly knocking both of them off the ladder, but fellow firefighter Scott Farnsworth steadied them, and all three made it safely to the ground.

"Ted has always been a team player," Hartman said. "He could be relied on to be there when needed and to help with any task on a fireground or emergency

scene."

Hillard said what he'll miss most isn't the adrenaline-filled moments but the people.

"The ones still doing the job today and the many who have retired or moved on—these are the individuals who have been my mentors, co-workers, and friends," Hillard said. "I have lifelong friendships with them."

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## Looking Ahead

Hillard will officially retire on October 2, followed by Timmsen on October 3. Fire Chief Hartman has announced that Andy Summitt will step into the role of Battalion Chief of the Green Shift, while Andrew McSorley will take over as Battalion Chief of the Red Shift.

For both men, the end of their careers is bittersweet. The call of the alarm, the camaraderie of the firehouse, and the shared sense of mission will be hard to leave behind. But their decades of service have left an indelible mark on the Muscatine Fire Department and the community they've protected.

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