

Employees Say Good-Bye with Over 70 Years of Combined City Service

Xenia, Ohio (January 26, 2015) – On Friday, January 16, 2015, the City celebrated over 70 years of combined service with the Xenia Fire Division with the recent retirements of Fire Captain Doug Cope, and Firefighter, Steve Mathis, and the resignation of Firefighter, Alex Zaharieff.

Captain Cope is a 25 ½ year veteran of the City of Xenia Fire Division, beginning his career as a firefighter with the City of Xenia Fire Division on July 30, 1989. Captain Cope is a lifelong Xenia resident and a graduate of Xenia High School. He received his paramedic certification in 1987 before pursuing his career as a firefighter/paramedic. Since then he received his State Fire Inspector and State Fire Instructor certifications along with attending numerous training opportunities to keep current on changes in emergency operations related to fire and emergency medical services.

Captain Cope demonstrated his passion for the Fire Service when conducting training events for City staff, other agencies and the public. He was instrumental in the production of the Fire Division's Fire Prevention Shows presented at the elementary schools designed to teach students about fire safety. In later years he provided National Incident Management System (NIMS) training for required personnel. The NIMS training defines how to plan prepare and mitigate before, during and after a disaster.

In addition to Captain Cope's responsibilities with the Xenia Fire Division, he has served on the Ohio Task Force One, FEMA Regional Rescue Team for numerous years. Ohio Task Force One serves our state and nation as one of the top Urban Search and Rescue Teams. Captain Cope's Ohio Task Force One rescue team has been deployed to assist during the aftermath of several hurricanes including Hurricane Katrina. He also served after two significant national incidents, the Space Shuttle Columbia recovery and the 9/11 World Trade Center. Captain Cope applied his national experience with Ohio Task Force One when assisting the City with emergency operations planning.

As Captain Cope says good-bye he added, "The Fire Service has changed a lot during my years of service and I'm glad I helped lead change for the Xenia Fire

Division.” He plans to continue teaching, working with OH-TF-1 and plans to pursue other opportunities in emergency management.

Firefighter Steve Mathis began his career with the Xenia Fire Division on November 2, 1986. He retires with over twenty-eight (28) years of City service. Firefighter Mathis dedicated his entire career to providing fire and emergency medical services to the citizens, business owners and visitors of Xenia. He was a certified level II firefighter and received his paramedic certification in 1985. Firefighter Mathis was a very dependable, knowledgeable and experienced firefighter and paramedic.

JEMS (Journal of Emergency Medical Services) published Mathis as one of the first paramedics to successfully administer the cardiac drug, Amiodorone, in the field. The introduction of Amiodorone was a change in protocol for treating patients with cardiac dysrhythmia. Firefighter Mathis responded on many calls for help during his career including the 2000 tornado. Although he led a quiet career, he took his responsibilities to serving the public very seriously. He always assisted his peers and officers in any way to ensure the best outcome to the situation at hand. Firefighter Mathis said, “This was the best job ever and it was a blast!”

Recently Alex Zaharieff tendered his resignation with the City after accepting an opportunity to become the full-time Administrator for Beavercreek Township. The City wants to recognize Alex’s seventeen (17) plus years as a career firefighter/paramedic with the Xenia Fire Division.

Alex began serving the public working for the City of Beavercreek Traffic Safety Division while attending school. He later worked for the Greene County Common Pleas Court holding several different positions while volunteering as a firefighter/paramedic for the Beavercreek Fire Department. Alex joined the Xenia Fire Division as a full-time career firefighter/paramedic on August 1, 1999.

Prior to beginning his career with the City of Xenia, Zaharieff earned a Bachelor’s Degree in Political Science from Wright State University. He knew following his career as a firefighter he aspired to advance into a leadership role so he pursued his Master’s Degree in Public Administration to its completion in 2004. During his career with the Xenia Fire Division, Alex took on several different roles and responsibilities. He was a certified Hazardous Materials Technician and a member of the Regional HazMat Team. He was a state certified EMS instructor and a member of the Fire Division’s EMS committee which was instrumental in many of the patient care advances implemented across the region. Alex assisted the Fire Division with writing grants to receive funding for fire prevention materials, self-contained breathing apparatus, fire training trailer and staffing through the SAFER grant.

Alex expresses his gratitude. "I cannot thank the Xenia Fire Division enough for all of the opportunities and experiences provided me during the last seventeen (17) years. I will miss the incredible firefighters I had the pleasure working with throughout the years. I would like to thank my co-workers for the support, guidance and encouragement provided me during my time with the Fire Division.

" Chief Riggsby said, "We are losing a great group of guys. The knowledge and experience from this group is going to be missed. I hope Doug and Steve enjoy a well-deserved retirement and I am confident Alex will be very successful in his role as full-time Administrator for Beaver Creek Township.

"The City would like to thank Fire Captain, Doug Cope, and Firefighters, Steve Mathis and Alex Zaharieff for all their years of dedication and service to the City of Xenia.