

Janesville Fire Department

MENTOR QUESTIONNAIRE

GOAL: In an effort to capture as much information as possible from our senior members, *our mentors*, before they leave us, the Janesville Fire Department has developed the "Mentor Questionnaire." You are being asked to take a few minutes and share your KNOWLEDGE, EXPERIENCES, HISTORY and TRICKS OF THE TRADE, with our new Firefighters. This information will allow us to pass along your experience and our Department's heritage to our newest and future members.

INSTRUCTIONS: KEEP IT SIMPLE! You don't have to answer them all but it would be greatly appreciated. They can be typed *or* hand written. Don't worry about misspelling or grammar. Those haven't saved any firefighter's lives, but maybe with this you can!

Name: Mike Rundle

Rank: Lieutenant

QUESTION 1 - (Calls, Incidents, Experiences or Problem Buildings)

Are there any Calls, Incidents, or Experiences that you would like to share? Whether for historical purposes or more importantly, a call or incident that provided you with a "Lesson Learned" type situation that may help a new Janesville Firefighter. Are there any buildings that you are concerned about? The type of building that when you think about it you find yourself saying "I hope we never have a fire in that place."

There was a fire in a residence on Lynn Street years ago on what ended up being the coldest day on record. The fire was discovered by a firefighter who was on his way home after a trade, and came back to the station. No one was dispatched until 82 and 92 went en route. Fire was coming out the front door and smoke was heavy. I ended up going to the second floor alone trying to find any extension. I did end up finding fire in the attic and reported back what I found. I realized after the adrenaline wore off that being in that situation alone was a big mistake. It was a classic case of adrenaline fueled freelancing and seemed like a good idea at the time. Control of adrenaline is essential, without control bad decisions will be made but bad consequences will not always happen. I consider myself lucky.

To me any large commercial building with few if any windows and no operating fire protection equipment are buildings that scream beware.

QUESTION 2- (Apparatus, Tools & Equipment)

What can you tell us about our apparatus? Are there any with special needs or "quirks?" Any with safety concerns that you would like to pass along? This can also apply to equipment on our rigs such as extrication equipment, generators, saws, tools, etc. Is there a rig you like best and why? Is there a rig you like least and why?

Fortunately the department has been pretty good about equipment and it is kept in good repair. I would recommend future engines not have the pre-connect hose lays in "trays" that 85 has now. It is difficult to load them so they are usable from both sides of the engine. In addition 85's top pre-connected 2.5" hose bed is too tight and when pulled the entire load comes out at once. We currently prefer to use the rear pre-connect as an alternative.

QUESTION 3 – (Paramedic Experience)

If you were a paramedic for the department is there anything you would like to share regarding this experience?

No question being a paramedic prepared me well for the position of officer. You will make critical decisions in short time spans as a paramedic and the experience is invaluable. The hardest thing you will do is dealing with the death or serious injury of a child. The most important thing to preventing burnout is to talk around the table at the station and essentially "debrief" there. It's OK to take it home, but not until you have talked it over with your co-workers.

QUESTION 4 - (Specialty Teams)

Is there anything specific about our specialty teams (Haz Mat, Tech Rescue, Dive) that you would want to share with a new Janesville Firefighter? Any hazards or safety concerns that would help keep one of our members out of trouble?

Like anything you only do on rare occasions, the specialty team members need to keep abreast of new information, trends, equipment, etc. It is also imperative that you stay familiar through practice, practice, practice.

QUESTION 5 - (Department History)

Can you provide us with any information regarding our Department's History? Anything you would like to share with future generations of Janesville Firefighters? History regarding our firehouses, apparatus, personnel, incidents, etc?

The fire department has a long and proud history in Janesville and so does Local 580. Did you know that the union took a vote to strike and the signed letter is framed and mounted at #1. When I started, many on the department came to work there because they were told about openings by friends or just saw an ad in the paper and thought it sounded like a decent way to earn a living. Starting in the late 70's and early 80's those who applied for the department had previous experience and some education and took a lot of flak from the "old guys". Today it is nearly impossible to be hired without one or the other. Years ago you learned as you went along with the flow and watched. We are a kinder gentler version today, willing to share our knowledge and experience, take advantage of it when you can.

I can tell you that while it may have been a station best described as a "dump" old Station 2 in the 4th ward was the best place to work. It had most of the calls both fire and ambulance and the neighborhood housed the most colorful characters in the city. You always knew the sun was shining because that was the only time (warm or cold weather) the ceiling in the apparatus floor would leak.

QUESTION 6 - (Your Wisdom and Thoughts)

Is there anything that you would say to a new Janesville Firefighter that would help him or her stay healthy and safe throughout their career?

The best way to stay safe and healthy is to take charge of your self. Do not rely totally on others. As you progress in your career remember both the good and the bad. Take note anytime a situation presents itself as a learning experience and realize there is probably a lesson there. The lesson will be repeated over time until it is learned. In this time of heavy reliance on technology do not forget that gut feelings (they come from experience), basic skills, and your senses will tell you more than you realize. Avail your self of opportunities for self improvement including reading trade magazines and attending seminars. Enjoy your time here and remember a successful day is the one you go home from the next morning, and tell your family about.