

THE BLAZE



SEPTEMBER 2020

DEKALB COUNTY FIRE RESCUE

ISSUE 9

FIVE BUGLES
FROM THE
FIRE CHIEF

MEETING THE
COVID-19
CHALLENGE

FIGHTING FIRES
BEFORE
THEY START

THE WORKHORSE
OF DCFR

THE FULLUM
EFFECT: SIX
YEARS OF
PROGRESSIVE
LEADERSHIP

To all that we serve:

As we continue our journey through 2020, my prayers are that you and your family are healthy and well. DeKalb County Fire Rescue had an exciting last year, and despite having to meet the challenges of a pandemic we have not slowed down this year.

Many of the recent improvements have been a result of funding made available through the citizens' approval of the Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST). DCFR has been actively upgrading equipment to better serve our constituents. SPLOST funding provided for the purchase of ten Rapid Response Vehicles. Nine of these have been placed in-service, and the remaining one will be staffed and in-service by the end of this year.

The project to rebuild Fire Station 7, one of our oldest and most distinguished fire stations, is underway. Additionally, the planning phase of construction has begun for two entirely new stations (27 & 28). Their completion will improve emergency response capabilities in areas of the county that have seen significant growth over the last decade.

The newly established EMS Division has two new DCFR ambulances in service providing transport capabilities as a contingency during times of high call volume. This initiative also involved the hiring of paramedic personnel to operate these transports. It is anticipated that two more units will be operational by the end of the year.

DCFR now has the ability to deliver 5,000 gallons of water to locations with limited hydrant access using our new Water Tenders. These trucks are specifically designed to carry large amounts of water and deliver them to fire scenes in the woods, on the interstate (where hydrants are not available), or any incident where extra water is necessary.

New fire apparatus and new fire stations are easily recognized accomplishments, but let me assure you that DeKalb County Fire Rescue has made many more improvements behind-the-scenes through strengthening our data analytics. We are better able to predict and prevent fires, and we have increased resource availability while reducing response times.

There are many exciting new initiatives for DeKalb County Fire Rescue, and we will be detailing them in future issues of this newsletter. We appreciate the community's support as we respond to your needs by offering the highest level of risk reduction and incident response while delivering superior customer service and professionalism.

With regards and honor,



Darnell Fullum, Fire Chief



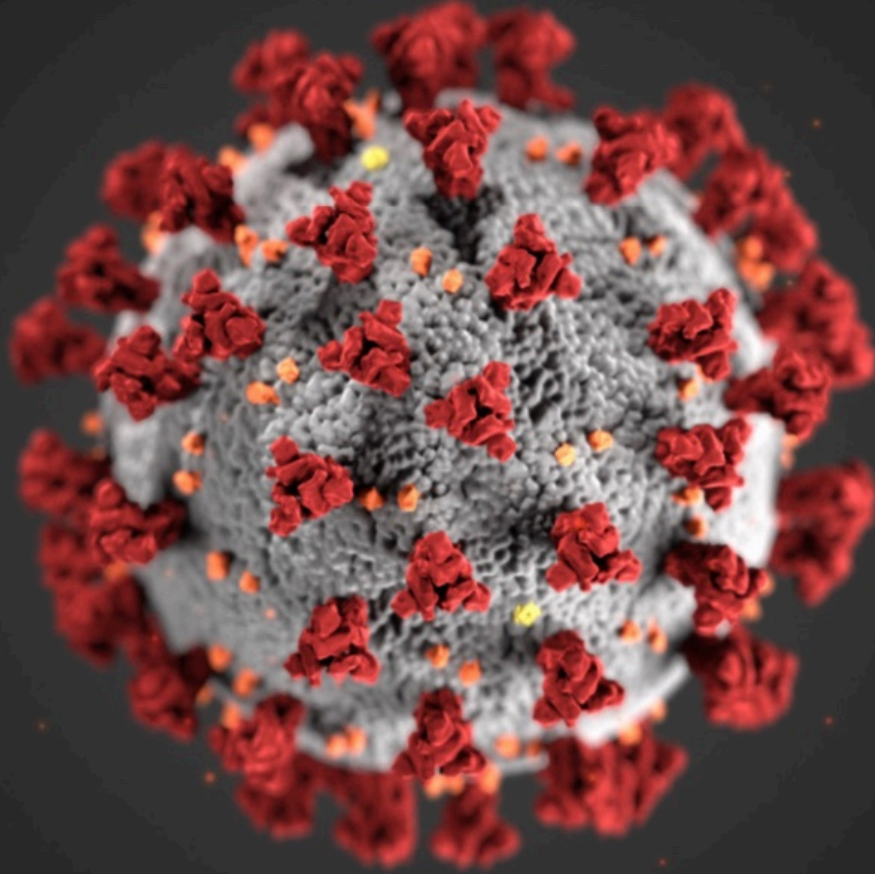
Chief Fullum at Atlanta United's home opener on July 22, 2019.



On the Front Cover
This photo of Capt. Bess aboard Quint 24 was taken during a fire in Clarkston.

Meeting the COVID-19 Challenge

COVID-19
image
courtesy of
the CDC.



With the advent of the COVID-19 event, all areas of DeKalb County public services were tasked with continuing to respond to requests from the public while protecting our workforce from the virus. But DeKalb County Fire Rescue was uniquely challenged within the umbrella of DeKalb County government services. Unlike DeKalb County government's other departments which continue to offer services despite COVID-19, DCFR is called upon to respond to help requests from the public specifically because they are possibly infected with COVID-19. We have met this challenge with a multi-pronged approach that ensures the maximum safety of all persons involved.

Our firefighters, EMTs, and Paramedic responders are a very specialized workforce that cannot be easily replaced if they fall ill. DCFR's efforts to keep them healthy and safe

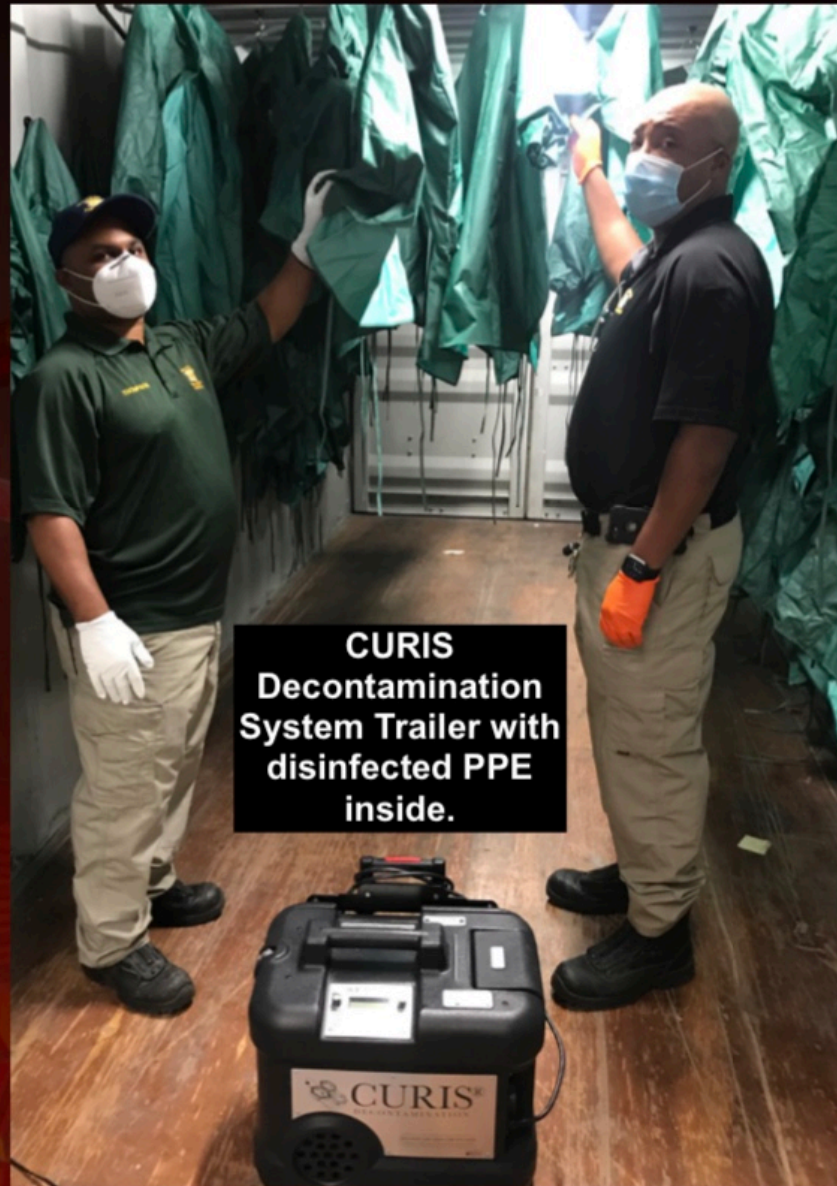
have included updated protocols requiring increased levels of PPE as prescribed by the guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). We have instituted procedures on scene, for the benefit of the public and our responders, that limit the amount of unnecessary close-contact interaction. And very early in the event and under the CEO Michael Thurmond's overall strategy, DCFR initiated a robust quarantine/isolation protocol for our workforce that quickly removes personnel with symptoms of COVID-19-like illness in order to limit their exposure to our other responders and the public. This quarantine/isolation effort is overseen by DCFR Medical Director Dr. Michael Carr, is congruent with CDC guidelines, and is managed 24/7 by DCFR's Health and Safety Officer Capt. Chris Cavender. We are proud to report that while we

have had to quarantine and isolate some DCFR members, our vigilant efforts have kept all 26 fire stations open and operational throughout this pandemic.

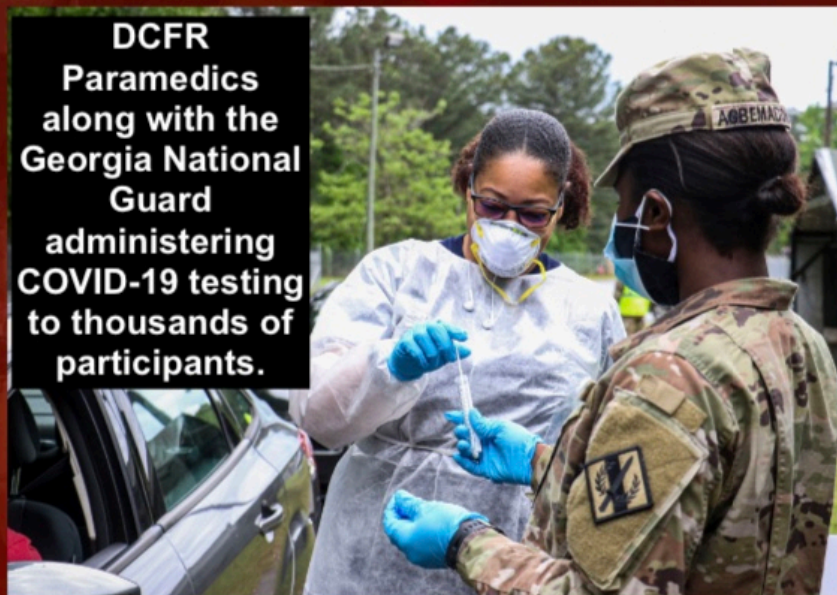
During normal times, service delivery at the rates DCFR provides requires a large and steady supply of masks, gowns, gloves, and eye protection. Additionally, DCFR has always maintained a stock of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in anticipation of outbreaks. But the widespread nature of COVID-19 and the speed with which it progressed required Support Services Deputy Chief Garret Smith and his staff to pursue means of replenishing DCFR's supplies of PPE outside of our normal supply chains. It has not been easy, but DCFR has been able to secure a steady supply of PPE to meet the needs of the department at our current rates of usage. This is due in large part to funding made available to DeKalb County through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) and earmarked by CEO Michael Thurmond to support DCFR's mission.

Additionally, and as an effort to further reinforce DCFR's PPE supplies, we have purchased the CURIS Decontamination System (also used by the U.S. Dept. of Defense) which allows DCFR to disinfect previously worn PPE for re-use. This system is one of the only ones of this kind known to be of use in the metro-Atlanta area. According to Deputy Chief Smith, "the CURIS Decontamination system uses one of the few EPA-proven methods of decontaminating the COVID-19 virus from PPE, as well as many other pathogenic organisms." Currently, DCFR is decontaminating and storing some PPE items as a precaution, in case PPE supplies become harder to obtain (like they were earlier in the event.)

While COVID-19 has changed some of how DCFR operates, it has not affected our ability to respond to calls for assistance from our stakeholders. DeKalb County Fire Rescue remains dedicated to providing quick and dependable emergency response and fire safety services, no matter what challenges we may face now or in the future.



**CURIS
Decontamination
System Trailer with
disinfected PPE
inside.**



**DCFR
Paramedics
along with the
Georgia National
Guard
administering
COVID-19 testing
to thousands of
participants.**

Fighting Fires Before They Start

DCFR plan reviewer
Anthony Hicks
reviewing a site plan on
January 28,
2020.



DeKalb County Fire Rescue uses a multifaceted approach to bring quality fire service to its customers. Modern fire fighting entails more than suppressing fires and has evolved to include site plan oversight, inspections, and community risk reduction. One way this is done is through the use of plan reviewers.

A DCFR plan reviewer's primary duty is to translate the requirements, as far as codes and regulations, to prospective builders seeking permits for new construction. Plan reviewers will meet with engineers, designers, and builders, to convey life safety needs before the first wall goes up. Once a site plan is ready for review, DCFR plan reviewers look at it to see if their guidance has been followed, such as the

number of exits, fire apparatus access points, and available fire safety systems.

DCFR utilizes plan reviewers in accordance with fire codes adopted by the State of Georgia as it reviews new construction within its jurisdiction. This system is in place, as a part of the permitting and licensing process, that ensures the safety of citizens and visitors of DeKalb County. DCFR plan reviewers are available for each municipality within DeKalb County, and are based out of the Fire Marshal's Office. These plan reviewers are readily accessible to guide new construction projects in DeKalb County. For assistance with your new construction needs you can call 404-371-2828 or email dekalbfmo@dekalbcountyga.gov.

The Workhorse of DCFR



What most people think is a fire truck is really a fire engine. In DeKalb County Fire Rescue, a fire truck is an apparatus with a movable vehicle-attached hydraulic ladder. If this is true, then what is a fire engine?

DCFR has 23 fire engines in service. These vehicles can carry up to four highly-trained personnel. Fire engines are equipped with onboard rescue and EMS equipment, life-saving drugs, extrication tools ("Jaws of Life"),

loads of firefighting equipment, and a *tank full of water*.

Each fire engine can carry up to 500 gallons of water. That is a sufficient amount for firefighters to initiate an immediate fire attack or perform potential lifesaving rescues. This is crucial during fire ground operations, while additional resources arrive on scene. To put that much water into perspective, 500 gallons can easily fill five large Jacuzzi tubs.



Engine 26 with the clean cab concept design.



Engine pumper controls for charging hoses and flowing water .



Positioned just under the ladder are high rise packs which are special hoses that are configured for use in high rise fires.



Axes and Halligan Bars for breaching and making entry.

DCFR fire engines are equipped with 1200 feet of five-inch diameter supply hose, which is almost 1/4 mile. These supply lines are connected to fire hydrants for a continuous flow of water during working structure fires. Each section of supply hose weighs 100 pounds dry, and approximately 800 pounds when filled with water. Once that hose is on the ground, there's no moving.

The engine operator can orchestrate over 1/2 dozen hand lines to help facilitate the fire attack, flowing 1500 gallons of water per minute, more than enough water to fill a common variety swimming pool in 10 to 20 minutes.

One of the most visible pieces of rescue equipment, on a fire engine, is the removable ground ladders. The ladders are stored on the side of the apparatus, and can be used for:

- rescue operations during structure fires;
- means of egress for citizens;
- roof operations;
- and to gain further access during working incidents.

In addition to the 23 in-service fire engines, the DCFR daily deployment model also has 11 aerials (fire trucks). DCFR replaces its fire engines approximately every six years. These apparatus typically run 18,000 calls or 175,000 miles before they are replaced, and cost upwards of \$650,000. These fire engines are custom built to meet the needs of DeKalb County. It takes 14 months to build DCFR fire engines, and each one carries over \$100,000 of equipment. DeKalb County Fire Rescue surpluses or donates, retired engines, to smaller departments that are in need of a seasoned apparatus.

The Fullum Effect: Six Years of Progressive Leadership



DCFR Command Staff on September 11, 2019, a national day of mourning in solemn remembrance of 9/11.

Fire Chief Darnell Fullum celebrated an important milestone on February 18, 2020, his 6th anniversary of being the Fire Chief of DeKalb County Fire Rescue. In that time, Chief Fullum has brought many new initiatives to DCFR.

"The biggest change we have seen in the past six years has been the implementation of data-driven analytic decision making," according to Deputy Chief Antonio Burden. Under the leadership of Chief Fullum, DCFR now has a fully staffed Appraisal and Planning unit that is focused on data interpretation. Fire response, in DeKalb County, has evolved in the past six years due to the increased role of data. Not only has the department gathered data with greater detail, but now said data is being used in hopes of improving DCFR's ability to respond.

One of those initiatives with a large impact on the community has been the Rapid Response Vehicles, that were purchased with SPLOST funds. These apparatus have been strategically located throughout DeKalb County utilizing data analysis of past historical call

volume and projected changes in the population. The result has been an overall reduction in response times across DeKalb County. Citizens may recall seeing this program in the news and in press releases over the last year.

Communication is extremely important for DCFR, and Chief Fullum has placed an emphasis on the department's ability to reach its stakeholders. As such, improved internal and external communication at DCFR have increased transparency and clear articulation with our partners in the county.

The department has grown in the way that it updates the community, its constituents, and its customers through a large social media footprint, briefings that are released department-wide on a daily and weekly basis, and a departmental periodic newsletter that is released externally. As reported by Chief of Staff Wm. Voorhies, "Never before has DCFR had so many different avenues to communicate through. The changes in technology and how people receive information have led to an



Sophie Choi interviewing Chief Fullum on October 2, 2018, about implementing the Rapid Response vehicles.



Chief Fullum speaking at the Cohort 19 Graduation on March 28, 2019.

increased ability for us to reach our communities."

Chief Fullum has embraced technology for the betterment of delivering Public Safety in DeKalb County. His willingness to pursue innovation has changed the dynamic between DCFR and its Public Safety partnerships. The free flow of information and qualitative analysis of emergency call data, between E-911 and DCFR, has furthered DeKalb County. "Fire Rescue and E-911 probably have one of the best relationships we've had in my tenure, and it's in no small part due to similar objectives, to bring cutting edge innovation to emergency response," said Marshall Mooneyham, Director of Emergency 911 Communications.

The department has also invested in its personnel. The number of firefighters serving

the citizens of DeKalb County has increased during Chief Fullum's time with the department. Additionally, the opportunities for those personnel to grow professionally have increased. "The department was brought under one accord and that accord is professionalism," said Deputy Chief Shane Dobson when interviewed for this article. He continued, "In the last few years, Chief Fullum has implemented annual officers' retreats, created opportunities for personnel to expand their certifications through training, and increased their opportunities for promotion."

In keeping with DeKalb County CEO Michael Thurmond's commitment to Public Safety, DCFR has increased staffing and has implemented an Office of Recruiting.

Chief Fullum, acting on priorities of the CEO, charged DCFR's Recruiting Officer with making the hiring process transparent and welcoming. Candidates look forward to and have come to expect that career fairs and dedicated open hiring periods now take place periodically. "Since initiating the DCFR Recruiting Unit, which consists of Capt. Troy Augustin and MFF Adrian Ziyad, the department has been able to better liaise between DeKalb County Human Resources and the highly skilled candidates that we recruit," according to Deputy Chief Jason Smith. Additionally, the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners has been integral in this process by approving the open recruit firefighter positions, which have to be allocated prior to candidates being hired. Upward

changes in the number of firefighter positions in DeKalb County, inherently mean, a change to DCFR's daily deployment model. Jack Lumpkin, Director of DeKalb County Public Safety, has supported Chief Fullum from day one, especially in matters of providing the best coverage and protection for citizens and visitors to DeKalb County.

Under Chief Fullum's leadership, and with the support of the county leadership, DeKalb County Fire Rescue continues to move forward as one of the nation's premier fire rescue services. We will continue implementing new technologies to capitalize on the existing opportunities and take innovative approaches to the challenges our communities face.



Chief Fullum stands on CEO Michael Thurmond's right as the CEO informs the public at a SPLOST press conference held at DeKalb County Public Safety Headquarters on September 19, 2019. Also pictured to the CEO's left are Public Safety Director Jack Lumpkin, and Commissioner Larry Johnson.

On the Back Cover

On December 14, 2019 DCFR units responded to a house fire at 2237 Southern Grove Rd.

