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Paducah firefighters carry forward courage, commitment of Sept. 11 responders

A large fire is burning inside a wooden structure, possibly a trailer or a large box, with thick black smoke billowing out. Two firefighters in full gear are positioned in front of the structure, one holding a hose and spraying water into the fire. A person in the foreground is taking a photo of the scene.

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Prepared to answer the call

Training, teamwork and community partnerships strengthen Ballard County’s emergency response

By Laurna Pruett
KPI Writer

As the nation pauses to remember the lives lost and the first responders who answered the call on Sept. 11, 2001, the anniversary also provides an opportunity to recognize those who continue serving their communities today.

In Ballard County, protecting lives and property requires emergency management, fire departments, law enforcement, emergency medical services and other agencies to work together—often under difficult and rapidly changing conditions.

Ballard County Emergency Management Director Travis Holder said the county has a variety of departments and resources that can be put into action immediately, depending on the type and severity of an

emergency.

“Emergency Management, fire departments, law enforcement, EMS and other local agencies can quickly begin response operations,” Holder said.

The response does not end when the immediate danger has passed. Local resources and community partners are also available to help meet the needs of displaced residents and begin the recovery process.

The working relationships among Ballard County’s emergency agencies are strengthened through their regular responses to fires, motor vehicle crashes, medical calls, severe weather and other incidents. Holder said that familiarity helps departments coordinate their efforts when a larger emergency affects the county.

“Many of our

volunteers and responders are cross-trained and have experience working alongside multiple agencies,” he said.

“Our departments communicate and work together to provide an organized and effective response.”

Preparation for an emergency begins long before a call is received. Holder said departments continually evaluate their equipment, training and procedures to find ways to improve the services they provide.

Local agencies participate in training opportunities and upgrade equipment as funding becomes available. Keeping pace with changing technology, response techniques and safety practices helps prepare personnel for emergencies ranging from everyday calls to large-scale disasters.

“Staying current with new technology,



Travis Holder

techniques and best practices helps ensure our responders are prepared for a wide variety of emergencies,” Holder said.

Medical emergencies, motor vehicle crashes, fires and severe weather are among the incidents Ballard County responders are most likely to encounter. Although many calls may be considered routine, emergency personnel must also be ready when an incident becomes larger or

more complex.

“Our staff and volunteers train regularly to ensure they remain familiar with current response techniques, equipment and safety procedures,” Holder said. “This ongoing training helps responders remain prepared to handle both routine emergencies and larger, more complex incidents.”

Residents also have an important role in helping emergency personnel do their jobs safely. Holder said one of the most helpful things people can do during an emergency is avoid the incident area and give responders the room they need to work.

“Emergency scenes often involve numerous responders, vehicles and moving parts, and unnecessary traffic or bystanders can delay operations and create additional hazards,” he said.

Residents should also follow directions from emergency officials and obtain information from trusted sources. Preparing a basic household emergency plan before disaster strikes can help families respond more safely and calmly when faced with severe weather, a fire or another crisis.

The events of Sept. 11 demonstrated extraordinary courage, sacrifice and cooperation among first responders and emergency agencies. More than two decades later, those lessons remain important in communities across the nation.

In Ballard County, preparedness continues through training, communication and partnerships among the people who stand ready to respond whenever the call comes.

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– Ralph Waldo Emerson, poet

“Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord.”
– Psalm 33:12

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Veterans and families invited to breakfast Sept. 12

By Lurna Pruett
KPI Writer

American Legion Auxiliary Unit 3 in LaCenter will host a breakfast for area veterans and their family members Saturday, Sept. 12.

A full breakfast buffet will be served from 9 to 10 a.m. at American Legion Post 3, located at the Ballard County Fairgrounds, 152 Fairground Drive in LaCenter. A business meeting will follow the breakfast.

The gathering will also offer an opportunity to learn more about the American Legion and American

Legion Auxiliary, two organizations dedicated to supporting veterans, active-duty military members and their families.

Anyone interested in becoming involved, sharing resources, building connections and helping carry the organizations' mission forward is encouraged to attend.

New memberships and membership renewals are now being accepted for the 2026-27 fiscal year for both the American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary.



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COURAGE,
from page 1

helps ensure they are ready for the wide range of emergencies they may face while also allowing them to respond as safely and effectively as possible. Although

firefighters prepare for large-scale emergencies and complex rescues, one of the most common dangers they encounter begins in an ordinary place — the kitchen.

Kyle said unattended cooking is the most common local fire hazard. His advice to residents is straightforward: “Never leave anything cooking unattended.”

Cooking fires can develop quickly, particularly when grease or other flammable materials are involved. Staying in the kitchen and closely watching food while it cooks can prevent a small mistake

from becoming a life-threatening emergency.

As the community remembers the firefighters who gave their lives on Sept. 11, Kyle said their willingness to accept personal risk for the sake of others remains an enduring lesson for today’s emergency responders.

“While we strive to be as safe as we can be while doing the job, there are inherent risks that you have to take,” Kyle said. “Knowing that there is risk, accepting that risk and going anyway is the example they gave and should be taken to heart by all responders today.”



Stephen Kyle





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Barlow firefighters face manpower, water challenges

By Laurna Pruett
KPI Writer

BARLOW — When a structure catches fire, Barlow City firefighters may be battling more than flames. Limited manpower and the lack of nearby fire hydrants can make rural fires especially difficult and dangerous.



LaDoy Owens

Barlow City Fire Chief LaDoy Owens said the number of firefighters available often depends on the time of day and which volunteers can leave their jobs or other responsibilities.

“As a volunteer department, we rely heavily on automatic mutual aid from other departments throughout the county to provide additional manpower for rural, as well as many in-city, structural fire responses,” Owens said.

Water supply presents another serious challenge. Because many rural areas do not have fire hydrants, neighboring departments use tankers and engines to shuttle water to the scene.

“Maintaining a

continuous water supply is critical to the safety of interior firefighters,” Owens said. “A loss of water during an interior operation can have potentially fatal consequences for those operating inside the structure.”

While dependable equipment is important, Owens said trained volunteers remain a department’s most valuable resource.

“Without people, all the equipment in the station is useless,” he said. “Whether it is daytime or nighttime, when the tones drop, someone has to respond.”

Becoming a certified volunteer firefighter requires a substantial commitment. The first certification level includes

approximately 115 hours of training, while the second brings the total to roughly 300 hours. Owens said the training gives volunteers valuable skills and an opportunity to make a lasting difference.

“A fire department is only as strong as the people willing to answer the call,” Owens said. “We need members of our community who are willing to step forward, commit the time required to train and serve their neighbors when they need help the most.”

The department is also applying for a grant to help fund a new fire station. According to Owens, the existing station does not have running water for its bathrooms, showers



for firefighters to remove dangerous contaminants after a fire or adequate washing facilities for protective gear.

If the grant is approved, the new station would provide firefighters with a safer place to train, prepare for

emergencies, clean their equipment and recover after calls.

“We are servants,” Owens said. “By God’s grace, we humbly do the best we can to serve our neighbors during some of the worst moments of their lives.”

Ready When Every Second Counts

Carlisle County strengthens emergency response through planning, technology and regional cooperation

By Laurna Pruett
KPI Writer

In a rural county, emergency preparedness is not measured solely by the number of ambulances, rescue vehicles or responders available. It is also measured by how well agencies know one another, how quickly they can organize and whether they know where to turn when an emergency grows beyond their local resources.

For Carlisle County Emergency Management Agency and EMS Director Joshua Glover, preparation means knowing what the county has, understanding what it may need and building relationships before disaster strikes.

“Being a small county actually helps us in some ways because most of our responders already know each other and have worked together before,” Glover said.

If a major emergency occurred today, Emergency Management would coordinate with

Carlisle County EMS, local fire departments, law enforcement, River County 9-1-1, the Carlisle County Fiscal Court and other local agencies.

Depending on the situation, the county could deploy ambulances, fire and rescue equipment, law enforcement officers, emergency management personnel and drones. Drones can assist with missing-person searches and damage assessments while providing responders with a better view of an incident without placing them in unnecessary danger.

Glover said Carlisle County’s size also means local resources could become stretched during a major or prolonged emergency. When more personnel or equipment are needed, the county can request mutual aid from surrounding counties and seek assistance from regional and state agencies.

“A big part of being prepared is knowing what we have available, knowing who we can call when we need help

and training together before an emergency happens,” he said.

Communication and organization become especially important when several agencies respond to the same incident. River County 9-1-1 manages dispatch and communications, while EMS, fire departments and law enforcement fulfill their individual responsibilities at the scene.

Emergency Management helps coordinate the overall response and secures additional resources when necessary. During a larger incident, agencies can establish an Incident Command System to organize personnel, determine priorities and ensure everyone is working toward the same goal.

Carlisle County has also continued investing in the equipment and training needed to strengthen that response.

Carlisle County EMS recently received approximately \$544,000 through the Rural Health Transformation Grant. A portion of that



Joshua Glover

funding will be used to begin a Community Paramedicine Program. The funding will also allow the department to update training equipment and provide more realistic, hands-on simulations.

“We hope some of these training improvements will benefit not only Carlisle County but responders throughout our region,” Glover said.

Although new equipment gives responders additional capabilities, Glover said it is only useful when personnel know how to operate it confidently under pressure.

“Equipment is important, but we also have to make sure our people are trained and

comfortable using it when the time comes,” he said.

Severe weather remains one of Carlisle County’s greatest emergency threats. The county may face tornadoes, severe thunderstorms, flooding, winter storms, extreme heat and other weather-related dangers.

Responders must also remain prepared for structure fires, serious vehicle crashes, medical emergencies, hazardous-material incidents, missing persons, power outages and other events that require several departments to work together.

Residents can make that response safer and more effective by preparing their households before an emergency occurs. Glover encourages families to create an emergency plan, identify where they will shelter during severe weather and keep medications and basic supplies readily available.

Households should also have more than one way to receive weather warnings

and emergency information. During an emergency, residents should listen to local officials, take warnings seriously and stay off the roads when travel is discouraged.

People should avoid damaged areas, obey barricades and never attempt to drive through flooded roadways.

“The more prepared our residents are, the more our responders can focus on the people who need help the most,” Glover said.

As communities reflect on the lives lost and the sacrifices made on Sept. 11, Carlisle County’s responders continue the daily work of preparing for events they hope will never happen. That readiness is built through training, improved equipment and cooperation—not only within the county, but across the region.

For Carlisle County, being prepared means recognizing the challenges of serving a rural community while making certain that, when every second counts, help is ready to move.

A children’s book that shaped a generation:

The Man Who Walked Between the Towers

By **Ciro Astarita**
KPI Writer

Children born around and after September 11th do



The Man Who Walked Between the Towers by Mordicai Gerstein (2003)

not remember a world before foreign attackers on domestic soil was considered a real threat by many. Now, we live in a very

different world. Well before 9/11, there was a french stunt performer named Phillipe Petite(1949-Present) who dared to do something no one else in the world would even conceive. In August 1974, a rope was installed between the top of the World Trade Center Buildings. Petite walked between the towers around 1,350 feet above ground and performed for about 45 minutes. He did this illegally. Following the spectacle, people were amused and even inspired. However, many felt Petite should be punished. Richard Kuh–the New York County District Attorney at the time–dropped all charges. He did this under one condition...he must perform a free aerial

show for children in Central Park. Petit obliged and it was so. Many years later, Petit’s story was immortalized in the children’s book titled ‘The Man Who Walked Between the Towers’(2003) written and illustrated by Mordicai Gerstein. Just one year after publishing his book,

Gerstein received a 2004 Caldecott Medal for his illustrations. This award is given to the previous year’s most distinguished children’s book. His book was widely available at Scholastic Book Fairs across the United States throughout the 2000’s and 2010’s and continues to be

an entry point for youth to understand such a tragic event. Discussing difficult subjects with kids can be challenging for parents. Literature is one of the best ways youth can be exposed to complex themes and topics in an appropriate way.



Philippe Petit: ‘I didn’t plan to cross eight times.’ Photograph: Alan Weiner/AP

Who are first responders and what do they do?

When an emergency happens, people often look for someone who can help. Whether it is a house fire, a traffic accident, a medical emergency or a severe storm, first responders are among the first people called to protect lives, provide assistance and bring order to difficult situations. First responders are trained professionals and volunteers who respond to emergencies. The most familiar first responders are firefighters, police officers and emergency medical personnel. Other emergency workers, including 911 dispatchers, search-and-rescue teams and emergency management officials, also play important roles in helping communities during times of crisis.

Firefighters do much more than fight fires. They respond to house fires,

vehicle accidents, hazardous-material incidents and other emergencies. Firefighters rescue people, provide first aid, operate specialized equipment and help prevent fires through inspections and public education. Many firefighters are also trained as emergency medical responders. Firefighters may work in dangerous conditions, including smoke, extreme heat and unstable buildings. They must rely on training, teamwork and specialized equipment to protect themselves and others. Volunteer firefighters are especially important in many communities, where they answer emergency calls while also working regular jobs and caring for their families.

Police officers help protect people and maintain public safety. They respond

to accidents, crimes, dangerous situations and calls for assistance. Officers may provide first aid, direct traffic, secure emergency scenes, assist with evacuations and help connect people with other emergency services. Their work often involves making quick decisions while keeping others safe. Police officers also investigate crimes, protect important locations and help communities prepare for emergencies. Their presence can help prevent dangerous situations and provide reassurance when people feel frightened or uncertain.

Emergency medical personnel, including emergency medical technicians (EMTs) and paramedics, provide medical care when someone is sick or injured. They assess patients, give emergency treatment, help stabilize serious conditions and transport people to hospitals when

needed. Their training allows them to begin important medical care before a patient reaches the emergency room. EMTs and paramedics respond to many different calls, including falls, breathing problems, injuries and other medical emergencies. They must remain calm, communicate clearly and make careful decisions while providing care.

911 dispatchers are another essential part of the emergency response system. When someone calls 911, dispatchers gather information, determine what help is needed and send the appropriate responders. They may also provide instructions to callers while help is on the way. Dispatchers must listen carefully and remain calm, even when callers are frightened or confused. Their ability to gather accurate information helps emergency

crews arrive with the right equipment and assistance. First responders often work together. At a serious accident, for example, police may secure the scene, firefighters may help remove someone from a damaged vehicle and medical personnel may provide treatment. Each group has a different responsibility, but their shared goal is to protect life and reduce harm.

First responders also prepare for emergencies before they happen. They participate in training, practice emergency plans, inspect equipment and educate the public about safety. Their preparation helps communities respond more effectively when unexpected events occur. Their work can be challenging, unpredictable and demanding. Yet every day, first responders answer calls for help and serve their

communities with courage, skill and compassion. They remind us that when emergencies occur, we are not alone. Communities can support first responders by learning basic safety skills, keeping emergency numbers available, following evacuation instructions and showing appreciation for their service. A simple thank-you can mean a great deal to the people who spend their days helping others. First responders are an important part of every community. Their dedication, training and willingness to serve help make neighborhoods safer and stronger. Whether responding to a major disaster or a single call for assistance, they play a vital role in protecting lives and helping people through difficult moments.

Preparedness begins before the sirens sound

Graves County emergency manage says residents, responders and community partners all have a role

By **Laurna Pruett**
KPI Writer

When disaster strikes, emergency responders move toward the danger—but they cannot face it alone.

In Graves County, a large-scale response can involve firefighters, law enforcement officers, medical personnel, road crews, schools, churches, nonprofit organizations and ordinary residents. Emergency Management

Director Tracy Warner said the county’s strength lies in bringing those resources together while encouraging families to prepare before help is needed.

“Take action before the storm,” Warner said. “Make sure you have a plan, so when something occurs, you and your family will know what to do.”

If a major emergency happened today, Graves County could immediately

call upon its nine volunteer fire departments, the Mayfield Fire Department, Mayfield-Graves County EMS, the Graves County Sheriff’s Office, the Mayfield Police Department and Kentucky State Police.

The Graves County Road Department, Mayfield Public Works and Kentucky Transportation Cabinet could assist with transportation and debris-



Tracy Warner

related needs. Graves County Schools, Mayfield Independent Schools and Northside

Baptist Christian School could also become part of the response, along with the county’s churches and nonprofit organizations.

Coordinating those agencies is one of Emergency Management’s primary responsibilities. Warner said her office gathers information from throughout the county to develop a clearer picture of the emergency and the

resources needed.

If conditions warrant, a local declaration of emergency can be filed with Kentucky Emergency Management. Decisions involving requests for mutual aid, additional equipment and personnel can then be discussed and coordinated through the local Emergency Operations Center. Communication

see **SIRENS**,
page 8

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SIRENS,
from page 7

is critical when numerous departments are working across a widespread disaster area. Each Graves County volunteer fire chief recently received a radio capable of communicating with other responding agencies during an emergency. The radios were purchased through Independence Bank’s Tornado Relief Fund.

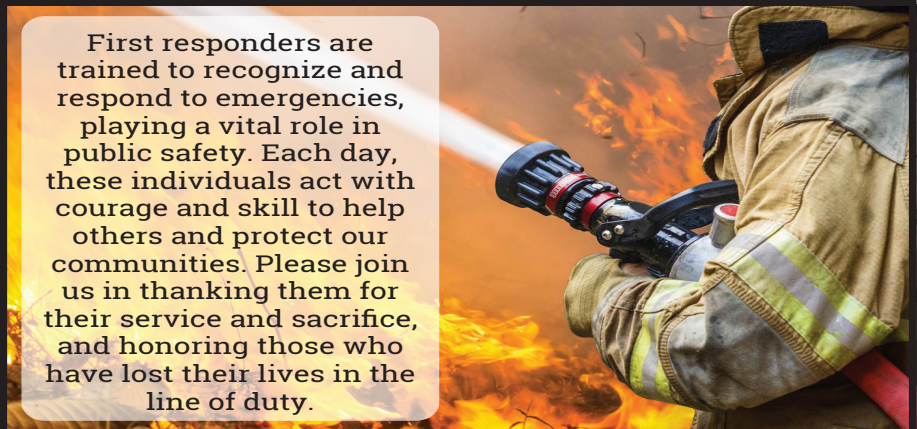
Departments have also added specialized rescue tools. All Graves County volunteer fire departments received grain-bin rescue equipment, while Mayfield-Graves County Fire and Rescue upgraded the motor on its swift-water rescue boat, improving its ability to operate in rough conditions. The rescue squad also partnered with the Graves County Sheriff’s Office to purchase a drone. Warner said it has

already been used in several types of situations, providing responders with an aerial view that can assist with searches, assessments and other emergency operations. Training ensures personnel can use those resources effectively. Emergency agencies must meet minimum training requirements, but Warner said many responders go beyond what is required. Their preparation includes

hazardous-materials awareness and operations, driver training, CPR, first aid and the use of automated external defibrillators. Graves County has faced flooding, severe thunderstorms and tornadoes, but Warner said her responsibility is to consider an even greater threat. “As an emergency manager, I plan for the worst-case possibility, which in our area would be an earthquake,” she said.

Residents can further assist responders by reserving 911 for life-threatening emergencies. During a recent storm, fallen trees blocked numerous roads across Graves County. Emergency crews worked to clear those routes so ambulances, firefighters and law enforcement officers could reach people facing immediate danger. Agencies have continued cleaning up damage left by the storm.

before the next emergency occurs. “There are several organizations that need your help,” she said. The anniversary of Sept. 11 is a solemn reminder of the courage shown by first responders and of the extraordinary impact people can make when they unite in service. In Graves County, that spirit is reflected not only in the professionals and volunteers who answer emergency calls, but also in the schools, churches, organizations and residents prepared to stand beside them.



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Preparing responders also involves attending to details that may seem small until an emergency begins. Vehicles must be fueled, chainsaws need to be in working order and teams require food, water and other supplies to remain in the field. “Responders have to take care of themselves and their families before they can help others,” Warner said. That same principle applies to the public. Warner encourages residents to maintain enough food, water, medications, first-aid materials and other necessities to care for themselves for at least three days. Families should develop a plan in advance rather than waiting until severe weather or another emergency is already underway.

Every unnecessary call or avoidable trip into a damaged area can pull limited resources away from those who need them most. Preparing ahead, following official instructions and remaining clear of affected areas allow responders to concentrate on saving lives and protecting property. Warner also encourages residents to consider serving their communities

Disaster response begins with trained personnel and dependable equipment. Community resilience, however, begins much earlier—with a plan, a willingness to help and the understanding that preparedness is everyone’s responsibility.



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How to honor first responders

This Friday marks the 25th anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The attacks on September 11, 2001 remain the deadliest terror attacks in world history, claiming more than 2,900 lives and causing countless injuries and long-term health problems for tens of thousands of civilians and first responders.

The 25th anniversary of 9/11 will no doubt evoke responses that span the emotional spectrum. Sadness may dominate such responses, but the anniversary of 9/11 also is a great time to reflect on the efforts of first responders. First responders played a vital role on 9/11, and many lost their lives and/or suffered long-term health consequences resulting from their selfless efforts to save innocent victims of the attacks.

In the two decades since the 9/11 attacks, first responders have continued to make countless sacrifices to ensure their communities are safe and peaceful places to call home. The 25th anniversary of 9/11 is a great time to recognize the efforts of first responders and honor them for all they do.

• **Donate to local fire departments.** According to the U.S. Fire Administration, 54 percent of active firefighting personnel are volunteers. Many of those volunteer firefighters work for underfunded departments that are in need of financial support. Donating to such departments is a great way to show first responders how much their efforts are appreciated. Donations may be used to purchase new equipment, upgrade existing facilities, provide vital training, and/or improve response times, the latter of which can increase the likelihood that firefighters make it through calls safe and sound.

• **Back legislation to support wounded first responders.** Many first responders suffer significant mental and physical injuries while on the job. Various nonprofit organizations help wounded first responders who may need to make modifications to their homes or purchase costly equipment to get through their daily lives. But nonprofit organizations cannot go it alone in support of wounded first responders. Citizens can do their part by promoting and voting for local, state and national legislation that makes it easy for wounded first responders to get

the help they need, when they need it.

In addition to urging local politicians

see **HONOR** page 10



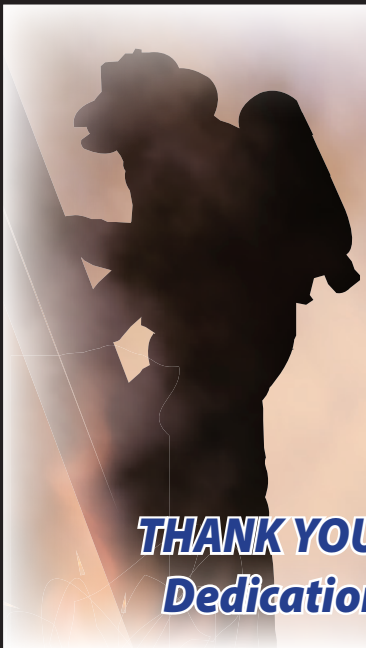
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HONOR,
from page 9

to support such legislation, private citizens can utilize social media to promote proposals and other efforts to support wounded first responders. Many 9/11 first responders are still fighting for government-backed support to treat injuries suffered 25 years ago, and a vocal citizenry can be a strong asset in

their fight and the fight of countless others in need of help.

• *Commit to supporting first responders year-round.* The 25th anniversary of 9/11 will call attention to the efforts of first responders on that day 25 years ago as well as the countless times since then that these brave men and women have served their communities. But first responders deserve vocal, year-

round support. Make a concerted effort to thank policemen, firefighters, EMTs, nurses, and doctors in your community whenever you interact with them, and urge others to follow suit.

First responders play a vital role in communities across the globe. The 25th anniversary of 9/11 can serve as a catalyst for communities to express their support for first responders.

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– RICHARD K. SCHACHERN

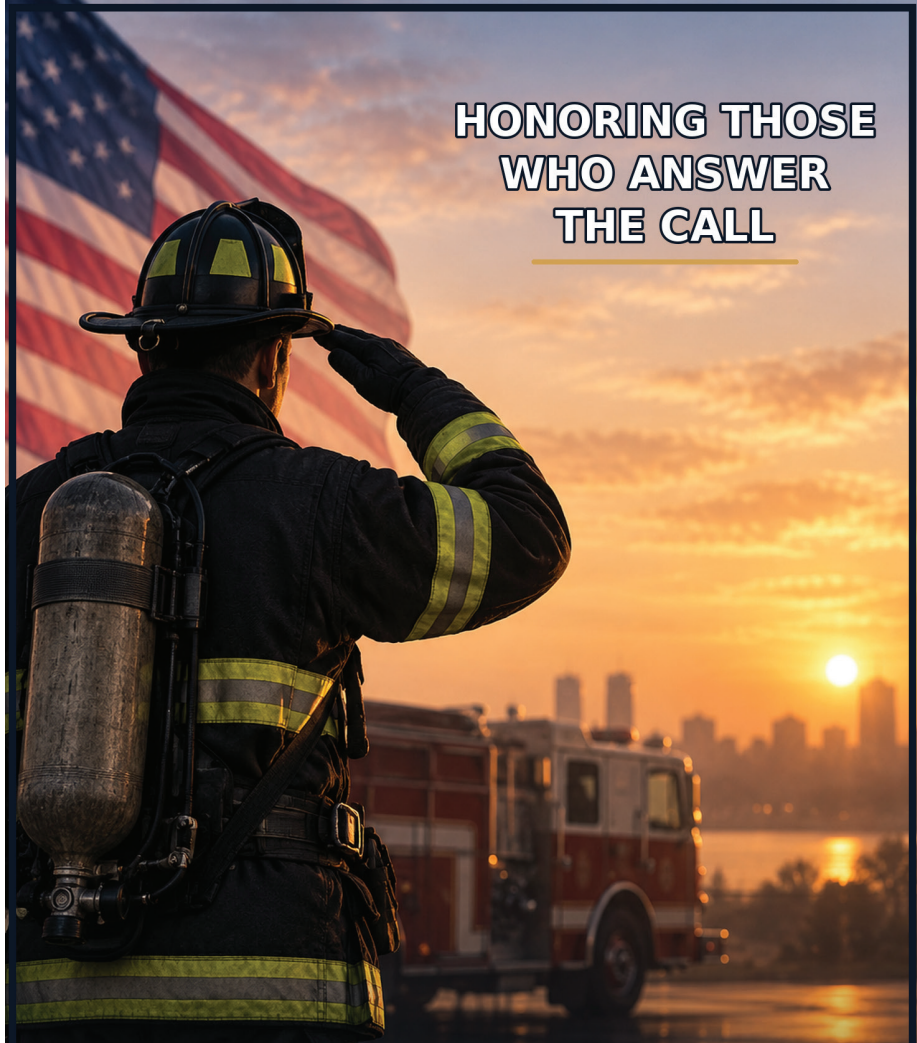
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The role EMS workers play in your community

Every community has its unsung heroes. Without the contributions of selfless individuals whose efforts often go unnoticed, thriving communities would not be as safe, welcoming or successful.

EMS workers are among the most important individuals in a community. The contributions of these individuals, many of whom work as unpaid volunteers, are invaluable and worthy of recognition. Making an effort to understand the role EMS workers play is a great first step toward showing them how much they're appreciated.

What is EMS?

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Office of EMS notes that Emergency Medical Services, or EMS, is a system that provides emergency medical care. The Office of EMS also notes that EMS does not exist in isolation, as it is integrated with other services and systems with the goal of maintaining and enhancing the health and safety of a community and its residents. This is why EMS services, though they vary from community to community, may be based in fire departments, hospitals, independent government agencies, or nonprofit corporations.



What duties do EMS workers perform?

Because EMS is a system, EMS workers wear a range of hats. The Office of EMS notes that

the responsibilities and services EMS workers provide may include:

- Incident recognition
- Access 911
- Dispatch
- First responder
- Basic life support
- Advanced life support
- Air/ground transport
- Emergency department services

- Specialty care
- Patient rehabilitation
- Prevention and awareness
- Public education

When do EMS personnel interact with their communities?

Many people only encounter EMS workers during medical emergencies when they are most in need of help. That underscores the vital role EMS workers play in public health and safety and just how integral they are in instances that could escalate into life-or-death situations.

Recognition of the roles EMS workers play is a great way to show support for these often unsung community heroes.

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The importance of first responders

When an emergency strikes, first responders are often the first people we look to for help. Firefighters, police officers, emergency medical technicians (EMTs), and paramedics play a vital role in protecting lives, providing assistance, and helping communities recover from unexpected situations. Their work is essential to the safety and well-being of people in every community.

First responders are trained to act quickly and make important decisions under pressure. Firefighters respond to fires, vehicle crashes, and other emergencies, working to rescue people and protect property. Police officers help maintain public safety, respond

to dangerous situations, and assist people in need. EMTs and paramedics provide medical care at the scene of an emergency and during transportation to a hospital.

Their work extends far beyond major disasters. First responders answer calls involving medical emergencies, accidents, fires, and other situations that require immediate attention. They may help someone experiencing a medical crisis, respond to a traffic collision, or assist a family whose home has been damaged. In each situation, their goal is to protect lives and provide the help people need.

First responders also spend time preparing for

emergencies before they happen. Training exercises, safety inspections, public education programs, and community events help them remain prepared. Their knowledge and experience can also help residents learn how to prevent accidents, respond to emergencies, and protect themselves and others.

Being a first responder requires courage, dedication, teamwork, and compassion. These professionals often work long hours, including nights, weekends, and holidays. They may miss important family occasions or face difficult circumstances while helping strangers. Despite

see **IMPORTANCE**,
page 14



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"A hero is someone who has given his or her life to something bigger than oneself."
— Joseph Campbell

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IMPORTANCE,
from page 13

these challenges, they continue to serve because they understand the importance of their work.

First responders also provide reassurance during frightening moments. Their presence can help people feel safer and remind communities that help is available when it is needed most. Whether responding to a serious accident or helping a family through a difficult situation, their service can make a

lasting difference.

Supporting first responders is an important responsibility for everyone. Learning basic safety skills, keeping emergency contact information available, following safety rules, and treating emergency personnel with respect are simple ways to show appreciation. Communities can also support local departments through fundraisers, volunteer opportunities, and public recognition.

It is equally important to remember that first responders

are people who experience stress, fatigue, and difficult emotions. Offering understanding and support can help them continue their demanding work.

First responders are an essential part of every community. Their service, sacrifice, and commitment make a lasting difference. They deserve our gratitude not only during emergencies, but every day. By recognizing their contributions and supporting their work, we help build safer, stronger, and more caring communities.

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— THEODORE ROOSEVELT

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Future generations will inherit

Twenty-five years after the attacks, a young Kentuckian’s white Navy cap stands as an example of what one generation owes the next

American Airlines Flight 77 was over eastern Kentucky when hijackers likely took control on the morning of Sept. 11, 2001. They turned the plane south, then east toward Washington.

At the Pentagon, Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Edward Earhart, 26, of Morehead, was working on a day he was supposed to be off. A colleague needed help, so he came in.

Earhart’s work had little in common with the images most Americans associate with war. He was an aerographer’s mate who helped Navy ships find safe routes around sea ice. An iceberg appeared on his computer screen saver. After his funeral, coworkers signed his white Navy cap and gave it to his family. The cap is now part of the National September 11 Memorial & Museum’s collection.

That cap offers a way to see past the scale of Sept. 11, which can flatten individual lives into one enormous national tragedy. Earhart did not report to the Pentagon expecting to enter history. He went because someone needed him.

Twenty-five years later, that distinction matters. The museum estimates that 100 million Americans have no living memory of the attacks. Those who do often remember small, precise things: the room where they first heard, the television they watched or the person



Sen. Jason Howell



they called. Younger Americans have none of that. They know Sept. 11 only through what others choose to tell them.

Pearl Harbor made this passage before it, from a day that millions remembered to a history later generations received. Sept. 11 is now following that path.

Memory itself cannot be handed down. What can be passed along is an honest account that keeps the people inside it. The story belongs to Americans who were not yet born just as surely as it belongs to those who watched it unfold.

It also extends well beyond the smoke and wreckage. This year, the 9/11 Memorial’s anniversary commemoration will include a seventh moment of silence. Six mark the times when the planes struck, the towers fell and Flight 93 crashed. The seventh, observed after the reading of names, honors those who later died

from 9/11-related illnesses. It has no corresponding minute on the clock. That part of the toll accumulated quietly over years.

By late 2001, the 101st Airborne Division’s 3rd Brigade had deployed from Fort Campbell to Afghanistan. Thousands of Kentucky National Guard soldiers and airmen would mobilize in the years ahead. Those deployments reached far beyond the people in uniform. Kentucky families planned around departures, endured months apart and waited for news from far away. Children grew older between homecomings. The television coverage eventually ended; the effects on those households did not.

That, too, belongs to the history later generations will inherit. The date alone cannot carry it.

We will not always be here to explain why Sept. 11 matters.

The date will remain, and so will the familiar footage. The people are easy to lose, but they are the most important thing we must treasure.

“Never forget” cannot mean repeating two words every September. It means remembering the names, the lives they lived and what followed those terrorists’ attack, and carefully preserving that story.

Someday, no living American will be able to begin, “I remember where I was.” When that day comes, the record should show

more than how the buildings fell. It should also preserve the signed white cap of a 26-year-old Kentuckian who went to the Pentagon because a fellow service member needed help.

###

Sen. Jason Howell, R-Murray, represents the 1st Senate District, including Calloway, Crittenden, Fulton, Graves, Hickman, Lyon, and Trigg Counties. He co-chairs the Interim Joint Committee (IJC) on

Agriculture and the Tobacco Settlement Agreement Fund Oversight Committee. He is also vice chair of the Legislative Oversight and Investigations Committee. Howell also serves on the IJC’s on Banking and Insurance; Economic Development and Workforce Investment; Licensing, Occupations, and Administrative Regulations; and Tourism, Small Business, and Information Technology.

“September 11 was, and remains, above all an immense human tragedy... a challenge to the values of freedom, tolerance and decency.”

— TONY BLAIR

A cheap charger could cost more than a new phone

By Laurna Pruett
KPI Writer

Replacing a lost or damaged phone charger with a low-cost option may seem harmless, but poorly made or incompatible chargers can cause expensive damage—and create a potential safety hazard.

Technicians at Mike’s iFix, located at 3125 Lone Oak Road, Suite A, in Paducah, said they have seen firsthand what can happen when consumers use cheap or incompatible chargers.

“These can range from excessive heat and damaged charging ports to premature battery wear and, in more serious cases, damage to charging components on the phone’s motherboard,” the repair shop explained. “A quality charger should properly regulate the power being delivered to the device.”

A charger that fails to properly control that power may harm the battery, charging port or internal components.



Damage may happen gradually, making it difficult for the owner to realize the charger is the source of the problem.

Warning signs can include a phone or charger becoming unusually hot, intermittent or inconsistent charging, unusually slow charging or repeated “accessory not supported” messages. A buzzing sound, electrical odor or battery that suddenly begins

draining faster than normal may also indicate trouble.

“Frayed cables, loose connectors and chargers that become extremely hot should be replaced immediately,” Mike’s iFix advised.

Consumers should choose a charger made by the device’s manufacturer or a reputable third-party product carrying certification from a recognized independent safety-testing organization.

Suspiciously low prices, missing manufacturer information, misspelled packaging and the absence of a recognized safety certification may indicate a counterfeit or poorly made product.

Where a device is charged also matters. Phones and tablets should be placed on a hard, open surface where heat can escape. Charging a phone on a bed, couch or underneath

a pillow can trap heat next to material that could burn.

Chargers should also be kept away from water and flammable objects. Devices should not be handled with wet hands while plugged in, and charging electronics should not be left unattended for extended periods.

Mikel Scott of M. Scott Electric said homeowners can add another layer of electrical protection

by having a surge protector installed at the home’s main electrical panel. This type of equipment can help protect electronics throughout the home from voltage surges and reduce reliance on multiple plug-in devices. It should be installed by a qualified electrician.

However, even whole-home surge protection cannot make a damaged or poorly manufactured charger safe.

Mike’s iFix said spending a little more for a quality charger is minor compared with replacing a phone that may cost anywhere from \$300 to \$2,000 or more. The greatest loss, however, may not be the device itself.

When a phone fails, irreplaceable photographs, messages and other memories stored on it can also be lost.

Saving a few dollars on a charger may feel like a bargain, but when expensive technology, personal memories and household safety are at stake, the cheapest choice could become the most costly.

Creative ways to boost health

Gym memberships, fitness classes and exercise equipment can add up, but staying active doesn’t have to strain your budget.

Walking, home workouts and community programs can provide inexpensive ways to:

- Build strength
- Improve balance
- Support overall health

FREE OR LOW-COST OPTIONS

Start by checking programs available in your community:

Senior centers may offer:

- Free or low-cost exercise classes
- Walking groups
- Other activities for

older adults

Recreation departments, parks, faith communities and nonprofit organizations may offer similar programs.

Public libraries may provide:

- Exercise videos
- Equipment
- Information about local fitness programs
- Some Medicare Advantage and Medicare Supplement plans include fitness benefits at no additional cost.

Programs such as SilverSneakers and Renew Active may provide eligible members with:

- Access to participating fitness

centers

- Exercise classes
- Online workouts

Benefits vary by plan and location, so check with your insurer to see what’s available.

WORKING OUT AT HOME

Home exercise can be an inexpensive option, especially for people with limited transportation or



when weather makes outdoor activity difficult.

Online videos and streaming programs offer routines such as:

Low-impact aerobics

- Strength exercises
- Balance exercises
- Flexibility exercises

Many activities require little or no equipment:

- Walking or dancing can provide aerobic

activity.

Wall pushups and other body-weight exercises can help strengthen muscles.

Resistance bands, light hand weights or household items can add resistance to some exercises.

A sturdy chair can provide support for certain movements.

Choose activities appropriate for your abilities.

Increase your activity gradually.

USING TECHNOLOGY

Free and low-cost digital resources can make it easier to exercise at home.

Health plans, community organizations and

fitness programs may offer:

- Live classes
- On-demand classes
- Online workouts
- Apps can help users: Find workouts Schedule activity Track progress

When choosing an online workout:

- Look for programs appropriate for your fitness and mobility level.
- Choose instructors who demonstrate modifications when needed.

The goal isn’t to follow the trendiest routine.

The goal is to find safe, affordable activities you’ll actually want to keep doing.

What to do about wellness over 50

Reaching one’s fiftieth birthday in optimal health is an accomplishment to be proud of. The hard work required to be healthy in midlife includes adhering to a nutritious diet and exercising regularly. Once individuals cross the threshold and enter their 50s, they can look to some additional strategies to maintain their physical and mental well-being for decades to come.

• **Get a pet.**
Many people 50 and older qualify as “empty nesters,” a term applied to adults whose children have grown up and moved out of their homes. Some empty nesters experience a phenomenon known as “empty nest syndrome,” which the Mayo Clinic notes can be marked by feelings of sadness or loss. Pets can help people over 50 with no children at home overcome feelings linked to empty nest syndrome. In 2018, the University of Michigan National Poll on Healthy Aging found that 86 percent of pet owners felt their pets make them feel loved while 73 percent said their pets provided a sense of purpose. Pets also can ensure individuals over 50 stay physically active and provide opportunities to connect with other people.

• **Prioritize learning.**
Whether it’s taking music lessons, going back to school or mastering a new hobby, learning has a profound effect on aging brains. For example, a 2013 study published in the journal Psychological Science found that memory function is improved by engagement in demanding everyday tasks. That study reported that people who learned new skills experienced

greater memory improvement than people who only socialized or participated in activities that were not as cognitively engaging.

• **Make an effort to improve balance.**
Various factors contribute to a decline in balance as adults age. For example, a decline in muscle mass that begins when people are in their 30s is a normal part of aging. Over time, that natural decline affects strength and agility.
Balance exercises can be a valuable component of a fitness regimen that help individuals reduce their risk for falling as they advance through their 50s and into their 60s and 70s. That’s a significant benefit, as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that one out of every three adults age 65 and older experiences a fall each year, and as many as 30 percent of those falls lead to serious injury.

• **Embrace your inner socialite.** Socialization is important for people of all ages, including individuals 50 and over. A recent study from researchers at Michigan State found that valuing friendships was a strong predictor of health and happiness among older adults.
Opportunities to socialize with friends may increase as people navigate their 50s and children move out or become more independent. Individuals can take advantage of opportunities to socialize whenever possible.
Various strategies can help people maintain mental and physical wellness as they make their way through their 50s and beyond.



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Randy and Andrea Orr

The logo for Tribute Monuments, featuring a stylized leaf design and the text "TRIBUTE MONUMENTS".

A photograph of a woman and a man in a blue shirt, both smiling. The man is wearing a cap that says "VETERAN".

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Ways to Thank and Show Your Support for Our Community's First Responders

- 1 Say thanks to a first responder, in person or on social media.
- 2 Send a handwritten note expressing your gratitude to a local department or agency.

Continued on page 19

COURAGE IN EVERY CALL

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— Sandy Dahl, wife of Flight 93 pilot Jason Dahl



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Continued from page 18

Parents and teachers can help kids create handmade thank-you cards to deliver to first responders.

- 3 Have breakfast or lunch delivered to a local department or agency, enlisting neighbors or coworkers to help finance the gesture.
- 4 Consider making a donation to a local fire, EMS or police department, or to an organization that supports first responders and their families.
- 5 If you own a business, consider offering a courtesy discount for first responders!



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