

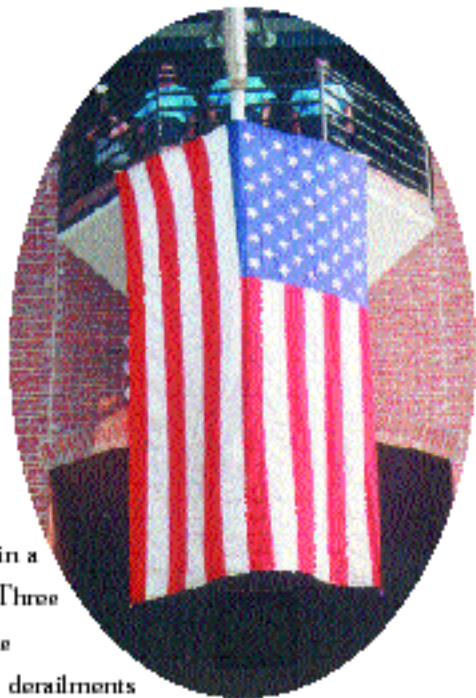
# Fire Department



When an Amtrak train collided with a transport truck last fall, our firefighters responded efficiently and professionally, bolstered by the training they received at the Public Safety Training Center in a cooperative program with the Three I Corporation. That invaluable training in handling collisions, derailments and hazardous waste spills was only part of the extensive 34,000 hours of classroom and field course work completed by our firefighters.

Our department responded to more than 3,300 calls for aid. With half of these calls being for emergency medical service, our 52 registered EMTs are a proven asset. At the same time, our Fire Prevention Bureau staff presented at least 65 programs to schools, civic groups and businesses in an effort to prevent fires and save lives, and our fire prevention specialists completed 1,500 inspections of local businesses to ensure that all fire codes are being met.

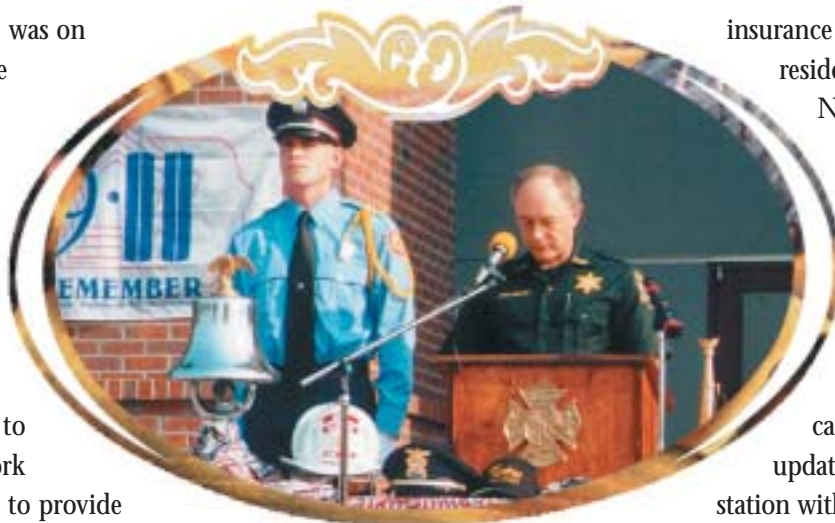
These human efforts were aided with the purchase of a second K-9, made possible through private funding. Bleck is specially trained to detect materials used in making bombs and has already assisted with 22 bomb threats. He joins Schroeder, our accelerant-



detecting K-9, who was on the scene for 48 fire investigations.

Reaching out to the community, the After the Fire Program once again provided help to families devastated by the loss of their homes to fire. Firefighters work with other agencies to provide temporary shelter and basic necessities. Also, through private donations, we installed more than 50 smoke detectors and 30 carbon monoxide testers in homes without them.

An important move was our decision to cancel our mutual aid agreement with Lauderdale County. Now, Meridian residents are no longer subsidizing the



insurance premiums of residents outside the city. Not only will this help keep down insurance premiums, it also puts us one step closer to the Class 3 fire rating that is our goal. As the fiscal year came to a close, we updated our oldest fire station with new air

conditioning, an air quality purification system, interior paint and a new roof. And, in September, we paused in a special ceremony at the Central Fire Station to honor those who died in the line of duty on September 11, 2001. The continuing war on terrorism is very real to us, as nine of our firefighters were activated to full military duty during the year.



*Opposite page, above left: Firefighters quickly respond to the scene when an 18-wheeler is hit by an Amtrak train and bursts into flames; opposite page, left: Firefighters practice pulling a victim out of a train during exercises at the Public Safety Training Center; opposite page, above left: A giant American flag is unfurled at the No. 1 Fire Station as part of the Sept. 11 commemoration; above: Firefighter Jim Fisher, left, tolls the fire bell to mark the time when the terrorists attacked the World Trade Center. The one-year commemoration ceremony was held jointly with all emergency service agencies, including the Lauderdale County Sheriff's Department, represented by Deputy Mike Mitchell.*