

Norfolk Insider

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“New Technology for Fighting Fires”

With the purchase of a new fire truck City of Norfolk firefighters have some of the newest technology available for fighting fires. The new fire engine is outfitted with a “compressed air foam system” or CAFS which uses less water and more foam to fight fires.



“CAFS is thought by many to be the most significant advancement in fire suppression technology since the horse drawn pumper. We can extinguish a fire more quickly at the same time reducing the damage that tremendous amounts of water can do to the involved structure and adjacent areas of the property not affected by the fire,” said Tim Wragge, Norfolk Assistant Fire Chief.

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, there are many advantages to using CAFS including easier handling of hoses with foam in them rather than water; reducing need to haul large amounts of water to a fire; and the capability of foam to reduce temperatures in a fire. Test results comparing the use of

foam and water have shown foam with a 3 to 1 more effective rate over water of extinguishing a fire.

“We’ve used foam with other fire apparatus but the new compressed air foam system enables us to spray foam that has less water in it which can be advantageous because it is more apt to cling to walls, eaves, roofs and trees to prevent rekindle by smothering the fire,” Wragge said.



The new fire truck is a 2014 Smeal Spartan Metro Star Chassis fire engine featuring a 1500 gallon per minute pump along with the CAFS system. The new fire engine replaces a 1992 fire truck.