

Firefighters recognized for years of service, retirements, new recruits welcomed to Howick Fire Department

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Howick Fire Chief Shawn Edwards hosted an outdoor awards ceremony on July 6 at the Howick Fire Department, presenting awards for years of service and retirement gifts, as well as welcoming new recruits and presenting their helmets.

Different levels of government and associations give awards, Edwards explained. The federal government issues a medal for exemplary service at 20 years. The provincial government issues long service medals at 25 years and bars at 30 years, and every five years after that.

The Howick Firefighters Association issues a framed print at 20 years, a plaque at 25 years, an acrylic flame at



Firefighter Kevin Stewart receiving his 30 years of service bars at the Howick Fire Department awards ceremony on July 6. Stewart works at Molesworth Feeds, where he is in charge of health and safety.



Firefighter Bil Graham receiving his 25 years of service medal at the Howick Fire Department awards ceremony on July 6. Graham is retired after a long career with Bell Canada.



Deputy Chief Doug Harkes receiving his 25 years of service medal at the Howick Fire Department awards ceremony on July 6.



Captain Scott Price receiving his framed print from the Howick Firefighters Association for 20 years of service at the Howick Fire Department awards ceremony on July 6.



Retiring member Rich Dolson with his plaque that now holds his helmet front patch. Dolson is retiring after six years of service.



Retiring member Shawn Jankura with his plaque that now holds his helmet front patch. Jankura is retiring after six years of service.



2021 Award Ceremony Recipients

YEARS OF SERVICE
Kevin Stewart – 30 years
Jamie Stewart – 30 years
Bil Graham – 25 years
Doug Harkes – 25 years
Scott Price – 20 years
Larry Kuepfer – 10 years

RETIRING FIREFIGHTERS
Rich Dolson
Shawn Jankura

NEW RECRUITS
Kyle Dickert
Cassandra Hamilton
Bobbi Loughran
Madelyn Yungblut

am very fortunate to lead this group of professional volunteers," he said.

Edwards has gone above and beyond for his team, including creating a unique memento for his retiring firefighters.

"There is no standard issue retirement gift that I am aware of," he said when asked about the gift. "Until recently Howick only presented a watch for retirement after 30 years, which is a long time."

"I decided to take it upon myself to start giving everyone who retires after five years of service a plaque that has their helmet front patch on it that they have worn since they joined the fire department," he said. "I have the plaques made up locally and mount the helmet front on them myself, and present them upon retirement." Howick Fire operates from its station located at 2005 Nelson St. in Gorrie.

The department comprises a fire chief, deputy chief, three fire captains, a training officer, a mechanical officer, and 18 volunteer firefighters.

To learn more about Howick Fire Department and its recruitment process, contact Edwards at howickfire@howick.ca.



New Recruit Kyle Dickert. Dickert is an operator/labourer with the County of Huron roads department, based out of Wroxeter.

30 years, and a watch at retirement after 30 years.

Several firefighters had already received their gifts privately from the association, but Edwards said, "we were playing catch up with the medals and service bars due to COVID."

Howick Township Reeve Doug Harding presented several awards to Edwards and complimented the team for their dedication, and welcomed the new recruits. Harding



New Recruit Cassandra Hamilton. Hamilton is a graduate from Lambton College Pre-Service Fire program and currently works as a vet tech in Listowel.

ing also commented how he is pleased to see so many young people joining the department. "On behalf of Howick council and staff, I would like to congratulate Firefighter Larry Kuepfer for 10 years of service, Firefighter Scott Price for 20 years of service and Firefighter Jamie Stewart for 30 years of service on the Howick Fire Department," Harding said.



New Recruit Bobbie Loughran. Loughran is a nurse at Listowel Memorial Hospital.

"I would also like to congratulate Fire Chief Edwards on receiving his Certified Municipal Manager Level III with fire service executive, fire suppression professional and fire training professional enhancements from the Ontario Municipal Management Institute," he added. "Howick Township council and staff appreciates all the volunteer firefighters and all they do to keep everyone safe."

Absent from the ceremony were Kuepfer and Stewart.



New Recruit Madelyn Yungblut. Yungblut is currently completing the Police Foundations program at Mohawk College and currently works as a Park Warden at a local provincial park.

According to the township's website, the Howick Fire Department has provided full fire protection services to the residents of Howick since 2010. The department also runs recruit training programs.

"In a time where the average service time of a volunteer firefighter is three to five years, Howick Township is extremely fortunate to have a number of firefighters with

20-plus years of experience," Edwards said. The department lost three of its volunteer firefighters – one to retirement, and two moved on – according to a report by the *Advance Times* in October 2020. At that time, the department was looking for three recruits. On July 6, Edwards welcomed four new recruits to the Howick Fire Department. "This year's recruit class has

completed all the components for NFPA 1001 Firefighter I & II," Edwards said in an email. "Provincial certification testing will be made available to them should they wish to pursue it."

Edwards went on to say how much he values his team and their dedication to the township. "The dedication and commitment of all our volunteer firefighters is fantastic and I

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