

JEFF donates funds to Fremont Fire Department

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(Photo: Molly Corfman/The News-Messenger)

FREMONT - The Fremont Fire Department got a boost from a group of local service organizations that pitched in and raised thousands of dollars for firefighter safety.

The Joint Effort for Fellowship (JEFF) donated \$4,221 to the fire department at JEFF Night, held Monday night at the Fremont Country Club.

The fellowship is composed of the Rotary Club of Fremont, the Fremont Exchange Club, Fremont Lions Club, the Soroptimist Club and the Fremont Kiwanis Club.

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Fremont Fire Chief David Foos served as this year's speaker at the Joint Effort for Fellowship Night at the Fremont Country Club. JEFF donated more than \$4,000 to the department for firefighter safety. (Photo: Molly Corfman/The News-Messenger)

Fremont Fire Department Chief David Foos spoke to the group about firefighter safety and the challenges and physical dangers his firefighters face from drug-related EMS calls and toxic exposure to carcinogenic materials and vapors.

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Scott Lang, president of the Rotary Club of Fremont, left, presents a check for \$4,221 to Fremont Fire Chief David Foos Monday at the Fremont Country Club. The money raised by the Joint Effort for Fellowship will be used for firefighter safety. (Photo: Molly Corfman/The News-Messenger)

Firefighters have a 68 percent chance of getting cancer in their lifetimes, compared to 22 percent of the general population, Foos said.

Brain, thyroid and testicular cancers are particularly prevalent among firefighters, according to Foos.

He said the department tries to take care of its firefighters so they can take care of city residents.

"I think we owe them every preventative measure we can give them," Foos said.

Foos said the JEFF donation would go toward Nano Flex coverings that shield the head and neck of firefighters from cancerous particles often found at fires.

Scott Lang, president of the Rotary Club of Fremont, said the five service organizations that make up JEFF decided to make the fire department the beneficiary of their fundraising efforts.

"I noticed they take care of their equipment, but they're on a tight budget," Lang said.

Lang said JEFF initially set a fundraising goal of \$2,300 for the project.

Foos said the Fremont department responded to 574 emergency calls in 2016. He said fire calls this year were slightly down, but EMS calls had risen 8-to-10 percent in relation to drug and overdose-related responses.

Heroin, fentanyl, carfentanil and a new street drug known as "grey death" have contributed to the increased calls, Foos said.

"We have street chemists. And it's tough to keep up with them," Foos said, noting the fire department frequently provided care to people who had passed out in their vehicles.

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