

From one Firehouse to another: Alton Fire Department receives life-saving donation

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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ALTON - A grant from the **Firehouse Subs' Public Safety Foundation** may help save the lives of Altonians facing cardiac emergencies.

An \$11,600 from the corporate sponsor was used to purchase a second **Lucas 2 CPR Device** for the **Alton Fire Department**. The first was purchased through the help of

several local businesses and a final donation from **OSF St. Anthony's Health Center**. **Alton Fire Chief Bernie Sebold** said that device has proved itself in the field already by saving one life.

"We did have the unit from OSF St. Anthony's that helped us save a life from traumatic cardiac arrest," Sebold said. "We cannot speak to his ultimate outcome, but when he hospital removed the device, he had a pulse after being found pulseless."

The device provides constant compression at timed intervals, which Sebold said provides proper CPR to a patient, as recommended by the **American Heart Association**. It also frees the firefighters to do other life-saving activities, such as inserting IVs to deliver medication. Sebold also said the device helps provide safety to first responders arriving at the scene and accompanying the person to the hospital.

"We don't have to stand in the back of an ambulance to keep providing CPR to a person," he said. "That's a lot safer for us. Also, this machine never gets tired."

Sebold said the machine can be placed on a person suffering cardiac arrest and left going until the patient either expires or is being treated by medical professionals. In fact, the machine may be plugged into a wall outlet at the hospital to remain on the patient until an emergency doctor or surgeon can operate on them.

This machine, donated by Firehouse Subs, will go into service immediately. Sebold said both fire stations now have a device, which means both sides of town will be served by it.

"We'll set one up on each side of the city, at both fire stations," he said. "We're very thankful for Firehouse and their contribution. Before this we used the old fashioned hands method. This is very much effective and gives patients the best chance for survival."

Alton Mayor Brant Walker said his main priority as mayor is public safety. He was thankful for yet another corporate sponsorship coming to aid the city.

"We are a much safer community, thanks to this contribution from Firehouse Subs," Walker said. "Our fire department does a great job. It doesn't do anything that isn't top notch."

Firehouse Subs franchise owner, **Hannah Lukowski** said the money for the Public Safety Foundation comes from Firehouse Subs customers.

"We ask them if they would like to round up their purchase to help first responders," she said. "Most people say yes, because they don't want to deal with the 11 or 12 cents in change bouncing around in their pocket."

Firehouse Subs Area Representative from St. Louis Michael Domico said he began working at the company six years ago only because it made the best sandwiches in the world, in his opinion. He said the grant program through the Public Safety Foundation has given as much as \$23 million to first responders across the country. He said that effort is why he now sees Firehouse Subs as much more than just a great place to get a sandwich.

"This is the heart of Firehouse Subs," Domico said.



Domico described going to Alabama with the CEO of the business after tornadoes ravaged the south. He said he was one of about a dozen people on a bus, driven by the CEO himself. Domico said that crew of a dozen was able to serve 1,000 people during their five day stay. He said the National Guard troops sent to aid in the relief efforts allowed them to walk the streets, giving the subs to first responders and people in need.

"It went from my head to that heart that day," Domico said. "It's one thing to see disasters on TV and feel bad for those people. It's a different story to see it in person."

The gift to the Alton Fire Department was a continuation of the soul behind those efforts, Domico said.