

Bethalto Fire Department Names Three New Chiefs

by Chris Rhodes, Reporter
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BETHALTO - Bethalto Fire Department has named James Schulte as Fire Chief, Brian Buhs as Deputy Fire Chief, and Dan Bartels as Assistant Fire Chief after the previous Chief Alex Campbell and Assistant Chief Jeff French stepped down to spend more time with family.

James started in the fire service as an explorer of the Edwardsville Fire Department joining the volunteer ranks of Edwardsville in 2000. He obtained his EMT Basic license in July 2003 and soon after started work at Alton Memorial Hospital as an EMT. He later joined Godfrey Fire Protection District in February 2006 and was a member until February 2013. James is currently a State of Illinois Paramedic at Lifestar Ambulance in Alton. He earned his State of Illinois Firefighter II, HazMat Awareness certificate, and took his Paramedic class through Lewis & Clark Community College. He has been with the Bethalto Fire Department since April 2011.

“It is an honor and a privilege to serve this community as fire chief. It has been a lifelong goal to obtain the rank of fire chief, and “I look forward to the opportunity of getting to know the community and its residents,” Chief Shulte said. In his spare time, he enjoys watching the Cardinals and the Blues.

Brian started in the fire service in 1998 with the City of Clinton Fire Department. Brian moved to Bethalto in 2005 and joined the fire department. His family moved to Coal City in 2010 and Brian joined Braceville Fire Department where he obtained the rank of Assistant Fire Chief. The Buhs moved back to the area in 2013 and Brian re-joined the Bethalto Fire Department. He also serves as an EMT Basic through the state of Illinois. Brian’s interests include hunting, fishing, and spending time with his wife and 2 children.

Dan is a lifelong resident of Bethalto. He has worked his way through the ranks beginning as a probationary firefighter, engineer, captain, and currently Assistant Chief. Dan began his career with the BFD in 2011. Currently, he works full time at the Madison County Sheriff’s office as a 911 telecommunicator. He obtained his paramedic license through SWIC in 2017, and his Firefighter II through in house fire department training. Dan enjoys watching the Blues and protecting the community he has lived in his entire life.

Bethalto Fire Department ran 1,295 calls last year, a new record. This was up considerably from last year’s 1,148 calls mainly due to the opening of two new assisted living facilities in town. 2019 saw our department receiving a new, much-needed EMS vehicle.

Bethalto Fire Department has 3 engines, 1 EMS vehicle, and 1 command vehicle.

Lora McMillian contributed to this article.