

# City Bridges

WINTER 2008

News to keep you connected to Albany City government

## This Issue

This issue of City Bridges features the Albany Fire and Police Departments

Kids Who Set Fires.....	2
Fire Department Report.....	2
Prepare Winter Hazards.....	3
APD Citizens' Academy.....	3
Thermal Image Camera.....	4

## Meet Joeri, APD's New K-9

The Albany Police Department would like to introduce its newest K-9 team: Officer Nathan Ard and his K-9 partner, Joeri (pronounced *yoo-ree*), a six-year-old Belgian Malinois (*mal-in-wah*).

Joeri was purchased by the Albany Police Department in December 2006, thanks to many generous donations from private citizens and local businesses. The money also paid for the training and equipment needed to get Officer Ard and Joeri certified and on the road. In March 2007, Officer Ard and Joeri started their six weeks of training and are now certified through the Oregon Police Canine Association (OPCA) as a Patrol K-9 Team. Joeri is trained to track, trail, search for evidence and people, and protect Officer Ard and others from harm.

Officer Ard and Joeri worked most of the summer with veteran K-9 Officer Dan Kloss and his partner, Draco. Officer Kloss has been a K-9 handler for 14 years and is a state trainer for the OPCA. Officers Ard and Kloss work offset shifts so that a K-9 team is on duty seven days a week. Officer Ard and Joeri are keeping busy and were deployed 18 times in September 2007.

Joeri recently found a suspect who ran from officers during the night and hid in a West Albany neighborhood. That suspect had evaded police on numerous occasions and was known to be dangerous. He had several felony warrants for his arrest. The



Albany Police Officer Nathan Ard and Joeri

incident ended peacefully as the suspect was taken into custody after Joeri found him hiding under a picnic table on the back porch of a residence.

If you see Officer Ard and Joeri, please stop and say hello. If you are interested in scheduling a K-9 demonstration, contact Community Service Officer Lynn Hinrichs at (541) 917-3208 for information.



## Albany Fire Department Child Safety Seat Clinics

The Albany Fire Department will host four child safety seat clinics this winter to help parents and others who carry infants and small children in their cars.

The clinics, held at Fire Station 12 at 120 34th Avenue SE, are intended to help anyone expecting a new baby or those who have recently purchased a new child seat. Fire personnel demonstrate proper installation of the seats and explain current Oregon law about how to use them.

Please bring your child with you so that the seat can be properly adjusted to fit.

The upcoming clinics are all scheduled on Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. until noon. Dates are December 15; January 19; February 9, and March 1.

### OREGON LAWS NOW REQUIRE:

- Infants to ride rear-facing until they reach both one year of age and 20 pounds.
- Children over one year old and between 20 and 40 pounds to be properly secured with a forward-facing child safety seat up to a minimum of 40 pounds or the weight limit of the seat.
- Children over 40 pounds to be properly secured in a booster seat until they are age 8 or 4'9" tall.
- Children age 8 or older or taller than 4'9" to be properly secured with the vehicle's safety belt system.

Clinics are free, but donations are gladly accepted and are used to purchase a limited number of car seats for families in need.

For more information, call the Albany Fire Department at 917-7700, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

## APD Traffic Team at Full Strength

The Albany Police Department Traffic Unit has been on the road since June 21, 2006, after being cut several years ago due to patrol and personnel shortages.

In the first year of the team's return to targeted traffic enforcement, injury

crashes have declined by 18%, noninjury crashes have declined by 18%, and hit and run calls have declined by 8%. All these decreases are believed to be from the increased enforcement and visibility of the traffic units. The traffic units also provide education throughout the community; we



Albany Police Officer Robert Hayes

feel this plays a big part in reducing traffic crashes.

Traffic units are sent to most of the traffic complaints reported by Albany citizens. Each complaint is reviewed and followed up. The largest number of traffic complaints to the Albany Police Department deal with speeding and aggressive driving.

Traffic units also work increased patrols to look for intoxicated or impaired drivers and assist with traffic-related special events (sporting, parade, and funeral) where increased traffic is expected.

Officer Robert Hayes was the first to be assigned to the traffic team. Officer Buck Pearce joined the unit on September 26, 2007.

### New Laws for Oregon Drivers

The 2007 Oregon legislative session brought some new traffic laws. The first, in effect since July 1, 2007, is the Occupant Protection Law. This law outlines rules for child safety seats. Albany Fire personnel explain the rules during periodic safety seat inspections. (See sidebar on this page).

House Bill 2275 extended requirements to wear safety belts to drivers of certain commercial vehicles designed or used for transportation of property, previously exempt. This law goes into effect January 1, 2008.

House Bill 2872 deals with cellular phones. A person under age 18 who holds a provisional driver license, special student permit, or an instructional driver permit is prohibited from using a mobile communication device while driving on the highway. A "mobile communication device" is defined broadly to mean a text messaging device or a wireless, two-way communication device designed to receive and transmit voice or text communication. This law also goes into effect January 1, 2008.

For other laws and legislative updates, visit [www.leg.state.or.us](http://www.leg.state.or.us) or [www.namic.org/stateLaws/07oregon.asp](http://www.namic.org/stateLaws/07oregon.asp).

The members of the Albany Traffic Unit wish everyone a safe holiday season. Remember with weather changes, give yourself extra time when traveling.

## Exercising in Water is All Wet!

Come to the Albany Community Pool and exercise in 84-degree water. You won't be alone in asking "How will I look in a swim suit?" Jump on in – everyone else is just like you – they just want to work out.

The pool, at 2150 36th Avenue SE, has plenty of programs and classes: Aqua Jogging, Water Aerobics, Senior Fitness, and Lap Swimming are all open to the public.

**Aqua Jogging** Mondays and Wednesdays, 6:00 – 7:00 p.m. No-impact class taught in the deep water with flotation belt or buoyancy cuffs. Aqua gloves and dumbbells can add a boost. Cost is \$3.75 for a drop-in or \$35.00 for a 10-class punch card.

**Water Aerobics** Tuesdays and Thursdays, 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. Taught in four feet of water. Hand weights and flotation equipment work specific muscles. \$3.75 drop-in/\$35.00 for 10-class punch card.

**Senior Fitness** Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, 7:15 – 8:15 a.m. or 8:15 – 9:15 a.m. Designed to increase flexibility, strength, and cardiovascular endurance. Open to anyone over 50. \$3.00 drop-in/\$55.00 for a 20-class punch card.

**Lap Swim** Monday through Friday, 5:30 – 8:00 a.m. with 8 – 12 lanes open; noon to 1:00 p.m., 12 lanes; 6:00 – 7:00 p.m., 3 – 4 lanes available. \$3.25 drop-in/\$60.00 for an adult 20-punch card.

For more information, call the pool office at 967-4521.

City of Albany Directory

Mayor

Doug Killin 926-6829

Ward I Councilors

Dick Olsen 926-7348  
Dan Bedore 812-1426

Ward II Councilors

Sharon Konopa 926-6812  
Ralph Reid, Jr. 928-7382

Ward III Councilors

Bessie Johnson 791-2494  
Jeff Christman 926-0528

City Manager

Wes Hare 917-7505

City Hall Phone Numbers

General Information 917-7500  
Ambulance Billing 917-7710  
Building Inspection 917-7553  
City Council Message 917-7503  
City Manager 917-7500  
Downtown  
Carnegie Library 917-7585  
Economic Development 917-7639  
Engineering 917-7676  
Finance Office 917-7500  
Fire Department 917-7700  
Human Resources 917-7500  
Main Library 917-7580  
Mayor's Message 917-7502  
Municipal Court 917-7740  
Parks & Recreation 917-7777  
Planning and Zoning 917-7550  
Police Department 917-7680  
Public Information Office 917-7507  
Senior Center 917-7760  
Transit 917-7667  
Water and Sewer Billing 917-7547  
Water/Sewer/Streets 917-7600

**Emergencies**  
(Fire, Police, Ambulance)  
**Dial 911**

City Bridges Info

City Bridges is published by an editorial team from the City of Albany. Questions and input about this newsletter can be directed to the City Manager's Office, 333 Broadalbin SW, P.O. Box 490, Albany, OR 97321-0144.

Contributors

Nate Ard • Amy Bennett • Travis Giboney  
Matt Harrington • Robert Hayes  
Dawn Hietala • Jeff Hinrichs • Lynn Hinrichs  
Kevin Kreitman • Wanda Omdahl  
Sandy Roberts • Marilyn Smith  
Darrel Tedisch



333 Broadalbin SW, Albany, OR 97321  
[www.cityofalbany.net](http://www.cityofalbany.net)

# AFD Calls & Performance Measures

Oregon fire agencies, including the Albany Fire Department, keep track of the work they do each year. Albany is currently part of the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) Oregon Performance Consortium for Fire and Emergency Medical Services. The measures below show how our Fire Department's workload compared to others in Oregon in 2005:

Total Fires per 1,000 Population:

Albany	5.18
Portland	4.00
Salem	2.86
Corvallis	2.00
Dallas	1.93

Commercial & Industrial Structure Fires per 1,000 Commercial & Industrial Structures:

Albany	12.80
Portland	11.40
Salem	7.80

Non-Fire Responses per 1,000 Population:

Albany	104.50
Portland	92.20
Salem	77.50
Eugene	75.50
Corvallis	29.20
Dallas	14.80

Residential Structure Fires per 1,000 Population:

Albany	1.27
Portland	1.01
Salem	0.77
Corvallis	0.50

Nonstructure Fires per 1,000 Population:

Albany	3.58
Portland	2.66
Salem	1.89
Corvallis	1.30
Dallas	1.07

EMS Responses per 1,000 Population:

Eugene	110.00
Albany	90.00
Portland	70.00
Dallas	65.00
Salem	65.00
Corvallis	40.00

## Working with Kids Who Set Fires

You may remember a time in your childhood where you misused fire — maybe burned grass, melted plastic army men? You may have just stopped misusing fire or something like a fire happened at your house because of your actions.

Every year, the Albany Fire Department sees about 85 kids who have misused fire in some way. Misuse of fire is serious since kids who do it are most likely to hurt or kill themselves or other children.

Kids have several different motives for lighting fires:

**Curiosity:** These kids really are just curious about fire. They may have seen adults use fire and are mimicking what they have seen. They may have watched it on TV or in a movie and really don't understand what can happen. These kids usually benefit from education and don't misuse fire again. Once they understand what could have happened, they are no longer curious.

**Crisis:** These kids are much more complicated. They may be burning what they have been abused with. They may feel like it is the only thing they have control over, or they may know that if they light a fire, it will calm them. This type of firesetting takes more than education to stop. It may involve Mental Health, Department of Human Services, law enforcement, and

the Juvenile Department. When kids light fires in a crisis, it takes a network of people to provide the help that they need. It's a time when the community really has to come together to deal with the crisis so the child can be safe.

**Delinquent:** These kids usually do this to be destructive. Law enforcement and the Juvenile Department are needed to get these kids on the right track.

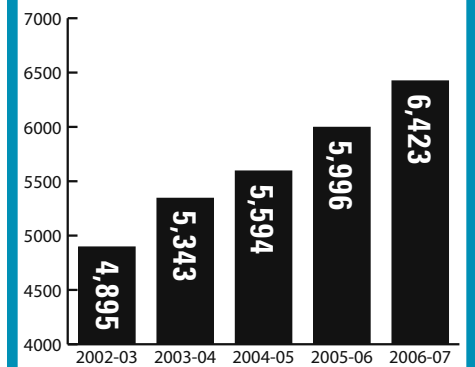
What do these kids look like? Like the kids you know. They usually range in age from 8-13 and most are boys although girls also participate. A child who uses fire isn't always a pyromaniac (a mental health diagnosis rarely used) or deviant. It does mean that adults need to pay attention and address the behavior. It's important not to minimize what has happened.

What happens if you call the Fire Department because a child you know is misusing fire? You will be asked to answer some questions on the phone, and then an appointment will be made for you and the child to come to the Fire Department for an educational session. If more help is needed, we will assist you in finding that help.

For more information or if you know a child who is misusing fire, please contact Wanda Omdahl at 917-7734.

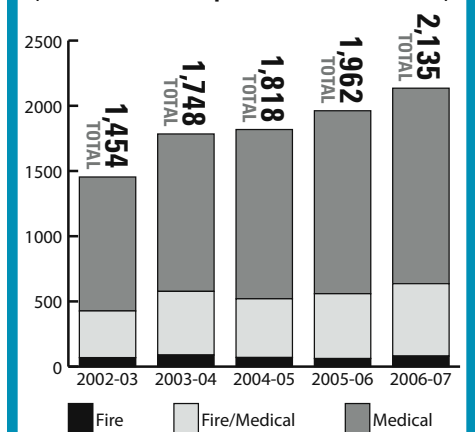
### Albany Fire Department 2002-07 Call Statistics

Total Calls for Service



Daily Average (FY2006-07):  
17.6 Calls for Service

Overlapping Calls  
(calls which are reported at the same time)



## Seniors: Take Charge of Crime Prevention at Home

Property crimes are among the most frequently committed but are also some of the most preventable. Albany residents age 55 and up are experiencing a greater sense of security in their own homes due to Safe and Secure Seniors Independent (SASSI).

Albany police and other local police agencies have specially trained a core of SASSI volunteers to perform a variety of free services for seniors including home security and fire safety inspections, identification of potential accident hazards, and resource information and referrals pertinent to seniors. Each volunteer has passed a criminal background check and is certified by each agency.

SASSI clients are often referred to the program by a concerned neighbor, relative or friend. Clients also hear about it through newsletters and other publications.

Volunteers conduct free home inspections and make recommendations that range from making house numbers more visible to installing deadbolt locks or new smoke detectors. These

essential security improvements can be beyond seniors' financial and physical means. SASSI will provide and install basic security devices at no cost to the client. There are no financial parameters for seniors who want the services; however, recipients are welcome to make a donation.

Vincent and his wife Julie requested SASSI services in May 2007 after seeing an article in the Albany Senior Center's *Highlights*. After volunteers installed a view hole, new window locks, smoke detectors and made other safety recommendations, Vincent said that he felt not only more secure but safer in his home.

"You have put my mind at ease," he said. The inspection checklist and connections to resources within the community have been very helpful, he added.

If you would like to refer a loved one, friend or yourself to participate in SASSI, call the Albany Police Department Community Resource Unit at 541-917-7680 or contact RSVP at 753-9197.



Once a client's home has been inspected by trained volunteers, these security labels are placed in the home's windows and are easily seen from street vantage.

# APD Citizens' Academy A Success

The Albany Police Department held another Citizens' Academy this fall. Seventeen Albany residents attended the sessions, held every Tuesday evening, from September 4 through November 13, 2007.

The Academy is offered each fall and is free to Albany citizens. The Academy is designed to promote awareness and understanding of the Albany Police Department's role in the community, the criminal justice system, and to educate citizens about the Department's operations.

The 2007 class included courses on police officer selection, training, and duties; investigation skills; tactical operations; use of force and defensive tactics; canine procedures; firearms use; Deputy Medical Examiner duties; crime scene processing; crime prevention; emergency vehicle operation; and a tour of the Linn County Jail.

Students had these comments on the course curriculum and presentations:

"Very fun activity but made us appreciate the driving skills police officers possess."

"A well done and very interesting presentation. Thank you for taking the time for this important subject."

"I like their enthusiasm and personal stories."



Albany Police Department Sergeant Curtis Hyde demonstrates how Tasers are operated.

"I can't believe there are so many different programs available to the community. Great Job!"

"I am certainly glad we came to this Citizen Academy."

If you are interested in attending next year's Academy, please go to [www.cityofalbany.net/police](http://www.cityofalbany.net/police) in June 2008 and download an application or contact the Community Resource Unit at 917-7680.

## Detective Takes on Computer Crime

Albany Police Detective Dawn Hietala has become involved in computer forensics and is completing a required six weeks of training to become a certified Computer Forensics Examiner.

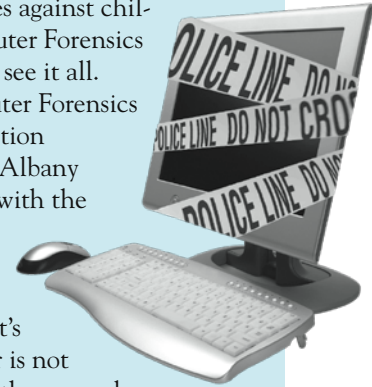
Computers are involved in one way or another in almost every type of crime and Albany's criminal element has proven that to be true. From identity theft and counterfeit checks to Internet crimes against children, a Computer Forensics Examiner will see it all.

The Computer Forensics

Examiner position will bring the Albany Police on par with the people they investigate.

Although analyzing what's on a computer is not what many of the general public visualize when they think about detectives, imaging and analyzing a hard drive is much like solving a difficult puzzle. A detective's job is to put the pieces of a puzzle together.

Detective Hietala has been an Albany Police Officer since February 1991, working primarily in the patrol division. She has been assigned to the detectives division for the last three years where she became interested in computer forensics.



## Thank you, APD Volunteers!

The Albany Police Department Community Resource Unit is fortunate to have citizens in our community who volunteer their time and resources. We would like to thank the following groups and individuals for all they do for APD and those whom we serve:

### Volunteers with Seniors and Law Enforcement Together (S.A.L.T.)

Volunteers with Safe and Secure Seniors Independent (SASSI) • Volunteers with Neighborhood Watch  
Margo Coleman • Deb Conway • Dan Conway • Connie Erickson • Mary Grace • Brenda Hoyt  
Wendy and Betty Hamm • Beth and Harry Harrington • Sharon Kelly • Dave Schnebly • Jim Washington

## Are You Prepared for Winter Hazards?

Sadly, most of us aren't. We wait until the last minute to get prepared, then rush around just before a storm strikes, purchasing supplies we think we may need.

It doesn't have to be that way. Taking a few hours now can prepare you and your family for most major emergencies and eliminate the stress of playing catch-up when time has run out.

### Do two things right now:

- 1) Develop a family emergency plan, and
- 2) Put together a Home Emergency Kit.

Go to the City of Albany Web site, [www.cityofalbany.net](http://www.cityofalbany.net). In the Government drop-down menu, click on Fire. The Fire Department pages include a preparedness booklet which can guide you through putting together a Family Emergency Plan and what you should consider for a Home Emergency Kit. You can also drop by the Fire Department administrative offices on the second floor of Albany City Hall to pick up a booklet and ask questions.

Take action right now! As soon as you finish reading this, commit yourself to act. If you think you don't have time, think about your family. If you think it will never happen to you, think again. If you don't take any action, you may become someone who must rely on neighbors during an emergency.

### Family Emergency Planning

When you have your booklet, begin to develop your Family Emergency Plan by:

- Writing down the phone numbers of those individuals you may need to communicate with before, during, or after an emergency.
- Talking about and deciding, as a family, what you will do if any of you are at work, school, shopping, or away from home when an emergency is about to occur or does occur.

- How will you communicate?
- Where will you meet?
- What if you can't get home?
- Do you have someone out of state to call to report your status?
- Talking as a family about different scenarios and what you as an individual and family will do in each. Engage your kids; they will be the ones you're most worried about should something occur. Get them involved in the discussion and the decision-making. Work through some situations so they feel comfortable with what will take place.
- Don't stop planning. Emergencies can happen at any time. Make emergency planning a routine topic with your family.

### Home Emergency Kit

The preparedness booklet includes an excellent list of items for you to consider in putting together your Home Emergency Kit. Use it as a starting point and tailor the kit to your family's needs. Some families are two adults with no children, for example, while others have children or elderly parents living in the home. Your family's needs should be your focus.

When putting together your Home Emergency Kit, you don't need to put everything in a container. Food, batteries, clothing, blankets, and other items are already throughout your home. Put only the things in your Home Kit that you may need immediately and for which you might not have time to look in the house. If you have camper equipment, you already have much of what you need for your Home Kit. Don't duplicate what you already have.

Start now to prepare for an emergency which might affect your family. It may be an electrical power outage, an ice or snow storm, or that much-talked-about earthquake. Don't wait until later to do what is right to protect you and your family.

For more information about home emergency plans, contact the Albany Fire Department at 917-7700.

## Free Equipment Available for Chimney Cleaning

It's the time of year when we warm up our houses with wood stoves or fireplaces, but have you thought about what the inside of your chimney looks like?

When creosote builds up on the inside of a chimney, you risk having a chimney fire. You can borrow chimney-cleaning equipment from the Albany Fire Department at no cost.

Before you borrow the chimney cleaning equipment, check for the following:

- Is your chimney round or square?
- What are the inside dimensions of your chimney?
- How tall is your chimney? You need to know how many extension rods you will need.

Bring this information to Albany Fire Station 11, 110 Sixth Avenue SE. Ring the doorbell and station personnel will help you find what you need to clean your chimney.

If you have questions, please call the Albany Fire Department at 917-7700, during regular business hours, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

## Albany Police Department Members Give Back

Members of the Police Department spend their on-duty time providing police services to the citizens of Albany. Like many others, our members spend a great deal of off-duty time giving back to the community. Many worthy programs benefit Albany's citizens; here are a few programs and projects to which Albany police staff contribute personal time and money:

- Volunteering for and donating to the Center Against Rape and Domestic Violence (CARDV).
- Providing holiday gift baskets for families and seniors.
- Volunteering for and donating to All Because of Children (ABC) Resource Center.
- Officiating at football, softball, baseball, and other youth sports.
- Coaching Little League, wrestling, and other sports.
- Volunteering for and donating to Special Olympics.
- Participating in "Shop with a Cop" for kids each Christmas.
- Volunteering with Kiwanis.
- Volunteering for and donating to the Albany Boys and Girls Club.
- Serving as 4H leaders.
- Volunteering at and donating to our local schools.
- Teaching at the Oregon Department of Public Safety Police Academy.
- Donating to Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) for children.
- Providing dog training.
- Participating in other fund-raising activities.
- Contributing to the Albany Police Benevolent Association for scholarships, funds for community activities, and emergency assistance to families or seniors in crisis.

# Albany Police Receive Thermal Imaging Camera from Federal Grant

The Albany Police Department has received a thermal imaging camera, valued at \$17,000, from the Department of Homeland Security Commercial Equipment Direct Assistance Program.

Law enforcement has used thermal imagers for years; however, the cost of the equipment meant that only the largest agencies have been able to purchase them. The federal grant program helps place imagers in the hands of those who can use them the most. APD was one of hundreds of agencies throughout the United States to receive a thermal imager through the grant program this year.

A thermal imager “sees” surface temperatures and, by distinguishing very slight differences, creates a picture. A built-in digital camera captures the image. Thermal imagers do not see through objects, even through glass. The imager only captures the temperature of the first

surface in front of it. In looking at a home, for example, you would see how warm the walls are, heat loss around windows and doors, or someone hiding in bushes outside. The thermal imager cannot see anyone inside a home or what is happening inside a home.

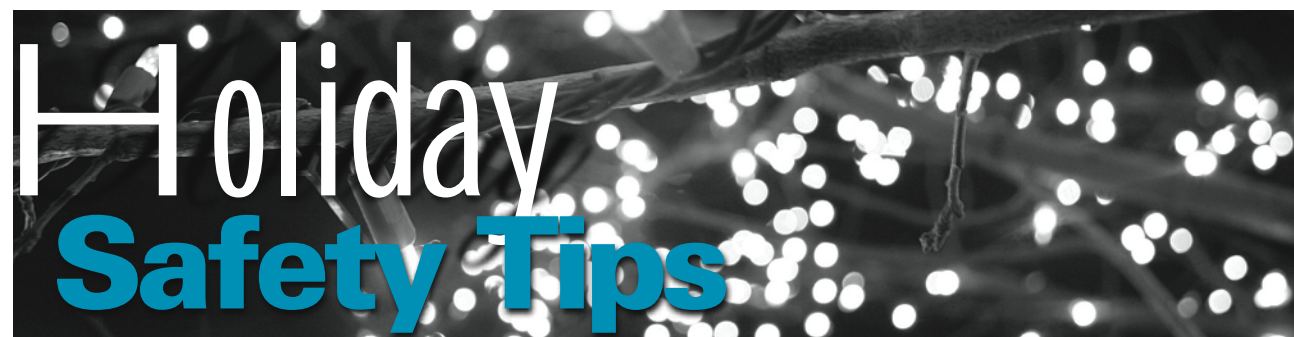
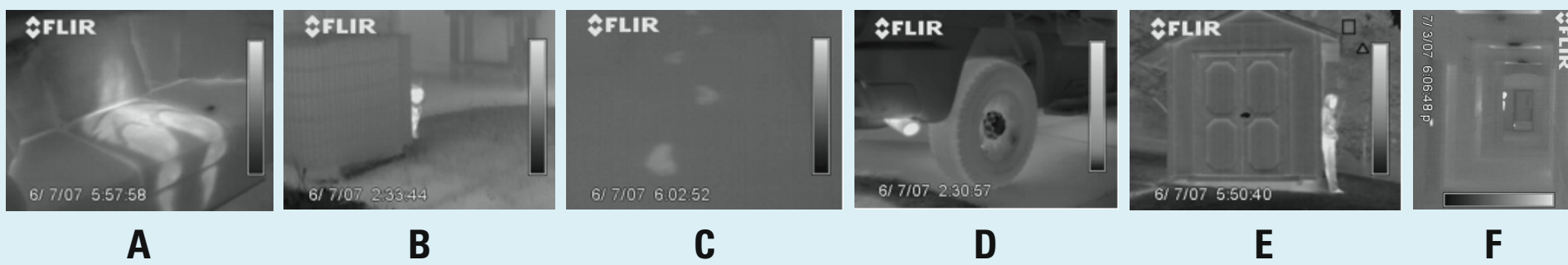
A few of the benefits of having a thermal imager for police use include:

- Locating subjects hiding in a yard, field, or brush. People are a different temperature than vegetation, grass, concrete, and gravel.
- Searching for items discarded by subjects. An item discarded by someone is normally a different temperature than the surroundings.
- Searching a building for people. A thermal imager can potentially see the heat from a person who is hiding more quickly than an officer will locate them.

- Tracking subjects. Even a footprint on the ground is a slightly different temperature than the undisturbed ground around it. Finding where someone has been hiding or laying down is easy with the thermal imager because body heat takes time to dissipate.
- Tire marks at a crash scene can be easily seen where they may be invisible otherwise. The heat from tires will remain for a period of time.
- Recently driven vehicles are easily recognized. The intense heat from the engine, exhaust, brakes, and tires can help police more easily recognize recently-driven vehicles used in crimes.

A thermal imager does not solve crime by itself but, combined with good police work, it can make the job easier and help solve some crimes more quickly.

Here are a series of photos taken with the thermal imager. Try to determine what the photos are and test your temperature recognition skills by comparing your answers to the answers at the bottom of the page.



Holidays are a great time to get together with family and friends, but it’s also a time when we bring things into our homes that can pose potential danger without proper precautions. Here are some tips to ensure that your holidays are safe:

### Candles

- Use a sturdy metal, glass, or ceramic candle holder.
- Never burn candles near a Christmas tree or decorations that can burn.
- Keep candles away from curtains or anything that can burn.
- Never leave candles unattended or within reach of small children or pets.
- Always extinguish candles before leaving a room.

### Christmas Trees

Christmas trees can burn very fast if they catch on fire. When choosing a tree, here are some things to look for:

- Make sure you choose a fresh tree. Needles should be green and hard to pull back, and they should not break if the tree is freshly cut. Old trees can be identified by bouncing the tree trunk on the ground. If many needles fall off, the tree has been cut too long ago.
- Trunk should be sticky to the touch.
- When you get your tree home, cut the trunk at an angle and put it in a tree stand that won’t tip over and will allow you to add water.
- Keep the tree stand filled with water at all times.
- Keep your tree away from fireplaces, heaters, and the exits in your home.

### Holiday Lights

- Check cords to make sure they are not frayed and that they have no bare spots, gaps in the insulation, or broken or cracked sockets. Weather and garage storage can weaken the cords, creating a fire hazard. Throw them away if they show any signs of damage or wear.
- Do not overload electrical sockets or put rugs over cords.
- Make sure that extension cords are not pinched behind or under furniture.
- Unplug lights before leaving home or going to bed.
- Never use electric lights on a metal tree.

### Having a holiday party?

#### Some things to think about:

- If you invite smokers, have a proper container for cigarette butts. If someone is drinking and smoking, keep a close eye on them. If ashes get into upholstery, it can smolder for a while before a fire actually starts.
- Supervise children. Keep matches and lighters out of their reach. Watch them around fireplaces, candles, and space heaters.
- Make sure space heaters are at least three feet away from anything that can burn.
- Make sure that you have working smoke alarms in your home. Smoke alarms belong on every level of your house, outside of each sleeping area, and in the bedrooms.
- Have a home fire escape plan. Practice the escape plan so everyone in your family knows what to do in case of a fire.
- If you need help with escape planning, smoke alarms or fire escape ladders, please contact Wanda Omdahl at 917-7734.

## Albany Police Join Linn County SWAT

Four Albany Police Officers joined the Linn County SWAT (Special Weapons and Tactics) team in early 2007.

The name only partially describes what the team does. SWAT members use a variety of special equipment and training to deal with many dangerous or delicate situations: high-risk warrant service, hostage incidents, barricaded suspects, and any other scenarios that may require a large number of officers to safely accomplish the mission.

SWAT members use heavy bulletproof vests capable of stopping rifle rounds, ballistic helmets, goggles, and gas masks. The special equipment can add up to about 60 pounds. They also carry short rifles for easier movement inside buildings. Team members are also trained to use tear gas and a number of less-lethal weapon systems.

Team members must compete to be assigned to SWAT, which is a duty they perform in addition to their regular work assignments. Team members are recommended by their supervisors and must go through a formal selection process that includes an oral board, firearms qualification, physical fitness testing, and unanimous SWAT team approval. After becoming a member of the team, SWAT officers must keep up with physical fitness standards, which are tested regularly: a 1.5 mile run in less than 10 minutes, 60 push-ups in less than two minutes, 80 sit-ups or 100 crunches in less than two minutes, six pull-ups, and one bench press lift of 110% of body weight.

Team members are divided into two specialties: entry and perimeter. Perimeter team members are also known as the “snipers.” All members complete basic week-long training in both specialties and continue to train together for two days each month. The perimeter team trains together for an additional half day each month. Albany Police have two members on each special team.

The Linn County Sheriff’s Office joined the long-established Benton County SWAT team in 2000. Benton County left the team in 2006 for financial reasons. The new Linn County team has a total of 21 members. Linn County members come from the patrol and corrections operations of the Sheriff’s Office; the Albany Police Department has assigned three patrol officers and a patrol sergeant.

Thermal imaging photo answers: (A) Someone wearing shorts sat in the center of the couch for a few minutes. (B) Small dog peering around a long hallway. (C) Bare footprints on carpet. (D) A vehicle driven in the past hour. (E) A person standing beside a shed. (F) A person peering around a corner around a shed.