

COBURN: (He's) seen the best and worst of life

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Of his career, Tim's proudest achievement is being a mentor to younger firefighters and emergency medical technicians (EMT). He shares his own experiences with new employees, showing them 'the ropes.'

Though Tim does not seek the limelight, he has been honored for his work and his character over the years. Since his first award, Volunteer of the Year, in 1996, he has been named EMT of the Year (2003), Employee of the Year (three times, in 2006, 2012 and again in 2022), Firefighter of the Year (2018) and Marion County Firefighter of the Year (2007).

Tim is popular in the Keizer fire hall, many affectionately calling him Timmy. His biggest fan has to be Chief Jeff Cowen.

"I wish I could clone him," Cowen said. "How can we possibly replace him? He is an anchor of the Keizer Fire District. He's a great firefighter, he's a great EMT."

"He's a compass for me of the organization. When you ask for his opinion, it can be relied on. I'm absolutely delighted that he gets to retire in a real celebratory way. On the fire chief side, I need five people to replace him."

Tim Coburn loves what he has been doing since 1987. He would recommend a career as a firefighter to anyone. He exhibits the traits he said a good firefighter should have: honesty, good attitude, the ability to get along well with others and be able to think quick on your feet.

Like all men and women in the fire and EMT field, he has been affected by the things seen. How does he and his brethren across the nation deal with devastating calls? He talks to others.

"Some of the calls stay with you, you never forget them," he said.

Deputy Fire Marshall Ann-Marie Storms said that everyone at the



PHOTO/Courtesy of Keizer Fire District

district watches out for each other. "You pick up on subtle clues," she said, about others are behaving in light of returning from horrible calls. "We're fixers," Storms said about firefighters and EMTs. "We don't ask for help, we think we can fix it ourselves." Tim picked up that theme saying that talking to others is key to dealing with the stress of the job. "We all joke with each other. If you're serious all the time, it will eat you up."

Tim and his wife, Heidi, have plans for his retirement. They will travel in their new fifth wheel recreational vehicle and visit people they haven't been able to see. He will continue his hobbies of woodworking, working in the yard, fishing and camping. And he has a long Honey-do list of chores to accomplish.

Whatever he does in retirement will most likely be done with the laser focus he brought to 35 years with the Keizer Fire District.



PHOTO/Courtesy of Keizer Fire District



PHOTO/Lyndon Zaitz

Tim Coburn is immortalized on the mural on the north side of The Rec, at 3500 River Road N.