

Oh brother, no Mother's Day Breakfast from KFD

By JOSHUA MANES
Of the Keizertimes

For the third year in a row, pancakes won't be flipping at the Keizer Fire District in May.

With three weeks before the event, Keizer Fire District Chief Jeff Cowan has made the decision to forego the annual Mother's Day Breakfast at the station.

COVID protocols made the decision for them the previous two years, but this time there were multiple reasons for Cowan to decide to hold off on the festivities.

"We want to get back to normal," Deputy

Fire Marshall Anne-Marie Storms said. "But we had to have the hard discussion."

According to Storms, one of the main factors was the health and wellness of the firefighters. KFD has responded to a record number of calls so far in the year, and Storms said they are exhausted.

The small volunteer pool compounds this. Where they normally have 50 to 60 volunteers, Storms said they currently have about 10.

With their limited numbers, Storms brought up another concern that had to be taken into consideration.

"What happens if we take out 25 firefighters to a COVID outbreak?" Storms said.

Storms also cited supply chain issues as a reason for the decision.

But with the cancellation of the Mother's Day Breakfast, there is still optimism for the rest of the year for events like the Santa Breakfast and Candy Cane Day.

"Let summer happen, get our feet under us, and figure out staffing," Storms said.

But even when events return, Storms warns that things could look different under the "new normal."

Last year, instead of Santa arriving on a firetruck through neighborhoods, families were the ones driving. According to Storms, this not only allowed for a small return to normalcy, but also helped with the actual work needed.

"The drive-thru option helped allow them to answer calls and bring a little Christmas spirit," Storms said.

Despite the issues being addressed, Storms said the KFD wants to return to having their events, but the timing just isn't right yet.

"We love community events, but they have to take a back seat," Storms said.

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