

After 34 years of service, Battalion Chief Rorrer is retiring from Roanoke Fire-EMS.

Chief Rorrer began his career on Valentine's Day in 1992, but his journey in the fire service started even earlier. Inspired by his father, a volunteer firefighter, he began volunteering at Mt. Pleasant before applying to Roanoke alongside several friends. One of those friends started the job with him that same year.

His first day was a full 24-hour shift at Historic Station 1 on Ladder 1, where he quickly learned the difference between rural and city firefighting. Just weeks later, he faced his first major fire at a chemical plant involving a vat fire. This incident required crews to decontaminate in the street due to chemical exposure.

Another call would leave a lasting impression. While fighting a structure fire, one of his firefighters suffered a major heart attack inside the home. Chief Rorrer called a mayday and crews began CPR in the yard. The firefighter survived, but the moment served as a powerful reminder of how quickly incidents can evolve.

Throughout his career, Chief Rorrer developed a passion for designing and improving apparatus, helping create safer and more efficient trucks for firefighters across the city. From improving tool placement to the now recognizable grey over red trucks with gold leaf lettering, he takes pride in the fleet that serves the community today

"I consider the apparatus my baby—we've come a long way with our trucks and there's a lot of good stuff coming," He shared.

When asked what he will miss most, his answer was simple:

"The people. It's a second family."

In retirement, Chief Rorrer is looking forward to spending time with his wife, traveling, riding motorcycles, and working on his cattle farm.

On his final day, firefighters from across the city stopped by to share their thanks and present him with a shadow box honoring his career.

Chief's final message to the team:

"Look out for one another, keep each other safe, and learn from your mistakes."

Thank you, Chief Rorrer, for 34 years of leadership and service to our department and community.