



Johnson County Fire Protection District

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NEWS RELEASE – Friday, March 14, 2025

Mutual Aid Agencies Step Up to Cover District

WARRENSBURG, MO – Johnson County Fire Protection District Captain Vernon Collett was laid to rest on Friday, March 14, following a funeral service at Heartland Church north of Knob Noster. Captain Collett, who dedicated more than 29 years of service to the district, passed away in the line of duty on March 8 after collapsing while extinguishing a field fire in rural Johnson County. He was 60 years old.

To allow JCFPD personnel the opportunity to honor their fallen brother without concern for emergency response coverage, the entire fire district was placed out of service for the duration of the funeral. In a true display of fire service brotherhood, six neighboring fire agencies stepped in without hesitation to provide emergency coverage to the 520-square-mile district. These agencies staffed four of JCFPD's twelve stations, ensuring the safety and protection of the community while JCFPD members paid their final respects to Captain Collett.

The agencies that provided coverage included:

- Central Cass County Fire Protection District
- Cole Camp Rural Fire Department
- Fort Osage Fire Protection District
- Johnson County Fire Protection District 2
- Lone Jack Fire Protection District
- Pettis County Fire Protection District

Under the leadership of Johnson County Fire Protection District 2 Assistant Chief Carl Elliott, who served as duty chief, the covering agencies responded to a natural cover fire, a fire alarm, and a vehicle crash while JCFPD personnel attended Captain Collett's funeral.

JCFPD Chief Larry Jennings expressed his deep gratitude to the responding agencies, emphasizing the unwavering support and solidarity within the fire service. "When we put out the call for assistance, these six agencies stepped up without question. They sent personnel and equipment without hesitation, allowing our firefighters the peace of mind to come together as a family to honor Captain Collett. This is what the fire service is all about—firefighters standing together, standing by each other in times of need."

Chief Jennings further highlighted the importance of mutual aid and the unbreakable bond among first responders. "The fire service is more than just a job; it's a brotherhood and sisterhood. When tragedy strikes one of us, we all feel it. To know that we could honor Captain Collett with full respect and that our citizens were still in good hands—it speaks volumes about the dedication and heart of our fellow firefighters."

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For more information contact:

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