

Bellevue-Dayton chief calling it a career

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Bellevue-Dayton Fire Chief Denny Lynn is retiring on Jan. 1. He has been with the department for 38 years and chief the past 21 years. / The Enquirer/Patrick Reddy

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DAYTON — Back in 1974 Denny Lynn used to hang out with his firefighter buddies at the Dayton firehouse. Someone suggested he become a volunteer firefighter, which led to a paid position the following year and eventually to the rank of chief.

Now after 38 years of working in the fire-fighting business, Chief Lynn is retiring on Jan. 1, 2012.

"It's been a very good career," said Lynn, 57, who said his retirement is a little bittersweet. "I'm looking forward to it, but there are parts of the job that I'm going to miss, like the great group of guys that I've worked with over the years."

Lynn became chief of the Dayton Fire Department in 1990. After years of discussing consolidation of the Bellevue and Dayton fire departments, Lynn and Bellevue Fire Chief John Daley successfully merged the departments in 2002.

Lynn retained his position as chief of the Fire Department of Bellevue-Dayton. He said the merger was very smooth and was beneficial to both cities and their citizens.

Lynn said many things have changed in the fire industry since he began his career, but the changes have been geared toward safety for both firefighters and citizens.

He said other than the merger, one of the most important changes made occurred in 1999 when the city went from offering basic life support to advanced life support services with a paramedic program. Paramedics are trained for more advanced medical procedures, such as starting intravenous fluids and administering cardiac medications.

"That took a lot of time and some money, which the city backed and it made a big difference in our life squad to have a paramedic on the squad," Lynn said.

At Tuesday's city council meeting, Dayton Mayor Ken Rankle honored Lynn and presented him with the key to the city.

"I've sat through many council meetings and watched so many people get proclamations and keys to the city and really never thought that I would be getting one any time soon," Lynn said. "All of a sudden, here I am getting one and I really appreciate it."

Rankle, 51, has been mayor for nine years, but has known Lynn all his life. He said Lynn's family has been very community-oriented. Lynn's father and stepmother both served terms as the city's mayor, his brother is active in the community and his son has been a volunteer firefighter for eight years.

"He's been great to work with," Rankle said. "He's always been very professional and he's always had a lot of dedication to the city."

Rankle said Lynn's replacement will be Bellevue-Dayton Fire Captain Michael Auteri, 45.

Auteri said he is looking forward to running the department, which has a staff of 15 paid employees, 11 volunteers, a part-time administrative assistant and a part-time fire safety educator. He credits much of his knowledge to Lynn, whom he has known for 25 years.

"He treats people fair and he loves the cities of Bellevue and Dayton and really cares a lot about the community which kind of reflected on us," Auteri said. "He's an all-around good fire officer and has a lot of knowledge about investigating fires and building construction."

Lynn said he would like to stay involved with the community in some capacity.

"It just came to me and I thought I've been here long enough, it's time to relax for a while and get involved with something else," Lynn said.