

# ASSIGNMENT COMPLETE

## Area communities celebrate the life of Fontanelle Fire Chief Denny Sickles

By **CALEB NELSON**  
*Adair County Free Press*

Fontanelle Fire Chief Denny Sickles completed his assignment on earth and his life was celebrated Friday afternoon in a memorial service at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, with Pastor Steven Broers presiding.

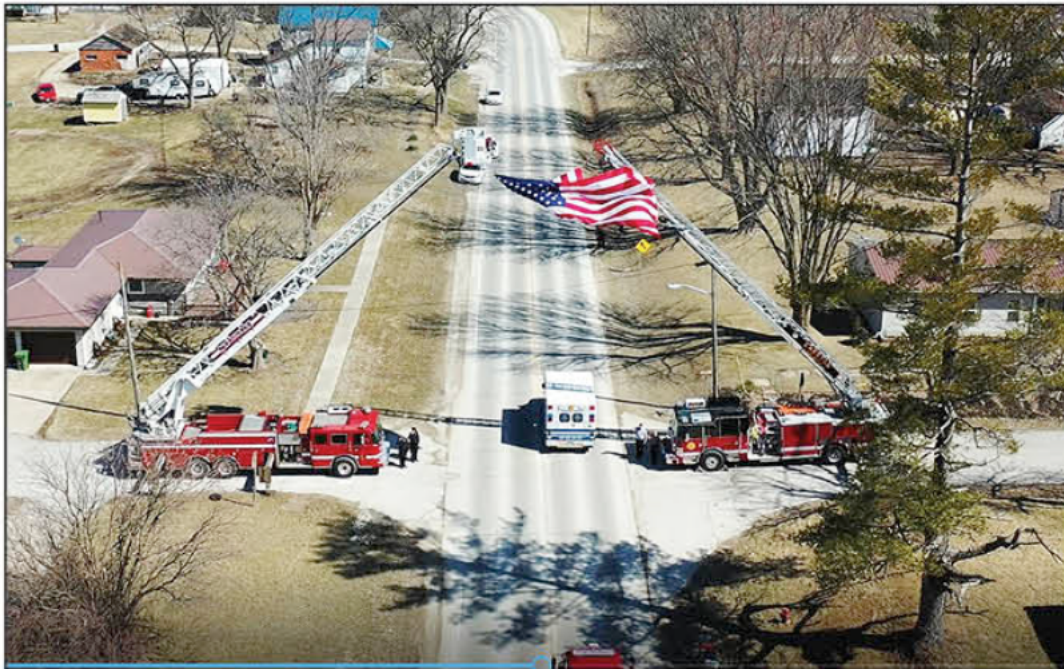
Sickles had served Fontanelle Fire and Rescue since 1977. He later became chief, taking over top rank in the department.

Throughout his time on the department, Sickles served alongside many, including several of his family members.

During the memorial service, Sickles was remembered for loving his family, the outdoors, his livestock and helping people. He was described as being a dedicated firefighter, EMT and community-minded person. When Fontanelle last held the Fourth of July, Denny and his wife Debra were chosen as grand marshals of the parade because of how they've helped many people in their community in a variety of ways.

Sickles worked at Farmers Lumber Company for 54 years, having retired at the end of 2021. He was known there for helping people and being a jack of all trades.

He was on the local fair board, emergency management board, lamb and wool growers association, Iowa Firefighters Associ-



**ABOVE:** The Fontanelle ambulance leads the funeral procession for Fire Chief Denny Sickles Friday, under an American flag hung over Washington Street in Fontanelle by the Stuart (left) and Creston (right) aerial fire trucks.

Contributed photo by DOUG WELSCH

**BELOW:** Fontanelle firefighters, and those from other area departments, prepare to file into the church for Sickles' memorial service.

ACFP photo by CALEB NELSON

ation, and served Fontanelle on the city council at one time, as well as a member of the local Lions Club.

Numerous area emergency agencies brought emergency vehicles to be part of the service and say their goodbye to Sickles. Creston and Stuart fire departments brought their respective aerial ladder trucks and hung a large American flag over Highway 92 on the east side of town before, during and after the service.

Retired Clive Assistant Chief Tony Collins honored Sickles with the



Ring of the Bell Ceremony as part of the funeral. Fire service tradition

says that four sets of five tolls of a fire truck bell signifies there has been a

death of a comrade. It is a ceremony that dates back to the early days in New

York City.

Immediately following that, Adair County Dispatch transmitted Sickles' final call heard from a lone fire pager in the church sanctuary. After no response was heard from Sickles when he was paged, the dispatcher honored him and thanked him for his service on behalf of all of the county's emergency responders, saying his final assignment is now complete.

Denny leaves behind his wife, Debra, son Tyson and daughter Teresa, and many other family members.

### Memories

Several area individuals were willing to share their memories of Sickles with the newspaper, though there are likely countless others, and too many to print in a newspaper.

Ray Stewart was a firefighter and EMT Sickles served with for his entire career on the department. He and his wife, Sandra, told the newspaper Ray was on the department for 51 years and served as chief at one point too. When he stepped down from that role, Sickles moved up from assistant chief and became chief. Sandra said Denny would help anyone at any time and was a great community person. Stewart took EMT classes with Sickles as well.

Lynn Eddy recalls that

**SICKLES**

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