

The Arvada Sentinel

McChesney, Schneider to be part of 2005 firefighter calendar

Carrie Mitchell, The Arvada Sentinel, July 29, 2004

Arvada Fire Protection District Lt. Tim McChesney is one of two Arvada firefighters to be featured in a 2005 fund-raiser calendar, to benefit the burn unit at Children's Hospital.

Arvada Fire Protection District Lt. Tim McChesney and longtime volunteer and former board President Doug Schneider will be part of the 2005 Colorado Firefighters calendar.

A native of Arvada, McChesney has been part of the department for 20 years and will represent AFPD in the calendar.

Schneider comes from four generations of Arvadans and has volunteered with the Arvada fire department for 19 years. A full-time firefighter with the Cunningham Fire Protection District, Schneider will represent both departments in the calendar.

Both men said they were interested in the project because of fellow workers who had participated in previous years. This year, Fired up for Kids, a nonprofit organization that works exclusively with Children's Hospital, is sponsoring the fund-raising calendar. All sales proceeds will benefit the hospital's burn center, which handles 90 percent of the burned children in Denver.

"I love (being part of the calendar), it's all for good causes," McChesney said. "Anytime you can help kids - we're the mentors for them."

Schneider agrees.

"It's going to be a good time," he said. "It's a good cause."

The calendar received a little over 100 entries from firefighters, which were narrowed down to 38. These 38, including McChesney and Schneider, went downtown to take part in a celebrity panel, where the participants were questioned about their lives and what they enjoyed in their jobs.

Local celebrities, such as Mudflap from KBCO 97.3 FM, Patricia Lopez of Channel 4, Shea Maddox from KALC (ALICE 105.9 FM) and Penny Parker of the Rocky Mountain News were part of the panel.

"I had a great time doing it," Schneider said. "They made it fun and joked around a lot."

Schneider was asked about his participation in the police and fire department games, where he competes in the eight-event Toughest Competitor Alive. He also competed in the World Games, which is second only to the Olympics in size.

McChesney was asked how he liked his job.

"The interview with the celebrity judges was nerve-racking," he said. "But it was fun. When I got down there, there are all these young guys, but it worked out good."

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Both men joke about their age and being part of the calendar. McChesney, 45, and Schneider, 49, came across applicants half their age during the process.

"I told my wife they can see me and know they can (stay in this profession and love it for a long time)," McChesney said.

Schneider said he will be one of the oldest in the calendar.

"Most of the younger guys try to keep up with me," he said.

The two firefighters participated in a photo shoot July 19 through 24, and there is more in store for them, including a fund-raising stint as bartenders. When the calendar is complete, they will attend signings to promote the product.

The reaction of their fellow firefighters has been a mixture of teasing and respect.

"I thought I was going to take a lot of ribbing," said Schneider. "But they're proud I was able to make it in the calendar."

This year's calendar also will feature alumni from past years posing with children at the hospital. One of the past participants was offered a television commercial because of the project.

However, any recognition that could come from taking part in the calendar is shadowed by the men's reason for participation.

Schneider remained a volunteer at Arvada fire while working for Cunningham.

Fifteen of McChesney's years with the Arvada fire department were spent as a volunteer.

"I love the city (of Arvada). (Being a firefighter) is the greatest job in the world. Everyone who does it loves it," McChesney said. "I was born and raised here. Every day (on the job) you're able to help somebody. You're there to help someone."

Schneider said he also is passionate about his career choice. He was inspired to become a firefighter by his father.

"If someone needed something, he'd drop everything and help them," said Schneider. "My uncle was on Arvada for 25 to 30 years, (and when I tried volunteering) I really enjoyed it and pursued a career in it."

The crux of being a firefighter for both men is helping others.

"When people call 911, they're in chaos. I enjoy being able to make a difference in people's lives," said Schneider. "I like to help people. I get up in the morning and I love going to work."

The 2005 Colorado Firefighters calendar will be available at: Virgin Records in the Denver Pavilions, 500 16th St.; Tattered Cover bookstore in Lower Downtown Denver, 1628 16th St., and Cherry Creek, 2955 E. First Ave.