

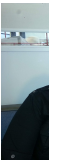
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# Eastern Iowa Airport officer attains rare master firefighter certification

27 passed course out of over 100 applicants





Adam Wesley/The Gazette Amy Page, a public safety officer at The Eastern Iowa Airport, wears her fire-retardant gear complete with oxygen tank, mask and helmet in a fire engine bay at the airport. Page, who serves as a firefighter, police officer and emergency medical technician, is one of only 27 people nationwide out of more than 100 applicants to become a certified airport master firefighter.

**George C. Ford, The Gazette**

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CEDAR RAPIDS — A public safety officer at The Eastern Iowa Airport has attained certification as an airport master firefighter, one of 27 out of more than 100 applicants nationwide.

Amy Page, 27, serves the regional airport as a firefighter, police officer, and emergency medical technician as well as handling operations duties. She said the airport master firefighter program, offered by the American Association of Airport Executives in Washington, D.C., offered an opportunity for additional training.

“I love learning and expanding my knowledge, knowing it will help me do my job better,” said Page, who joined the airport in 2009 after earning a bachelor’s degree in flight operations and aviation management from the University of Dubuque.

Beginning in October 2013, Page studied online courses for a year before taking a 150-question multiple-choice test at the end of September. While doing the independent study, she continued to work the required 24-hours-on, 24-hours-off shifts at the airport as well as completing continuing education requirements of her employment,

Page, a native of Huxley, Iowa, credits the support she received from Airport Public Safety Commander Ken Washburn as well as having a supportive spouse, who works as an air traffic controller at the Quad City International Airport in Moline, Ill.

“My husband was very understanding,” Page said. “There were evenings when we were not able to go out and do stuff because I needed to stay home and study.”

The curriculum for the program includes materials related to rescue and firefighting operations as well as airport administration and management. Page, a licensed pilot, said she gained a better understanding of her role in the overall operation of the airport.

“I studied aviation management in college, but we didn’t get into the financial, legislative, and marketing aspects of an airport,” she said. “The program helped me learn a lot more about how an airport operates.

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“We’re in one department out of multiple departments at the airport, Understanding what the other departments do helps you do your job better.”

Jason Graber, battalion chief with the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority in Leesburg, Va., said the airport master firefighter program is designed to meet the need for professional training at the nation's airports.

“After an airport firefighter gets a basic certification at various sites across the country, there is no other certification that an airport firefighter can get specific to that discipline. That's what we're trying to drive with the professional certification program,” said Graber, who was instrumental in developing curriculum for the airport master firefighter program.

“It's just giving a starving industry something else in the way of professional development.”

While her certification prepared her to manage an airport fire department, Page expects to continue working in the airport safety department and looking for additional training opportunities.

“I love working at this airport and I plan to stay in aviation,” she said. “At this point, I really can't see too far down the road.”

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