Continued from FIREFIGHTERS on Page A01

Firefighters

From Page **A1**

“It builds a camaraderie, friendships, and trust. Trust is huge in this business. You’re going to go into a burning building, you’ve got to know that that guy with you is basically almost like a brother to you,” Frink said.

The family ties at Dunn’s Corners Fire Department may evolve once more as Frink said his 14-year-old son seems interested and could soon join the department’s junior firefighter program, an initiative geared toward finding prospective volunteers at a young age and bringing them along into the department.

Frink said another factor is even more important than family tradition in prompting people to get involved: “You see an opportunity to give back to your community. That was really my motivation. It’s nice to be able to help your neighbor, to be out there to help someone in need.”

The modest Frink, the department’s first full-time, paid chief, initially demurred when asked to describe the highlights of his firefighting career.

He did mention his department’s involvement in the Honor Flight program that brings veterans to Washington, D.C., to see the National World War II Memorial and other monuments.

Rhode Island’s Honor Flight program is sponsored by the state Association of Fire Chiefs.

“I’ve been a guardian for two WW II vets, one from Westerly, Armando ‘Chuck’ Azzinaro,” he said.

He then added, “Sitting in this seat right now with a lot of people who came before me and helped me out. I had no expectations of sitting in this seat. Right now, this is the highlight of my career.”

Dunn’s Corners Fire Department responded to 403 calls in 2012. The department has 29 active firefighters and a total of 46 members. The department provides service to the Dunn’s Corners Fire District, Shelter Harbor Fire District, Shady Harbor Fire District, Bradford Fire District, and Central Beach Fire District, all in the towns of Westerly and Charlestown, where it maintains its Station 2.

The department’s equipment includes five engine trucks, one tower-ladder truck, one tanker truck, a boat, a bucket truck, and an SUV.

The department’s current budget is $787,380.

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