The motto of Lafayette’s earliest firefighters was as simple as their uniforms: "SAFETY AND PROTECTION." Today’s staff of more than 200 firefighters and support personnel may seem a far cry from the early days of the Hobo Volunteers and Firefighting Company No. 1, but the basic idea expressed by the motto still remains at the heart of a firefighter’s service.

The Story of Chief:
Firehouse Dog Alive & Well

We’ve all seen the pictures and heard the stories of the firefighter’s constant companion, the Dalmatian. Known for their intelligence and quickness, the spotted dogs have been the mascot of firefighting since who knows when.

Lafayette’s fire department is no different. For years the fire station on Johnston Street near USL – which was recently remodeled – was home to Chief, the department’s Dalmatian.

“Chief never really went out on fire calls,” said Capt. Ron Broussard. “He lived at the station, though, and had pretty much free run of the place.”

At least, he did until he became too smart for his own good.

“Chief was an intelligent dog,” Broussard said. “He soon learned that life at the fire station operated on a certain cycle: Alarm sounds, men leave. And if the alarm happened to sound at lunch time, there would be food left on the table. The firefighters would return to the station to find their meal all over the floor.”

Broussard said that was when Chief graduated from being an inside dog to an indoor-outdoor model, with his own pen on the fire station’s property. When the alarm would sound, Chief would go to his pen and the firefighters would respond to the emergency.

“It turned out that Chief was also somewhat of an escape artist,” Broussard said. “He would get out of his pen and go wandering around the USL campus. He was a pretty big dog, and so that was kind of a problem; the firefighters had to go over to USL and pick him up a time or two.”

So it was decided that it would be in everyone’s best interests, including Chief’s, to relocate the dog to the private home of one of the station’s firefighters. So now Chief has room to roam, and firefighters can safely leave the noon meal unattended.

And last we heard, this strategy has worked out well for everyone. The firehouse dog is alive and well and living a life of peaceful retirement.
Gabik is a commissioner for the Bayou Vermilion District, vice president of the Republican Women's Club, and is past president of the Women Business Owners Association and the New Acadians Club.

Sharane Gott worked her way up to president of the Better Business Bureau of Acadiana, starting first as the arbitrations director for four years before being promoted to operations manager for two years. Her educational background was in elementary education, and Gott says she finds herself educating people and businesses every day.

She is in her fifth year as president, and under her leadership, the bureau has doubled in size — both in dollars and in the number of members it serves. It is the only bureau in Louisiana to have face-to-face mediation. For the first time in the bureau's 23-year history, it was honored last year with the National Award in Bureau to Business Communications.

Gott was recently named by the Louisiana Attorney General, Richard Ieyoub, as a member of the Auto Repair Task Force. She served as Master of Ceremonies at the National Better Business Bureau Chief Executive Officer Meeting in February and is the Program Chairman for the Southeast Region of Better Business Bureaus Meeting this Spring.

Gott is involved in community work through serving on the Advisory Board of Big Brothers/Big Sisters.

Dr. Jean Kreamer is director of the Department of Media and Printing Services, in the Division of Computing and Information Services at USL. The major focus of her work is in the area of instructional support for the entire university community.

Kreamer has published over sixty articles in professional journals and has completed work on her sixth book, having recently finished her work as a contributor to the Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science of the American Library Association. In the past five years, Kreamer has delivered twenty major invited lectures to professional organizations. Her speaking credits to state library associations are extensive.