

FIREFIGHTER PAY | They completed their training, city says

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"The city is disappointed in the ruling because we believe the three firefighters completed their required training, but I understand that both the fire commission and court relied upon the records submitted by the official training officer."

No money will change hands, because the city already paid back the fire commission.

The appeal stemmed from the fire commission asking the city to return \$12,000 in incentive pay, because it found that the three firefighters – Battalion Chief Daniel Miller, Lt. Ray Travis

and Sgt. Thomas Young – did not complete 100 training hours in 2007.

Firefighters earn incentive pay for completing 100 training hours per year through a publicly funded grant.

The fire commission originally attempted to reclaim \$30,000 from Frankfort in

July 2008. The additional \$18,000 came from Deron Rambo, the city's emergency management director, whom the commission said wasn't eligible for incentive pay.

The commission reviewed Rambo's case and unanimously decided he was eligible based on his po-

sition with the Frankfort Fire Department.

The city then focused its attention on keeping the firefighters' \$12,000 incentive pay because the city believed the firefighters completed the required 100 hours of training.

The city brought in Lou- is McClain, the fire depart-

ment's former training officer, in October to look at training records.

McClain reported that the three firefighters had performed 100 hours of training. The court denied his testimony because it didn't want to undermine the records sent by Morgan, then the current training officer.

"The answer is love and compassion." – Bill Pelke, the founder of Journey of Hope

DEATH PENALTY | Abolish it, speakers say

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fore he was cleared.

In and out of trouble in South Central Los Angeles, Graham spent much of his adolescent life in juvenile institutions, until he was sent to Soledad Prison at age 18.

In prison, Graham became a leader of the Black Panther Party expanded. He fought against racism and guard brutality in the prison, he says.

He says that's why, in 1973, he was framed in the murder of a prison guard at the Deul Vocational Institute, Stockton, Calif. The community became involved in his defense and supported him through four trials. Graham and his co-defendant, Eugene Allen, were sent to San Quentin's death row in 1976 after a second trial in San Francisco.

"The most horrifying thing for me was when you would get a visit, the guards escorted you out, they would holler 'Dead man walking!' and the other prisoners would get up against the wall as you went by," said Graham, his voice shaking and sweat forming on his brow.

In 1979, the California Supreme Court overturned the murder conviction. A third

trial ended in a hung jury, and after a fourth, Graham and Allen were found not guilty.

"I am here today not because of the system but in spite of the system," he said.

Terri Steinberg

A devoted mother who often visits her son on death row, Steinberg asked students to think about the collateral damage that goes with the death penalty.

She held up a photo of her other children and asked, "How do you explain the death penalty to a 4-year-old?"

Steinberg did that after her son, Wolfe, a 19-year-old marijuana dealer, was convicted in 2002 of hiring another dealer to kill a third one.

Steinberg maintains her son's innocence and fights the death penalty.

"They're going to kill my son," she said fighting tears. "People can prove their innocence and become free. Maybe one day my son will be free, and he can tell this story instead of me."

She is currently in the appeals process and dreads the outcome.

"If he does get executed, we're the ones who will be

left behind. How are we going to keep going? How are we going to trust in our justice system knowing what they've done to us?"

Bill Pelke

Pelke, the founder of Journey of Hope, arrived at his argument from the other side. He is a murder victim family member who is morally opposed to the death penalty and has dedicated his life to abolishing the practice.

"The death penalty has nothing to do with the healing," he says. "It just continues the cycle of violence."

He's told his story more 5,000 times, but he still choked up Tuesday during the telling.

Four teenage girls skipped out early from their Indiana high school in 1985. After drinking wine and beer and smoking pot, they decided they needed money to go to a local arcade. One girl knew her neighbor, 78-year-old Ruth Pelke, would invite the other three girls in if they asked for a Bible lesson.

"She was a very religious woman, and her passion was telling Bible stories to young people," her grandson said. She invited them in.

One girl hit her over the head with a vase; another

pulled a knife and stabbed her. Then another took a turn with the knife. The girls ransacked the house and came up with \$10 and an old car.

Paula Cooper, 15 at the time, was the one who first pulled out the knife and was deemed the ringleader. When she was sentenced to the electric chair by the state of Indiana, Pelke supported the judge's decision.

A year later, however, he asked God for compassion for Cooper and her family.

When he imagined his grandparents' home, he saw his grandmother butchered to death on the dining room floor where they had celebrated Easter and Christmas and birthdays.

Forgiving Cooper changed that.

He became involved in an international crusade on Cooper's behalf in 1989, and through those efforts, she was removed from death row and her sentence commuted to 60 years.

When she's paroled, Pelke hopes she'll spread her story through Journey of Hope.

"People think, 'If I get revenge, I'll feel better,'" he said. "The answer is love and compassion. You're never going to want to see anyone put in the death chamber."

SEWER | State adds grant of half million

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grant. He said a portion of the match is in the budget, and he's going to check to see if the county road department could do some in-kind work such as grading and site preparation.

The Farmdale Sanitation District also was notified recently of a \$550,000 grant through the state Division of Water, according to Caroline Collins, secretary of the Farmdale Sanitation District board.

Caroline Collins said

the recent funding is an important step toward a cleaner environment. The board is currently looking for land to purchase, she said.

The treatment plant will be built in an area west of U.S. 127 and south of Interstate 64.

The \$900,000 was in the \$32.2 billion appropriations measure for the Department of the Interior, the Environmental Protection Agency and related agencies that was signed by President Barack Obama last week.

Germany fumes over GM move

BERLIN (AP) — Germany's politicians fumed with anger and Opel workers cancelled cost concessions and readied walkouts after General Motors Co. abandoned the sale of its European subsidiary to parts maker Magna International and Russian bank Sberbank.

Klaus Franz, Adam Opel GmbH's top employee representative, called it a "black day" and said workers would start brief work stoppages Thursday.

GM's decision Tuesday to abandon the deal was a sharp blow to government and labor officials who supported it as the restructuring option that would save the most jobs in Germany.

The German government had put up a euro 1.5 billion bridge loan to keep Opel afloat as a buyer was sought, and promised euro 4.5 billion in further financing so Magna and Sberbank could take a 55 percent stake.

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