

Fire Chief, father and husband...

“It’s all about having a passion for what you do”-
James Bouthillier

By Mable Hastings

James Bouthillier is the Director of Public Safety for the Municipality of Potton and he is also a husband and father of two small children. As a Fire Chief and Preventionist, James is responsible for organizing, directing and evaluating the firefighting and fire prevention as well as overseeing the First Responder group in the township of Potton. He works to develop, implement and evaluate policies and procedures related to the operation of the fire department reporting to the municipal council. He plans, directs and coordinates firefighting activities. Assessing the nature of fires, damages and dangers, he works closely with the members of his team. He is the lead of operations at the scene of a fire. He works to organize and lead fire prevention activities and represents the fire department. Coordinating the training of the personnel and supporting, encouraging and instilling teamwork with his team and improving the firefighting methods at all times. He presents the budgetary needs as well as equipment needs to the municipal council for consideration and approval. James worked as a preventionist in the MRC of Coaticook for two years prior to coming to Potton and is also a firefighter in Eastman.

“I love my job and enjoy being able to do something I believe in with such a great team standing alongside me,” said James Bouthillier in our recent discussion about his career choice. “Potton has a dynamic, diverse and extremely dedicated group of fire fighters and first responders,” shared James, “I feel very lucky to be in their midst.”

Bouthillier emphasizes that if you aren’t doing a job that you love, you may not stick with it and he feels that he has found his place as far as his career goes and is happy to go to work each day.

“Potton is often working proactively in its prevention techniques and has made great advancements in improving the equipment and upgrading the training and skills of the members of the department,” said Bouthillier. “Keeping the community safe and saving lives is definitely a priority for the Municipal Council and great effort is made in supporting us.”

Bouthillier, like many of the members of the local fire fighter and first responder teams is also a husband and father. When I asked him how he balances this role or incorporates it into his life, his answer was simple.

“I have a very understanding wife of 14 years who realizes that I may have to leave home or an event anytime, day or night and even on special family occasions,” shared James. “She is familiar with the Potton team and helps whenever possible.” Regarding his two young children James said, “My two children ages five and seven love everything related to firefighting and first



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responder work and on occasion they love coming to see the fire station. The two even want to join our team when they are old enough.”

Bouthillier stresses that family time is honored and while an emergency call can always find him having to leave, he tries his best to make their time together as special as possible. He wants them to know that they too are a special priority for him.

I think that most of our team has this kind of support from their families and friends. If not, we would not be able to do what we do. This type of commitment requires a lot of one’s spare time and it does not always leave a lot of extra for a social life.

“In Potton we’ve built a truly strong support network within our team, and I believe that with the support of the lieutenants and captains we are more like a second family than a simple team,” explained James. “We spend a lot of time together and have formed a special bond,” he added. “While this never replaces the friends we have in our personal life, creating this bond is so important for all and we all strive to include our families in the social aspects of what we do in hopes of creating a bond between all of them as well.”

Bouthillier is proud of the achievements of his team. When asked about the accomplishments of his team he emphasizes the creation of the nautical rescue unit, the creation of the “GARDE EXTERNE” for officers and first responders, replacement of the First Responder vehicle, the implementation of the Camp 911 and the replacement of many pieces of their equipment including Air packs, Jaws of life...”

“I wouldn’t change the profession I have chosen and I love the community I am working in. It is an amazing feeling when you save a life that makes the decision to pursue this type of career make sense,” he continued. “I strongly believe that as a team the Fire Department and First Responders of Potton will always give their maximum to help anyone in need.”



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