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# Banken Announces Retirement

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## Banken Announces Retirement

*By Annabeth Miller, SMT Editor*

It's hard to imagine any news being as big as the Cardinals make it to the World Series. But there is, indeed, as the news was shared that Chief Al Banken will be stepping down from his 48 year position as the Dexter Fire Chief.

The veteran Dexter fire chief delivered some rather surprising and unexpected news at the end of the Dexter Board of Alderman meeting, leaving some at a loss for words.

"Mr. Mayor, there's other news to talk about other than the Cardinals and the World Series, and I'm about to give you some," Banken said. Banken announced that after 48 years of service to the City, he plans to retire in January 2012.

"I've been on the Fire Department about 48 years and a lot of good things have happened," he said. "I am announcing my retirement on the date of Jan. 15, 2012. I will be happy to serve until that time."

Banken's wife Betty and one of their three sons were with the chief at Monday night's meeting. Son James from Cape Girardeau sat with his mother; sons Greg and Joe were unable to attend the meeting.

Mayor Joe Weber accepted Banken's retirement, with praise for 48 years of service and all Banken has given the city.

“I think everybody in this audience tonight – as well as all the people in town - realize how much ‘blood and guts’ you’ve given it through the years,” Weber said. “We appreciate that. When you’re the tops – you’re the tops!”

The aldermen and many of the department heads offered their congratulations and thanks to Banken for his service to the community, his expertise and community spirit.

“You’re a true asset,” said Ward II Alderman Kent Essner.

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