

Owens

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position he held for 13 years.

"In 1994, I was appointed chief by Mayor Martha Hawks," Owens said. "I was actually appointed before but declined the position."

Owens has been chief now for 23 years and has the longest tenure of any chief with the Humboldt Fire Department.

Owens loves being a firefighter but the job has one negative aspect, loss of life. Sadly for fireman, people do die in fires.

"The worst part of being a chief is to lose somebody in a fire," Owens said with remorse. "Thank God we haven't lost a firefighter. But losing someone in an accident or fire is hard."

Over a 40-year span, Owens

has seen fire fighting change drastically. When he was hired, training was done within the force for the most part. Now firefighters must pass tests for knowledge, ability and technique.

"Now we have National Fire Protective Approved (NFPA) equipment, the very best you can have," Owens stated. "All our firefighters are certified with the Tennessee Fire Service and Codes Enforcement Academy. The equipment we had then is not as advanced as what we have now."

Owens also said there were more structure fires earlier in his career averaging around one per day. He accounts the fewer structure fires to improved building materials

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