

Chance Favors the Prepared

BY TIM KRULAN

A quote often attributed to Louis Pasteur goes “chance favors the prepared mind.” In the field of fire protection, I think we can distill this down to just “chance favors the prepared.” As I drove north from Baltimore to New Jersey on a July afternoon, I found

fire protection industry. Suddenly and unexpectedly, the underside of the vehicle in front of me erupted in flames.

It was a minivan, and it was spitting flames as the driver cut across two lanes of traffic to get to the shoulder as quickly as possible. I pulled off just

one else was in the car, the extinguisher made short work of the fire. Not only was I prepared with an extinguisher in my car, but I was also knowledgeable in how to use the extinguisher to put out the fire. Just as soon as it started, it was over, that quickly! The fire was out, the van saved, and the driver and her children were safe.

After the adrenaline and shock of the situation subsided, we talked as we waited for the police and fire department to arrive. (Note: due to the highway location—there were no entrance ramps nearby—it took the fire department over twelve minutes to arrive.) I found out that she and her three boys were on a family trip from Florida to New York to visit their grandparents. All of the their luggage and belongings for the trip were in the van. We agreed that while all of the items in the van could be replaced, their family’s safety was most important.

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out just how true this statement is.

I had started out on Route 95 North heading back to my office in Boonton, New Jersey. I had spent the past two days in meetings and working on marketing photos of fire protection equipment with a photographer. The back of my car looked like a mini stockroom for the

ahead of the van and grabbed one of the 10lb ABC extinguishers that I had in the rear of my car from the photo shoot. I ran to help the driver, a young woman, as she screamed for her three children to run from the car towards the trees that lined the road.

Once I got to her and made sure no

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This statement proved true on this hot summer day in Baltimore for this family on their summer vacation. Some would say that, in this case, chance had indeed favored the prepared—I agree. But personally, I’d like to think that there was something more than chance that caused me to be in the right place at the right time.

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