

## **FIRE DEPARTMENT**

*Dale Freeman, Chief*

The Mishawaka Fire Department has a full time staff of 108 employees. The Fire Department is composed of four divisions, including suppression, emergency medical services, fire inspection prevention and investigation, and administrative.

Between these four divisions, the Fire Department is responsible for all fire suppression, emergency medical calls, vehicle extrication, water rescue, carbon monoxide investigations, hazardous material response, natural gas leaks, lift assists and other types of citizen assistance.



**Parade time Mishawaka Fire Honor Guard at Memorial Day Parade**

### **Retirements**

John VanBrouaene and Steve Shedd both retired from the department after serving for 35 years and 15 years, respectively. The citizens of Mishawaka are extremely grateful for John and Steve, as well as for their hard work, dedication, and commitment to the safety of our community.



**Parade fan Firefighter VanBrouaene poses with a young parade goer**

### **Run Volume**

Run volume for the Fire Department, including fire and E.M.S. incidents increased in 2010 to 5,727 from its 2009 level of 5,183. This averages 477 runs per month or roughly 16 runs per day. With a minimum of one-hour turnaround time for medical runs, which are still 78% of total call volume, we are keeping very busy. The number of E.M.S. runs in 2010 was 4,467.

### **Fire District Study**

In 2010, the Fire Department entered into an agreement with D.L.Z. of Indiana L.L.C. to update its 2004 Fire District Study. The update will take into account any changes which have occurred in the last six years, as well as several other improvements in traffic flow, such as the Main Street underpass and other improvements in the Main Street corridor. We constantly review run data for any possible changes we can make to improve our delivery of services and maintain world class service to our citizens.

In addition to the update of call types and locations, the agreement also calls for design and construction oversight to replace the current station #4 located at 2319 Lincolnway

East. As the Capital Avenue project becomes a reality, we have the opportunity to take advantage of some needed redistricting and plan for anticipated future growth.

### **St. Joseph County Dispatch Consolidation**

In 2010, officials from Mishawaka, the City of South Bend, and Saint Joseph County began conversations about a dispatch center consolidation. The Kernan/Shepard report mandates dispatch center consolidation by the year 2014. While there is still much to be decided, the initial proposal would call for the Mishawaka Dispatch Center to handle dispatch for Mishawaka Police and Fire, as well as for Saint Joseph County Fire departments. The South Bend center would be responsible for South Bend Police and Fire, as well as Saint Joseph County Police. Financial considerations and physical locations for the centers are still under discussion.

### **Fighting Fires in Mishawaka**

In 2010 the department responded to 17 commercial fires, 45 residential fires, 7 garage fires, and 16 apartment complex fires. Total fire losses were estimated at \$2,282,725 for the year. This is only an estimate by the officer in charge of the scene; actual losses are probably higher.

Several large fires occurred in Mishawaka in 2010, including those in the Dairy Queen restaurant, The Taj Indian restaurant, Golden Q billiard hall, and Sari Sari Market, all on McKinley Avenue.

Several large apartment fires also broke out in 2010. In July, the Summer Place apartments on University Drive caught on fire which damaged seven units. One month later a fire, which was determined to be arson, damaged four units in the Hickory Village apartment complex. In October, three units in the Kensard Court apartments were damaged. In November, four units in the Lakeside apartment complex were damaged. One life was lost in the tragic fire in Eastgate apartments the same day. Fire units did an outstanding job keeping the fires in the complexes of origin and not allowing them to spread to nearby units.



**The heat is on** *fire suppression in action*

### **Fire Statistics Summary**

The Mishawaka Fire Department conducted 5,761 runs in 2010. Over the last five years the City has averaged 5,364 runs per year. 2010 had 397 more runs than the five year average, or a 7% increase. Although the number of runs per year fluctuates, the number of runs has been increasing over time as the population grows, baby boomers age, and more medical/nursing facilities locate in the City.

### **Emergency Medical Dispatch**

In 2010, all of our medical runs were dispatched using Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD). Runs are categorized and dispatched according to the seriousness of the call. All members of the Emergency Dispatch Center comply with the Medical Priority Dispatch System (MPDS) protocols. The Mishawaka Fire Department's goals are to serve the citizens of Mishawaka and Saint Joseph County with a consistency, quality, and accuracy and to meet high EMD compliance scores. Runs which previously required lights and sirens may no longer warrant them if the call is non-serious. Safety of the responders, as well as the general motoring public, is enhanced by this system.

*...serve the citizens of Mishawaka and Saint Joseph County with a consistency, quality, and accuracy...*

### **Public Education**

2010 was another very successful year for public education programs. Firefighters Lieutenant Brian Linson II and Derron Hess, who, along with Peggy Marker from the Hannah Lindahl Children's Museum, scheduled the public education classes. This past year, 2,703 people were reached by these public education endeavors. 1,132 people toured the Survive Alive House located in Emmons School. Another 508 took advantage of "Little Red" classes at Station #3 on Douglas Road. Other assemblies and tours involved another 1,063 people. In addition to these numbers, Chief of Prevention James Schuster oversaw an additional 805 students at several schools in the area.

*...2,703 people were reached by these public education endeavors*

We were glad to participate in career day held at Mishawaka High School to explain the importance, responsibilities, and benefits of fighting fires professionally. Hopefully in the coming years, we will be able to recruit today's students.

### **Charitable Works**

In 2010, several charitable works were performed by firefighters for the enrichment of the community. Among these were the Needy Family Program at Christmas, Fill the Boot for the Muscular Dystrophy Association, Charity Bass Fishing Tournament, and Habitat for Humanity. Each of these are described in greater detail below.

In October, the "Firefighters Wear Pink" shirt campaign became a success with several local cancer charities, who received the entire profit. These programs show the dedication of the Mishawaka Fire Department to the community they serve. We enjoy giving back to the city that we call "home."

Mishawaka firefighters sponsor an annual bass fishing tournament held at Maggie's Marina. Larry Regina has done an excellent job leading the tournaments, while other firefighters help with staging, parking, etc. for the tournament. This year's tournament featured 56 two-person teams. After prize payouts, we raised \$969 for charity. The

charities selected this year were Hannah's House, which received a check for \$500, and St. Joseph Regional Medical Center Pediatrics, which received \$500 to purchase games, toys, etc. for the unit.

In its 29<sup>th</sup> year, the firefighters continued to serve the needs of those less fortunate. Thanks to the firefighter's generous support, we were able to help nine families and sixteen children. We received a total of \$4,254 from within our ranks and received additional contributions from area Kroger and Meijer stores. The manager of Kroger gave us substantial discounts, as well as a bonus gift card at purchase time.

With the overall savings from the groceries, we were able to help the Penn Township Food Pantry and a homeless shelter. We donated the remainder of the money to Pet Refuge on 6<sup>th</sup> Street. We owe a special thanks to Battalion Chief James Cocquyt, Captain Bryon Woodward, and Driver/Operator Jeffrey Regina for their coordination efforts; however it was truly a group effort by all.

Lieutenant David Ray and his fellow firefighters collected \$3,966 for the Jerry Lewis Labor Day Telethon with the Fill the Boot Campaign. A total of 46 firefighters took donations over the Labor Day weekend at four different locations. The donations allow us to help send local children to Camp Potawatomi.

### **Habitat for Humanity**

Several dozen members of the Fire Department personnel were able to participate again in the Habitat for Humanity house built in Mishawaka. The pride of any community is its strong neighborhoods, and the Mishawaka Fire Department wants to help foster these. This is the third house aided by the Fire Department and will hopefully pave the way for many more to come.



## **DIVISIONS**

### **Emergency Medical Service (EMS)**

The EMS Division, under the leadership of Chief Brian Thomas, has been very busy



thanks to the dedication and professionalism of the men and woman that serve our citizens every day. With both increasing calls for service and acuity of illness, our EMS providers have answered the call to duty each and every time. As time progressed, reporting demands, certifications, and training have all advanced. The plan to implement a third ambulance for 2011 is well deserved by both our citizens and our responders.

**First Response EMS workers  
on the scene**

During 2010, we were able to complete the implementation of a new EMS reporting system that directly coincides with our new outside billing company. These changes were critical in the streamlining of our management team. More importantly, the EMS reporting system allows for better documentation and therefore overall better care of the medical patient. This new software will allow us to track trends and share information with hospitals to better improve our care of future patients. Least of all, this new software and billing format will allow us to have greater revenue capture.

This past year, Saint Joseph Regional Medical Center completed its first year in our city. Since the reduction of the “old” Saint Joseph Community Hospital, we once had to transport 100% of our patients to South Bend. Now, 79% of our patients are transported within Mishawaka. This reduces both transport time, which is helpful for our most critically ill patients, and our turnaround time, preparing us for the next call.

With much research and preparation, we were able to adjust our EMS fees to better reflect the actual cost associated with the services we provide. We anxiously await the next few quarters to see how our collection on these new fees will impact revenue.

### **Fire Prevention Bureau**

The Mishawaka Fire Prevention Bureau, under the leadership of Chief Jim Schuster is responsible for inspecting businesses and buildings, new and old, to ensure the safe occupancy of the people who work in and visit them. In 2010, the Fire Prevention Bureau performed over 1,400 fire inspections of existing buildings in the City of Mishawaka. In addition, the Bureau works closely with the Mishawaka Building Department by reviewing all design drawings for new construction within the City of Mishawaka to make sure all fire and building codes are met.

Fire Investigators from the Bureau were called out 33 times in 2010 to investigate fires. These fires ranged from vehicle fires and house fires to large commercial buildings. All fire scenes are documented and photographed, and a written report is completed of the cause and origin. Any fire that is considered incendiary in nature will be jointly investigated with the Mishawaka Police Detective Division. Fire Investigators are on call twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, and 365 days a year.

The Mishawaka Fire Department Prevention Bureau has always had a strong commitment to educating the citizens, employees, students, and visitors within our city. Throughout 2010, we educated many businesses with hands-on experience of fire extinguisher use in the workplace. A live-fire in a controlled environment helps people recognize how and when to use fire extinguishers properly and effectively.

During Fire Prevention Week in October, firefighters conducted drills at all the schools in the City of Mishawaka. These drills were timed and witnessed by the Fire Prevention Bureau and all necessary changes were made to exiting procedures to ensure that students and faculty have safe evacuations.

During the year, many seminars were given to businesses on topics such as evacuation drills, fire safety plans, extinguishers, emergency planning and preparedness, smoke and

carbon monoxide detectors, and fire alarm systems. We also participated in the annual Bayer Safety Fair to distribute fire safety material to hundreds of Bayer employees and their families.

We continue to partner with businesses in Mishawaka to promote fire safety and prevention. We were very fortunate to receive a donation of \$1,200 from Lowe's of Mishawaka. This money was used to purchase smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors, fire extinguishers, and fire escape ladders. We also received a donation of 31 fire extinguishers from Koorsen Fire of Mishawaka with a value of \$1,500. The Mishawaka Fire Department continues to offer these fire safety items free of charge for the elderly or for those who may not otherwise be able to afford them. Our ultimate goal is to place a fire detector in every home within city limits.



**Reaching out fire safety**  
*obstacle course*

During Fire Prevention Month in October, we were able to bring our "Fire Safety Obstacle Course" to Walt Disney and Beiger schools allowing a total of 850 students to take part. The program was first initiated at Walt Disney School and combined ideas of P.E. Teacher Steve Govorko and Captain Ralph Smith. The Fire Safety Obstacle Course combines physical fitness and a fire safety message into one class. Twelve different stations were set up where each station has a fire safety theme including the following: a blindfolded hose-crawl over and under obstacles,

placing hoses on and off fire hydrants, climbing ropes, and ladders, etc. A fire safety talk is given prior to each session. It has been a great success and we hope to continue it for many years to come. For the fourth year in a row this program also took place at Elm Road School with the partnership of the Penn Township Fire Department. For the second year, we were proud to expand the program to include the Harris Township Fire Department. With our help they were able to offer the program to over 500 students at Horizon Elementary School. Our goal for the future is to expand this program to many more schools and get many more fire departments involved. A total of 1,400 students participated in this program in 2010.

### **Training**

The training coordinator duties are being handled by Assistant Chief Mike Talbot in addition to his facility and apparatus maintenance duties. A monthly training packet is put out with at least twenty hours of training per firefighter per month. By combining duties and delegating to the training committee we have actually increased the amount of training per firefighter, which will help us when we are reviewed by the Insurance Services Organization for grading.



**Tight quarters confined space**  
*entry training*

Assistant Chief Talbot and the Training Committee are responsible for the training of the 107 Firefighters making up our suppression, emergency medical services, inspection and administrative divisions.

The total amount of hours of training in 2009 was 14,054.5 hours or an average of 133.85 hours per member. This is an increase from 2008 when each member had an average of 100 hours per man. We are hopeful to increase this to 200 hours per person in 2011. We are able to accomplish this amount of training thanks to the fact we have 33 members certified by the State of Indiana to the Instructor level.

New hires are trained for 229 hours, achieving the certification of Firefighter I/II before being placed in the suppression. The State of Indiana mandate requires only 24 hours of training in order to be certified at the basic level. Our Training Committee strives to make sure we have the safest level of training prior to being called on to act in emergency situations.

Current members also constantly train on a host of topics to maintain proficiency. Among these topics are: Fire Fighter Survival, Salvage and Overhaul, Fire Streams, Preincident Planning, Strategies and Tactics, Vehicle Rescue and Extrication, Hazardous Materials, Ventilation, Fire Detection and Suppression Systems.

This is in addition to the necessary training we require to become certified and maintain any medical certification requirements. This ranges from 16 hours of continuing education for the First Responder level, up to 160 hours for the Paramedic level. Multiple hands-on skill stations must be passed as well.

The Mishawaka Fire Department also supplies instructors to the City of South Bend for its Swift Water Rescue Course which teaches water rescue techniques and boat operations to firefighters and public safety personnel from around the Country. A week long class is held twice yearly.

We also participate and help instruct as part of the Indiana Department of Homeland Security District 2 Tactical Rescue Team.

### **Mishawaka Fire Department Leadership Symposium**

This was the fourth year of our very successful Mishawaka Fire Department Leadership Symposium. Our working relationship with Bethel College continues to grow and prosper. The Mishawaka Fire Department wants to thank you Captains Bryon Woodward and Raymond Schultz for all of their hard work and dedication that they put into the symposium. The Symposium would not be possible without their efforts.

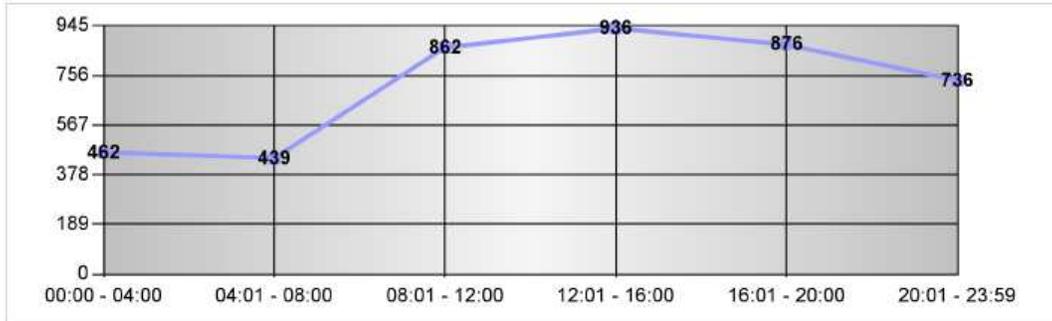
Working closely with Lisa Greco from Bethel we have one of the premier training opportunities for firefighters in the entire Midwest. Over a three day period, leaders from today's fire service present the latest in Fire Department training. Sponsors make this a free class to all participants with only minimal investment by the City of Mishawaka. A special thanks to our friends at Bliss McKnight, Hoosier Fire, Globe and 5 Alarm Fire

Co. for their continued support. Over three hundred attendees representing 15 departments from throughout the State were able to participate.

### Mishawaka Fire Department

#### Incident Count By Hour - Summary

Begin Date Range: 1/1/2010 12:00:00 AM  
 End Date Range: 12/31/2010 12:00:00 AM



Hours	Count	Percentage Of Total
<a href="#">00:00 - 04:00</a>	462	10.72
<a href="#">04:01 - 08:00</a>	439	10.18
<a href="#">08:01 - 12:00</a>	862	20.00
<a href="#">12:01 - 16:00</a>	936	21.71
<a href="#">16:01 - 20:00</a>	876	20.32
<a href="#">20:01 - 23:59</a>	736	17.07

<b>Total</b>	<b><u>4311</u></b>
--------------	--------------------

*(51) incident(s) are not included in this report due to incomplete or invalid data.*

*Incidents included in this report must have valid values for "Unit Arrived on Scene Time."*

*This report contains two drill-down reports which can be accessed by clicking on the underlined numbers (found in the "Hours" column and the "Total" column in the tables above).*