

## **Fire Department**

*Dale E. Freeman, Chief*

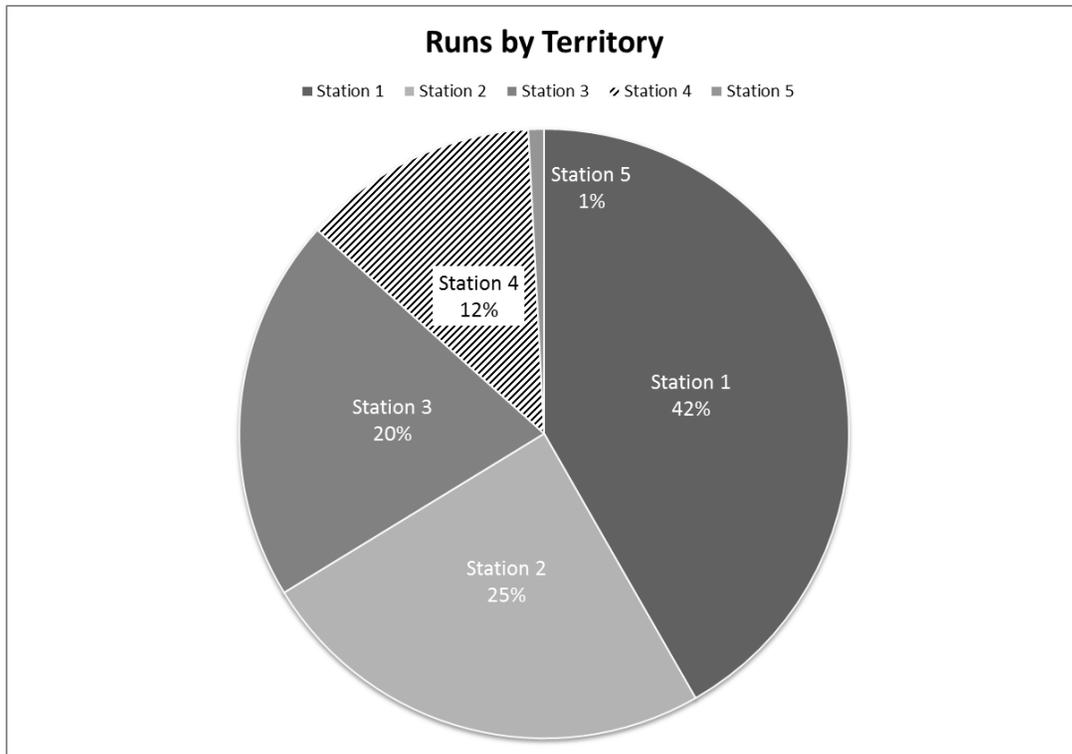
The Mishawaka Fire Department has been serving the City since 1904. The primary responsibilities of the Fire Department are fire suppression, fire prevention, fire investigation, emergency medical, hazardous materials, education, water rescue and confined space rescue. On any given day a minimum of 29 persons will be protecting Mishawaka, 24 hours a day 365 days a year.



*Mishawaka Fire Department Honor Guard*

The total run volume for the Fire Department, including fire and EMS increased this year to 6,425 from 6,271 in 2012. This averages 535 runs per month or roughly 18 runs per day. Medical runs have a minimum of one hour turnaround time and are 80% of the total call volume. The total EMS runs this year were 5,115. The Department also responded to 15 commercial fires, 23 residential fires, 5 garage fires, and 10 apartment complex fires. Total fire losses were estimated at \$5,309,400 for the year.

The single biggest news for the year was the dedication of the new Fire Station #4 located at 3000 East Harrison Road. The station also houses the administrative offices for the entire fire department. The dedication ceremony took place on Sunday January 13, 2013 for the 14,500 sq. ft. facility. The station and offices were built at a cost of 3.7 million dollars. In addition to the fire station and offices, it also houses a state of the art community room to be used for various events.



During 2013 The Fire Department started the implementation of a three platoon system. This new system replaces the antiquated two platoon structure. This change should result in greater efficiency for the Department.

**Divisions**

*Emergency Medical Services (EMS)*

This past year was a busy year for the EMS Division. With both increasing calls for service and acuity of illness our EMS providers have answered the call to duty each and every time. Revenues increased from \$1,218,283 in 2012 to \$1,306,855.

The City took bids for its newest addition to the ambulance fleet. The ambulance is a 2013 Horton Heavy Duty chassis. At a purchase price of \$250,000 the new rig should serve the City well for many years.

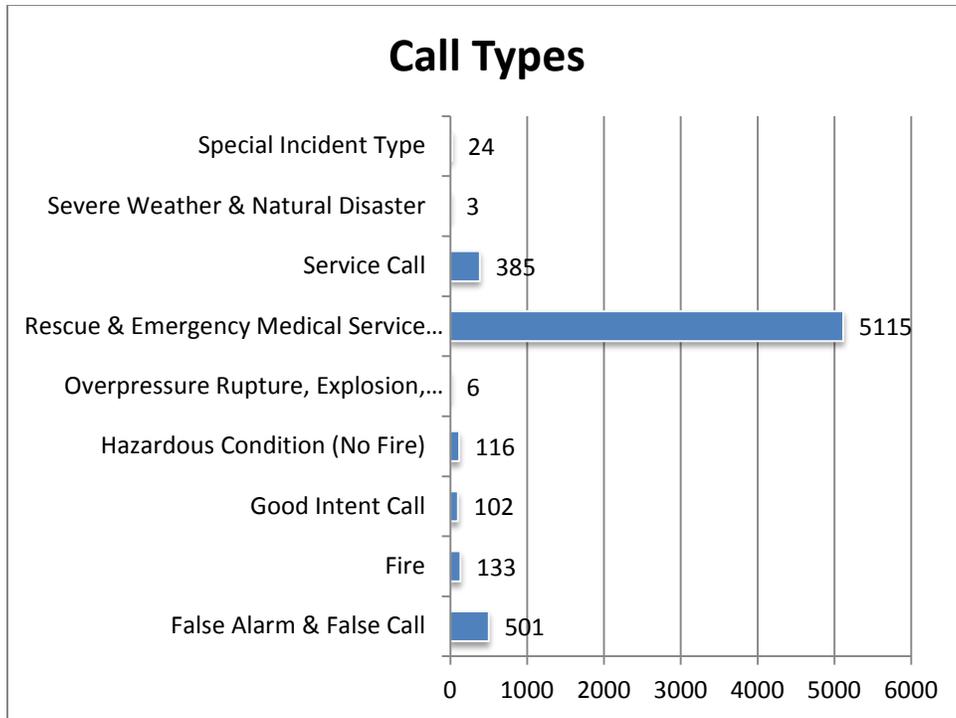


*New Ambulance*

*...we are now able to have a minimum of three ambulances in service every day*

The City is also going out for bids in the near future for another ambulance. Early in 2013 the ambulances were relocated from the centralized EMS facility to outside fire stations to respond more quickly to calls.

Successful contract negotiations between the City Administration and Mishawaka Professional Firefighters Union Local #360 have increased manpower to the point where we are now able to have a minimum of three ambulances in service every day, and on occasion a fourth is available to serve our citizen's needs.



In addition the EMS Division also:

- Added a full-time 3rd ambulance. First increase since 1995.
- Experienced an increase in ambulance responses of 4661 to 5220. A 12% increase over 2012.
- Increased ambulance revenues \$88,572 over 2012.
- Credentialed 3 additional Paramedics to Lead Status.
- Trained 25 Firefighters to the Advanced E.M.T. level.

### *Fire Prevention Bureau*

The Mishawaka Fire Prevention Bureau, under the leadership of Chief Jim Schuster is responsible for inspecting buildings, new and old, to ensure the safe occupancy of the people who work in and visit them. In 2013, the Fire Prevention Bureau performed over 1,720 fire inspections of new and existing buildings in the City of Mishawaka. This was an increase from 1,680 in 2012. 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. Final inspections and testing of safety features are conducted before a final certificate of occupancy is given.

Fire Investigators from the Bureau were called out 32 times in 2013 to investigate fires as compared to 25 times in 2012. These fires ranged from vehicle fires to house fires to large commercial buildings. All fire scenes are fully documented and photographed, and a written report is completed on the cause and origin. Any fire that is considered incendiary in nature will be jointly investigated with the Mishawaka Police Department Detective Division. All 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



*Fire Prevention Demonstration*

educating the citizens, employees, students, and visitors within our city. Throughout 2013, 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. The Prevention Bureau conducted 10 fire extinguisher training demonstrations for 209 employees of various businesses in the city.

During Fire Prevention Month in October, we were able to bring our “Fire Safety Obstacle Course” to Walt Disney and Emmons elementary schools allowing 900 students to participate. The program was initiated 12 years ago and included the ideas of P.E. teacher Steve Govorko. The Fire Safety Obstacle Course combines physical fitness and a fire safety message in one class.

Twelve different stations are set up and each station has a different fire safety theme including the following:

- A blindfolded hose-crawl
- Over-and-under obstacles
- Connecting hoses on fire hydrants
- Climbing ropes
- Ladders
- Window escape
- Coordination drills



*Fire Safety Obstacle Course*

In addition a fire safety talk is given prior to each session. This program has been a great success and we hope to continue it for many years. With our assistance, we have expanded this program

into other school districts with the help of the Penn Township Fire Department, and the Clay Fire Territory. We hope to expand this valuable learning program again in 2014.

We continue to partner with businesses in Mishawaka to promote fire safety, prevention, and education. We were very fortunate again in 2013, to receive a \$1,000 donation from Lowes of Mishawaka. This money was used to purchase smoke detectors and extra batteries, carbon monoxide detectors, fire extinguishers, and fire escape safety ladders.

The Mishawaka Fire Department continues to offer these items free of charge to the elderly or for those who may not otherwise be able to afford them.

### **Public Education**

This year was another successful year for public education programs operated by Captain Brian Linson II and Captain Derron Hess. Totals for the Survive Alive house located at Emmons School were 57 groups accounting for 1,414 people. Little Red tours accounted for 153 people in seven classes. School assemblies and tours accounted for another 31 groups of 1,269 people. In total for 2013 the department spent 300 hours on Public Education instructing 2,836 people.



*Fire Education*

### **Child Passenger Safety Certification**

Since 2011 the Mishawaka Fire Department has trained 15 members as car seat technicians. This valuable service is just one more way we serve our taxpayers.

A \$1,300 grant, received in 2013 through Kid Safe of Indiana, was used to fund the purchase of car seats and equipment to set up a permanent car seat fitting station. This program is totally funded by grants and donations from people who use our services. During 2013, the Mishawaka Fire Department established one permanent fitting station and three satellite fitting stations. The permanent fitting station is at Station #4, on Harrison Road, with Union Street Station and Station #2, and Station #3 being the three satellite stations. In 2013 the Mishawaka Fire Department checked or installed 94 car seats.

*In 2013 the Mishawaka Fire Department has checked or installed 94 car seats for the general public*

### **Recruitment**

In an attempt to recruit and qualify only the best candidates for the Mishawaka Fire Department a decision was made to purchase the required testing supplies for the Candidate Physical Ability Test (C-PAT). This is a nationally standardized test developed by the International Fire Chiefs and the International Association of Firefighters Union. The test ensures fairness and is recognized as the most valid test for recruits. Testing was completed in October of 2013 and a pool of 45 candidates has been established.

Several of the candidates have previous experience with other fire departments, as well as credentials which allow them to be hired and placed in service immediately saving the City a great amount of money and time in training. The Department works hand-in-hand with the City's Human Resources Department to get only the most qualified candidates for the department's openings.

## **Training**

Training has become one of the most important parts of our daily operations. Our personnel must train like their life depends on it, because it does. To deliver top quality service it takes years of training and experience to master our profession. Firefighters are required to conduct firefighting, vehicle extrication, water rescue, hazardous materials, EMS calls, and a host of others that are too numerous to mention. If someone calls for us, no matter what for, we will show up. Our customer service is very important part of our job.



With the implementation of the three-platoon system we added or promoted 12 firefighters to a higher rank. By adding these new positions we had a considerable amount of training that took place to get them ready to serve our community and members. Also, this change it allowed us to put an officer on every truck, which in turn this helped to keep our firefighters safer.

In the last 30 months The Fire Department has hired 25 new firefighters and in the process we have lost approximately 24% of our seniority. For the training division this has put tremendous amount of pressure preparing our new recruits not only to be safe, but also to be the best at serving our community

This year we did more training with MABAs 201 departments, our mutual aid partners, than ever before. Mishawaka Fire, South Bend Fire, Penn Township, and Clay Fire Territory held monthly drills together to increase our interoperability such as communication, water supply, and large incidents. Training with these agencies will not only benefit the citizens of Mishawaka but all of St. Joseph County as well.

*In the past year our firefighters  
have put in a record of over  
23,000 training hours*

In 2013 the State of Indiana changed the way EMT-A's can operate in the field. The Mishawaka Fire Department held a cross-over class that twenty four of our firefighters participated in and learned new life saving skills. The classroom portion has been completed and now they are in the process of completing their practical and written exams.

In the past year our Firefighters have put in a record of over 23,000 training hours. This is an average of 204 hours per firefighter in 2013. In our line of work is a flexible, demanding, dynamic and at times unforeseen consequence type of environment. Training is vital to how we

conduct ourselves and mitigate emergency scenes and with new technologies available we have become better and more efficient in providing the “World Class Service” the citizens of Mishawaka deserve.

## **New Equipment**

In addition to the new ambulance and defibrillators for the EMS division, the Department replaced all of its Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBAs). The old units were 13 years old and are nearing the end of their life cycle. Parts availability had become an issue as the manufacturer no longer supported the units and O.S.H.A. standards have increased. The new units went in to service in September. The total cost was around \$250,000.

## **Giving Back**

### *Firefighter of the Year*

This year Mishawaka Professional Firefighters Union Local #360 chose the firefighter of the year. This award was selected from entries from the Firefighters Union.

I am proud to announce this year’s recipient was Captain Brian Linson II. Brian has been with our department since 1995. In that time he has proven to be a tremendous asset to our department. In addition to his duties as Captain, Brian oversees the Survive Alive Programs and the Little Red program. For the last three years Brian has also served as Pension Secretary for the Department. Hats off to Captain Bucky for a job well done!



*Captain Brian Linson II*

### *Local #360 Fundraising*

Members of the Mishawaka Professional Firefighters Local #360 also took on three very important fundraising events. The first was the annual Pink T-Shirt fundraiser. \$1,000 profit was given to breast cancer support services for women’s mammograms. The program helps women who otherwise could not afford one this very valuable screening tool.



*Pink T-Shirt Fundraiser*

Firefighters also had a camouflage shirt campaign during the Memorial Day Weekend. \$600 dollars was raised and donated to “Honor Flight” the charity which flies World War II veterans to Washington D.C. to see the memorial there.

The third fundraiser was the Firefighter's Golf Outing. Thanks to their hard work, the firefighters were able to give two \$1,000.00 college scholarships to students. Hats off to Local #360 and their members for giving back to the community they serve so well.



*Local #360 Gives Local Students College Scholarships*

### *Needy Family Project*

For the 31<sup>st</sup> year, the firefighters continued to serve the needs of those less fortunate. The \$4,570 raised in 2013 enabled us to help six families. In addition to these contributions, we had additional help from area Kroger and Meijer stores. Meijer, and Store Manager Rick Zeeff, deserve thanks for a generous donation of \$600 in gift cards that were given to the six families.

### *“Fill the Boot” Campaign*

Captain David Ray and his fellow firefighters collected \$4,893 for the Jerry Lewis Labor Day Telethon. A total of 46 firefighters took donations over the Labor Day weekend at four different locations. The donations will allow us to send local children to Camp Potawatomi.