

## **Fire Department**

*Bryon Woodward, Chief*

### **Response Summary**

The Mishawaka Fire Department had another record setting year as the Department responded to 7,432 calls for service. The greatest number of calls for service were EMS in nature. Our ambulances and fire trucks responded to 5,731 calls that required EMS response. This was nearly a 4% increase over 2016. In addition, the MFD had 149 calls that involved a commercial, residential, apartment or other type of fire. The remaining 1,552 include any requests by the public involving investigations, gas leaks, citizen assists, and a variety of other types. In addition, collections were up for ambulance billing making 2017 the greatest revenue year. We collected \$1,518,428 dollars for services provided.



We continue to research and try to increase efficiency in the way we handle emergency responses. As we continue to evolve with the new combined St. Joseph County Dispatch Center we will be looking at how many EMS and fire vehicles we send to responses. We improved our technology with the addition of new tablets and upgraded radios into all our response vehicles, which allows us to be on the forefront of change and continuously improve our response times and level of service to our citizens. We look forward to the day when all the emergency responders in St. Joseph County, both Police and Fire, will be dispatched by the unified communications center. It should allow for greater communication and coordinated responses by the respective agencies.

***“...the Department responded to 7,432 calls for service”***

### **Fire Prevention**

The Mishawaka Fire Prevention Bureau is responsible for inspecting buildings, new and old, to ensure the safe occupancy of the people who work in and visit them. In 2017, the Fire Prevention Bureau performed over 1,109 fire inspections of buildings in the City. Our Fire Marshals work closely with the Mishawaka Building Department by reviewing all design drawings for new construction, building additions, and remodels within the City to make sure all fire and building codes are met. Final inspections and testing of safety features such as fire alarm systems, fire suppression systems, emergency lighting, etc. are completed before a final Certificate of Occupancy is given.

Fire Investigators from the Bureau were called out 32 times to investigate commercial, residential, apartment and vehicle fires in 2017. All fire scenes are fully documented, photographed, and a written report is completed as to the cause and origin. Any fire that is considered suspicious 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 educating the citizens, employees, students, and visitors to our City. Throughout 2017, we trained many businesses in the hands-on operation of fire extinguishers. Extinguishing a live-fire in a controlled environment helps people learn how and when to use fire extinguishers properly and effectively. Also during 2017, many seminars and presentations were given to businesses on topics such as evacuation drills, fire safety plans, fire extinguisher use, emergency planning and preparedness, smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, fire suppression systems, and fire alarm systems. Our main focus continues to be those occupancies that contain the elderly and children.

For the second year in a row, the Mishawaka Fire Department hosted 3 days of open houses for Fire Prevention Week. These open houses were conducted at Fire Station 4 on October 9th, at Station 1 on October 10th, and at Station 3 on October 11th. They were from 6 to 8 p.m. and were open to the public. Each of the open houses had a bounce house for the children donated by Burns Rent-All, cake and drinks donated by Mishawaka Fire Department Local 360, and fire station birdhouse kits that were donated by our Home Depot in Mishawaka. Our Fire Prevention Bureau fire extinguisher training unit helped train the adults in the use of fire extinguishers. Fire prevention and safety literature was available on various subjects such as home fire drills, office fire safety, home fire prevention, kitchen fire prevention, etc. Other members of our department gave tours or taught hands only CPR to visitors. We had a fantastic turnout for these open houses and plan on continuing them for many years. Educating our citizens on fire safety is a top priority!



On Saturday June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2017 the Mishawaka Fire Department partnered with the American Red Cross and their Home Fire Campaign. Volunteers from the Red Cross and members of the Mishawaka Fire Department went door to door giving out and installing free smoke detectors to any home needing them. We also educated the homeowners about having a fire safe home, establishing an escape plan, and encouraging them to practice their plan. By the end of the day, we knocked on several hundred doors and ended up installing 85 smoke detectors! We are already in the planning stages of partnering again with the Red Cross in the future to target more neighborhoods to make Mishawaka a safer community for everyone.

## **Training**

We believe in the mantra “*You can never know enough for a job that can kill you*” so the training division continuously strives for improvement. The wide variety of services we provide makes our continuing education paramount to firefighter safety. The men and women of the MFD spent 20,604 hours in the classroom, and on the training grounds. Our longstanding, common goal is for each firefighter to survive the shift and return home to his or her family. We are taking this to

a higher level with additional training in cancer prevention, PTSD recognition, and suicide prevention to give each firefighter the opportunity at a long prosperous career and retirement.

The department is in the process of upgrading our data management program to more accurately capture and assign hours to our members. These hours are used to design an advanced training program that continuously meets the old and new training requirements and help our department design a safer, more efficient working environment.

In 2017 we continued to partner with other regional fire departments to use new innovative methods to deliver our training. We are building a base for a new learning management system that will offer more options that can accommodate our ever increasing workload. By using technology to our advantage our members will have continuous access to training options that are accessible 24/7/365.



### **Health and Wellness Program**

We are now in the process of building a health and wellness program to aid our firefighters in living a healthier lifestyle on and off the job. This type of education is very important to our firefighters due to the stress of the job and will deliver first class information to guide and help us with nutrition, physical fitness, and mental health. We are now in our fourth year. We will again be providing work performance evaluations on a voluntary basis as we work towards adopting a formalized program in coordination with Mishawaka Professional Firefighters Local 360. We are also evaluating our physical fitness equipment to see how it best fits our needs to keep firefighters in shape. New rowing machines and Airdyne bikes have been added to every station to provide a high intensity, low impact workout option for our firefighters.

### **Apparatus/Increasing Efficiency**

As our current fleet of apparatus ages, we need to be vigilant in maintaining and replacing our trucks in the most cost-efficient manner. We took delivery of two new vehicles in 2017, a Sutphen fire engine and a PL Custom Ambulance. We also have plans to re-chassis a medium-duty ambulance in 2018 and purchase a new Water Rescue Response vehicle for Boat 2.

We continue to improve the efficiency of our preventative maintenance program for our fleet. Every attempt is made to maximize the longevity of our vehicles and utilize both the resources of the City's Motor Pool as well as exploring the option of contracting out some of the more specialized fire apparatus maintenance.

We also continue to explore software improvements which increase the efficiency of the way we conduct our day to day operations. A new program, Emergency Services Reporting, has been

brought online to better track all of our fleet maintenance and reporting as well as track a multitude of other programs run within the department.

### Charitable Causes

The Mishawaka Fire Department continued to give back to the community in 2017. As a fire department we go into people's homes on a daily basis and see those in need. We like to give back to the community we serve when we are able. Our Needy Family Fund raised \$5,598 this year to distribute to 8 needy families with 28 children. The money comes from donations from firefighters and their families only. We do not solicit funds from outside agencies. We were also able to donate an additional \$1,000 to the Mishawaka Food Pantry to assist those less fortunate.

The Mishawaka Fire Department has 6 firefighters trained as car seat technicians. During last year, they checked 42 vehicles for proper installation of a child passenger seat. Once a year we host a car seat event along with Memorial Hospital's children hospital at Martins on Bittersweet.

In 2017 we held a second event at Fire Station #4. During these events we check seats for proper installation, and proper fit for the child's height and weight. We have given away numerous seats to children through these events as well.

In 2017 Mishawaka Fire Fighters ran two very successful t-shirt campaigns to raise funds and awareness for some great causes. First, for the 5th year, the fire department sold limited edition t-shirts that benefited Honor Flight of Northeast Indiana. The shirts were sold to the public and worn on duty in the month of May. Honor Flight flies veterans from World War II, Korea and Viet Nam to Washington DC and back at no charge to the veteran. While in D.C. the veterans get a chance to visit their memorials and connect with other veterans. MFD has raised over \$9,000 to date, and local veterans have benefited from the Honor Flight program.



Second, our firefighters take on cancer every year with their Breast Cancer, Guardians of the Ribbon, Awareness campaign. Another limited edition, pink t-shirt is created every year and worn through the month of October to raise money and awareness for breast cancer patients and survivors. 2017 was our best fundraising year yet with 222 shirts sold, raising \$3000.



Lastly, our firefighters through other functions, such as their annual golf outing, continue to fund and distribute two \$1000 scholarships for local students from the city.

## Public Service

The Fire Department also performs, at no extra cost to the citizens, many hours of public service and education. Some of the many examples of additional public services provided are fire extinguisher training and demonstrations, car seat inspections and installations, Survive Alive, Little Red, MDA Fill the Boot, and on Veterans Day firefighters place flags on the grave sites of our military veterans. The members of the Mishawaka Fire Department performed over 17,918 man-hours of public service to its community in the year 2017.

