

Fire Department

Bryon Woodward, Chief

Response Summary

The Mishawaka Fire Department had another record setting year as the Department responded to 8,330 calls for service. The greatest number of calls for service was EMS in nature. Our ambulances and fire trucks responded to 6,136 calls that required EMS response. In addition, the MFD had 154 calls that involved a commercial, residential, apartment or other type of fire. The remaining 2,040 included any requests by the public involving investigations, gas leaks, citizen assists, and a variety of other types of responses. In addition, collections were up for ambulance billing making 2019 the largest revenue year. We collected \$1,590,208 for services provided.

We continue to research ways to increase efficiency in the way we handle emergency responses. Big changes happened with improved technology at the all call center in 2019, a new Motorola CAD system was purchased and went into service in November. With this new system we are anticipating continuously improving our response times and level of service to our citizens.



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 2019, the Fire Prevention Bureau performed over 1,850 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 70 times to investigate commercial, residential, apartment and vehicle fires in 2019. 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 2019, as in previous years, 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 2019, 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 priority continues to be those occupancies that contain the elderly and children.

For the third year in a row, the Mishawaka Fire Department hosted an open house for Fire Prevention Week. The open house was conducted at Fire Station 4 on October 10th from 6 to 8 p.m. and was open to the public. The open house had a bounce house for the children donated by Burns Rent-All, cake and drinks donated by Mishawaka Fire Department Local 360, cookies from Firehouse Subs, and building kits that were donated by our Home Depot in Mishawaka. Our Fire Prevention Bureau fire extinguisher training unit helped train the adults and children 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 into the future. Educating our citizens on fire safety is a top priority!

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 over 24,042 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 for a long, prosperous career and retirement.

The department is continuously upgrading our data management programs 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.



We now have an online learning system that dials into specific topics or trainings that can reach department wide or specific training allowing us to place focus and training where it needs to be.

Health and Wellness

We are always 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 sixth year. We are always evaluating our physical fitness equipment to see how it best fits our needs to keep firefighters in shape. In 2019 new treadmills in multiple stations were on the top of the list, which were successfully procured including a new service plan to keep all our treadmills in working order to benefit our members. We look forward to 2020 as we will be looking into other areas, such as cancer prevention, to help elevate our health and wellness to a higher level.

In January 2019 the fire department took delivery of brand-new sets of turnout gear, 115 in total, for every firefighter and implemented a replacement program that will buy new sets every 5 years. NFPA standards state all gear must be replaced after 10 years. As the program builds it will allow each firefighter to have 2 full sets of gear. This is vital as it will allow us to change into a fresh set after a fire while immediately cleaning the dirty set of all the contaminants that pose a risk to the firefighter's health well after the fire has ended. The purchasing of this gear has been a great asset to our members, and they are doing their part in maintaining the care and use of the gear so this program can continue to be beneficial to their health and safety.

Finally, another improvement we made was to overhaul the exhaust systems in our fire stations to better clear the air of many cancer-causing particulates. The new exhaust removal systems are a vertical air flow design, ceiling hung, re-circulating air filtration system that uses a "4-stage" filter pack that is UL tested and certified, OSHA approved, industry standard sized and are strategically placed throughout the apparatus floors based on the size of the building.

Apparatus / Equipment

As our current fleet of apparatus ages, we need to be vigilant in maintaining and replacing our trucks in the most cost-effective manner. We took delivery of a new aerial in 2019, a new 100ft Sutphen Ladder truck in May in 2019 and this aerial now runs out of our Station 3 on Douglas Rd. as Ladder 3.



This purchase allowed us to move the previous aerial to reserve status and decommission a ladder truck that was over 27 years old. We also sent a medium-duty ambulance to be re-chassised for delivery in early 2020.

We continually strive 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 contracting out some of the more specialized fire apparatus maintenance.

Many notable equipment purchases were completed and delivered in 2019 including all new battery-operated Hurst Rescue Extrication Equipment on Rescue 1 and then on Ladder 3, consisting of new spreaders or better known as the "Jaws of Life," cutters, and combi-tools (combination spreader and cutter) to name a few. These new tools save precious seconds when only minutes can count to affect the outcome of a traumatic event. We also took possession of four new Thermal Imaging Cameras (TICs) to replace outdated and worn equipment. This is the first half of the replacement program for these cameras, with the second and final half to be completed in 2020.

Another upgrade we made was purchasing a vending machine for our medical supplies. This machine will allow us to be more efficient and enable better tracking and control of the costs of our medical supplies, giving us better control of our inventory and where we allocate our funds.

One of our biggest equipment additions in 2019 was made possible by the hard work of Firefighter Jessica Hostetler. Firefighter Hostetler applied for a grant through Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation, Inc for 40 tactical bullet proof vests. Our department was awarded this grant for \$18,720 and it enabled us to place a vest on every frontline seat in our fleet. With an ever-changing society, we must continually evolve and be in the forefront of safety to better protect our members so they can accomplish the goal of assisting our citizens in their times of need.



Charitable Causes

The Mishawaka Fire Department continued to give back to the community in 2019. As a fire department we go into people's homes daily and see those in need. We always like to give back to the community we serve when we are able. Our Needy Family Fund is spearheaded by Firefighter Nicola DeCicco and raised \$3,344 this year to distribute to seven families with thirty-four children in their time of need. The money comes from donations from firefighters and a GoFundMe drive that was established. With the money raised we provided Christmas gifts for the children, food for the families and various types of gift cards to help the families meet other needs. One new change to the program in 2019 was instead of just interviewing families and their children, the firefighters took them shopping as well. Members of the department met the families at local merchants and allowed to the children to pick their gifts on the spot. This was a huge hit with everyone, especially

the children, who not only received gifts but had a great time interacting and spending time with the firefighters, creating a bond that will hopefully continue in their futures.

The Mishawaka Fire Department has several firefighters trained as car seat technicians who check dozens of vehicles for proper installation of child passenger seats. Our technicians are required to do outreach and continuing education to maintain their certifications and one of the ways they achieve this is to participate in car seat events. 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 2019 Mishawaka Fire Fighters again ran two very successful t-shirt campaigns to raise funds and awareness for some great causes.

For the 7th year, the fire department sold limited edition t-shirts that benefited Honor Flight of Northeast Indiana. This project was the creation of Driver/Operator Eric Hiatt, who is a veteran himself, and still heads up this amazing cause. The shirts were sold to the public and firefighters to be worn on duty in the month of May. Honor Flight transports veterans from World War II, Korea, and Viet Nam to Washington DC and back at no cost to the veteran. While in D.C. the veterans get a chance to visit their memorials and connect with other veterans. MFD has risen over \$10,000 to date, and local veterans have benefited from the Honor Flight program. The Mishawaka Fire Department would like all our veterans, including Driver/Operator Hiatt, and current members of military service to know their service is greatly appreciated by all of us here, God bless you and thank you!

Our firefighters take on cancer every year with their Breast Cancer, Guardians of the Ribbon, Awareness campaign. As firefighters we take cancer very seriously as studies have shown that not only is firefighting inherently dangerous, it is associated with occupational exposures that increase the risk of cancer in our profession. Nobody takes this cause more seriously than Driver/Operator William Mason who met this challenge



head on and continuously produces spectacular results. A different limited edition, pink t-shirt is created every year and is worn through the month of October to raise money and awareness for breast cancer patients and survivors. Because of the firefighter's efforts and outreach, 2019 was our best fundraising year yet with 403 shirts sold, raising \$4,662. This year we were proud to have partnered for this fundraiser with an incredible organization called EyeCandy Apparel and its owner Candance Brown. All proceeds raised in this campaign went to an amazing woman, Shelia Hall. Our department would like to thank all those who donated along with our members for their gracious and generous gifts to make this experience possible.

Lastly, our firefighters through other functions, such as their annual golf outing, continue to fund and distribute two \$1000 college 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, smoke detector installations, car seat inspections and installations, Survive Alive, Little Red, Fitness with a First Responder, 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 countless man-hours of public service to its community in 2019, interacting with close to 7,570 adults and children.



In July of 2019, the Fire Department collaborated with the South Bend, Clay, and Penn Township Fire Departments to bring an app called PulsePoint to our county. PulsePoint is a mobile application that alerts citizen responders to cardiac arrest events in our community. Once you download the app, you can follow these departments and receive messages when there is an emergency within their respective areas. Additionally, PulsePoint also has an adjunct application that will help you locate defibrillators nearby, saving precious time when it counts the most.

PulsePoint

Our department shares the philosophy of the International Association of Fire Chiefs which states, *“Sudden Cardiac Arrest is not just a job for emergency responders but rather a community-based issue that requires a community-based response. In no other medical situation is there such a vital reliance on the community.”* With this approach in mind, Firefighter Randi Sotelo is spearheading a community outreach campaign that will educate any interested individuals or groups in the Pulse Point application, it’s uses, and CPR.

In Memoriam

On November 22nd, 2019 the Mishawaka Fire Department lost one of its most beloved members, former Chief of EMS and Training Division Chief, Mike Hargreaves to cancer. Chief Hargreaves remained active for over 52 years in fire and EMS until shortly before his passing. Mike moved to the City of Mishawaka and became our first paramedic ever. He was the creator and pioneer who laid the groundwork for the EMS system the department runs today. He assisted in delivering 39 babies, worked 550+ fires, 500+ CPR incidents and more than 15,000 ambulance calls during his career.

When he wasn't working, he was teaching, Mike was one of the most well-known and respected educators in the state. Chief Hargreaves will always be in our hearts and minds as his work ethic and care for his community were second to none.



Michael R. Hargreaves