

VINCENT FIRE COMPANY

Serving from the Village of Vincentown Since 1850



ANNUAL REPORT 2009

Submitted
February 1, 2010

By
Chief Steven A. Pratt

www.vincentfire.org

The year 2009 was another active year for the members of the Vincent Fire Company. We responded to 393 calls for assistance from Southampton Township and the surrounding communities that we provide mutual aid with. This was a decrease of 11 runs as compared to 2008. We had 2 new members join our team and we did have a couple of members move on to pursue other interests. We currently have 33 members with 25 active members who respond to incidents. Our average turnout per call is at 10 members. This is because of the dedication of our 100% volunteer organization. Without the support of the many spouses, children and significant others this would not be possible.

Our emergency incidents are broken down into four shifts. Shift 1 (10PM – 6AM) accounted for 35 incidents, Shift 2 (6AM – 12PM) 115, Shift 3 (12PM - 6PM) 166, and Shift 4 (6PM - 10PM) 78. We answered 208 or 52% of our incidents between 6AM – 6PM on Monday thru Friday. Our busiest day of the week is Tuesday and our busiest time for incidents is between 5PM and 6PM. We are very fortunate to have many members that work from home, are retired, are college students and have employers that allow them to leave their job to respond to incidents. Additionally, the Southampton Township Committee allows township employees, who are firefighters, to respond to daytime incidents. Without this support our daytime manning would be greatly affected.

Our volunteer duty crew program continues to be a huge success. This program, which started on February 4th 2008, consists of our members standing by at the station Monday – Thursday from 6PM – 10PM. This allows us to have a staffed crew ready to respond to any incidents without having the delay of responding from home. During this time the members conduct training, inspections and some building maintenance duties. The crew normally prepares a dinner that promotes teamwork and is healthier and more cost effective than ordering out. Some of the accomplishments of this program include our Home Safety Survey and Smoke Detector Inspection Program, assisting with staffing an ambulance for medical emergency calls for service and providing standby crews for special events. This program has also allowed us to open the program up to certified firefighters from other municipalities. This permits non-members the chance to attend our training, learn new techniques and procedures and to be part of a structured team for an evening. We currently have 2 firefighters that take advantage of this opportunity. The duty crew program alone equated to 3,200 man-hours.

We continue to build upon our training program. This year we offered 125 opportunities to attend a quick drill. Quick drills are presented during the duty crew and cover a range of topics from our annual mandatory training such as blood borne pathogens, SCBA fit testing and HAZCOM to vehicle extrication and basic firefighting skills. We also conducted 12 company drills that include all of the members and usually consist of live burn training, water supply operations and RIT training. In house training added up to 225 man-hours. We are proud of the members that continue their education at the Burlington County Emergency Services Training Center. Members attended classes in Fire Detection and Suppression Systems, Building Construction Principles, Fire Inspector, Fire Instructor, RIT Operations, RIT Strategies and Tactics and many more. Man-hours just at outside training centers totaled 2,159. The line officers traveled to Baltimore City to attend the Firehouse Expo and Training Conference. This marks the first time we have sent our leaders to a national conference for training. We hope to build on this tradition in 2010.

We received federal funding totaling \$34,000 from the Department of Homeland Security. This allowed us to purchase 20 sets of structural firefighting gear. The members worked hard to obtain the grant, which helped us comply with National Fire Protection Association standards, as well as better protect the citizens of Southampton. This purchase would have not been possible without this award. The grant is authorized under the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Assistance Firefighters Grant Program (AFG) for Fire Operations and Firefighter Safety. The grants work to strengthen the Nation's overall preparedness and enhance first responders' ability to protect the health and safety of the public.

Our cost recovery from motor vehicle collisions continues to grow. This is a joint venture between the Vincent Fire Company, Hampton Lakes Fire Company and Vincentown Emergency Squad. Representatives from these three agencies are the backbone of this program and ensure the funds are equally distributed on a quarterly basis. These funds help to offset our annual operating budget.

We have received our much awaited rope rescue equipment. This equipment has been added to Rescue Engine 1712. Some of the incidents that this equipment can be used for are rescuing victims from a steep slope or removing a hunter from a tree stand. We also purchased 2 dry suits that can be used for ice/cold water rescues. At the time of this report emergency personnel from Southampton and Pemberton Boro have teamed up and received technical certification for removing victims at an ice or cold water incident. This training will continue in the first part of 2010.

We were fortunate to have a building emergency backup generator installed this year. This generator is vital to continue the operation of the Fire Company and the Emergency Squad in Vincentown during power failures.

We have been working very hard with the Hampton Lakes Fire Company this year by cross training our firefighters. This has been a success and look forward to the progression in 2010.

In 2009 we participated in many community events including Memorial Day parade, fireworks display, Boy Scout car show, and the annual tree lighting ceremony. Every year in October over a two day period members take personal time off from their employment to present fire education to the children of our Township Schools. This year 14 members devoted themselves to this valuable program. We visited the School District to educate the Pre School and grades 1-4. Additionally the Kindergarten class traveled to our station for a tour of our facility, the chance to use a hoseline, learning to stay low and the importance of not playing with matches. We finished off the activities with an open house, again hosted at our building. We open our doors to the public to demonstrate our skills, showcase our equipment and instruct adults how to properly extinguish a fire using a fire extinguisher.

We work hard with our mutual aid partners' from our surrounding communities. We continued working with several departments in the Southern Burlington County Regional Mutual Aid Association (SRMAA). Chief Pratt and Chief Welling (Tabernacle) are co-leaders of this organization that is comprised of the officers from Southampton, Pemberton Boro, Lumberton, Tabernacle, Shamong, Medford, Medford Lakes and Woodland. This group also includes the

Tabernacle Rescue Squad for fire ground rehabilitation activities. The key to this group is regionalization of response as we work together on almost all assignments. The group has been very active with establishing regional operating guidelines, training and water supply coordination. Lastly, this group has established the Southern Regional Operations Team, which is comprised of chief officers who will respond to other municipalities to assist the Incident Commander with administrative and/or operational, needs.

In summary, we have built a reputation for delivering high quality and consistent service to our community and those that surround it. We must grow and move forward with new and innovative ways to deliver our service. We must continue to train to remain proficient in our skills and to expand into new missions. We must continue to recruit members and to retain existing members by promoting family values and teamwork that are so vital to the success of our organization.

Thank you for allowing me to be your leader. I look forward to exploring fresh and inventive ways of providing the best possible service to the people.

Respectfully submitted

Steven A. Pratt

Fire Chief