

**Report of the President
Simsbury Fire District
May 9, 2011**

I am pleased to present this report on the activities of the Simsbury Fire District for the 2010-2011 fiscal period. This year will mark the 67th anniversary of the creation of the Simsbury Fire District. Sixty-seven years ago, the founders of the District had the foresight to create, with the endorsement of the Connecticut Legislature, an independent fire protection authority for Simsbury which has maintained a tradition of excellence to this day. With this authority, the District has been able to carry out its mission to the citizens of Simsbury in a professional, apolitical, and cost effective manner.

The District could not carry out this mission nearly as cost effectively for Simsbury's citizens without a group of dedicated citizen volunteers that devote untold hours to training and protecting Simsbury. While their expertise shines in response to local emergencies, their visibility in the community in activities like the Torchlight Parade earns well deserved praise from Simsbury's residents. As in the past, I wish to express a sincere thank you on behalf of the District and our community to all of the volunteers that make up the Simsbury Volunteer Fire Company, the Junior Firefighter program, and the Ladies' Auxiliary. The extraordinary contributions by these selfless citizens of time and effort save Simsbury's taxpayers significant expense each year. If the community ever had to resort to a paid department, even with minimal professional staffing, the Fire District budget would likely increase 200-300% .

The Fire District also has a small complement of paid employees whose commitment and work is much appreciated. The Fire Marshal's office, our building and fleet maintenance staff, and our dispatch office staff once again contributed greatly to maintaining the excellence of this department.

Finally, I also wish to acknowledge the work of my fellow District members, volunteers themselves. They continue to work together effectively to meet the fire protection needs of Simsbury in a fiscally prudent manner.

Simsbury's citizens can continue to rest assured that they have the benefit of a great group of volunteers and employees dedicated to maintaining the Simsbury's status as one of the best-protected communities in the State of Connecticut. .

Following are some significant highlights of our accomplishments this past year and some goals for next year.

- The Simsbury Fire District operated within budget. The District adhered to its long-term goal of meeting both operating and capital requirements without resorting to borrowing. It is especially important to note that the Main Station replacement proceeded without an increase in the tax rate or resorting to any borrowing. The Fire District has been planning for this project for the last 10 years and had accumulated sufficient capital reserves.
- Early in this year's budgeting process, the District actively discussed the weak economic environment the country and our taxpayers continue to face and set an objective to try to formulate a budget with little or no increase. The budget we propose tonight achieves

that objective. This budget represents a decrease in the overall rate of spending of approximately \$6,000 from the prior fiscal year bringing the cumulative reduction in our spending to \$166,000 over the last three years. If the budget proposal coming before this meeting is adopted, the mill rate for 2011/2012 will be reduced from 1.03 mills to 1.02 mills, close a 1% tax decrease. This follows a mill rate decrease of 2 percent last year.

- The District has ordered a replacement for a 25 year old pumper, S-13, which is expected to be placed in service in the fall of 2011.
- The proposed budget for this year includes \$198,000 for the mandated replacement of SCBA air packs, our air filtration and compressor system, and personal protective clothing as well as an allocation of \$300,000 toward the replacement of another pumper.
- The Fire District hosted the Annual Lt. Richard Kelleher Awards Dinner on February 11, 2011 at which the 2010 service awards were presented to the department's volunteers. (Lt. Kelleher, aged 37, died in the line of duty fighting a fire at the Knights of Columbus Hall, next to St Mary's Church, on November 6, 1981.)

A special note of appreciation at this awards ceremony was expressed to retired Chief Mark Kerr who tendered his resignation after a remarkable 49 ½ years of service to the community. Rarely do we see individuals who exhibit such extraordinary dedication.

A total of seven Firefighter service awards were presented representing 75 cumulative years of volunteer service for the honored recipients. Further, six Ladies' Auxiliary service awards were also presented representing an additional 95 years of volunteer service. Simsbury can be proud to have volunteers that make this kind of commitment to the safety and protection of the community.

Awards were presented as follows:

Chief's Award – The Simsbury Volunteer Fire Department Ladies' Auxiliary

Carl Banks Engineer Award – J T Huber

Lea Hutchinson Service Award – Anson Brown

30 Year Award	John Solury
15 Year Award	Chris Vervaert
10 Year Award	Michael Brown
5 Year Award	JT Huber Kellan Boudreau Andrew Albert Ryan Esthus

The following service awards were also presented to members of the Ladies' Auxiliary.

35 Year Award

Bobbie Kowalski

20 Year Award

Valerie North
Ruth Senger

10 Year Award

Pam Kelley

5 Year Award

Stephanie Brown
Allison Wilcox

- We have continued to add more public information on the District to its section of the Fire Department website. The reports and budgets presented tonight will be posted to the website for convenient access and as a matter of public record. We hope that this helps the public understand the role of the District particularly as it relates to expenditures and taxation.

I have enjoyed working with all the members of the District as well as the members and officers of the department this year. Your hard work and spirit are a great source of pride to the community. Further, your dedication and service make Simsbury a more affordable place to live than it would be if the Department was a paid one. Thank you.

Finally, this District remains committed to providing the Fire Department membership the resources which they need to continue to enhance their ability to meet the fire emergency response needs of the citizens of Simsbury. We will remain proactive about evaluating the risks and the future so that we remain on the leading edge of our important mission of protecting our community.

This concludes my report for this year.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin A. North, President