

Report of the President Simsbury Fire District May 14, 2012

I am pleased to present this report on the activities of the Simsbury Fire District for the 2011-2012 fiscal period. This year will mark the 68th anniversary of the creation of the Simsbury Fire District. Sixty-eight 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.
- In the past year, the fire company exceeded all records by responding to 993 call outs. It has been a remarkable year of volunteer service by the entire SVFD family, regular members, officers that lead the department, as well as member of the Ladies' Auxiliary. Aside from the normal year's worth of drills, responses, and community events that the department participates in, two town-wide storm events, first a hurricane, then a freak October snowstorm taxed the capacity but demonstrated the preparedness of the

department to provide disaster response. The department has received much positive feedback from Simsbury's citizens about its efforts including recognition by Simsbury's Chamber of Commerce of Kevin Kowalski, the town's Fire Marshal and Emergency Preparedness Director, as well as the Ladies' Auxiliary for their tireless work in staffing the emergency shelter during the extended power outages.

- The District ordered a replacement for a 25 year old pumper, S-13. Its replacement, designated S-7, was placed in service in the first quarter of 2012.
- The mandated replacement of all SCBA air bottles as well as the associated air filtration and compressor system was completed.
- Major enhancements were made to the training grounds in Weatogue to increase safety, security, and to minimize environmental impacts from automobile rescue training.
- The Fire Company staged a very moving remembrance of the 10th Anniversary of the September 11, 2001 attacks on our country.
- The Junior Firefighters once again won the Ct. State Championships of the Junior Firefighter Challenge which maintained their undefeated status.
- The Fire District hosted the Annual Lt. Richard Kelleher Awards Dinner at which 2011 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 total of twenty Firefighter service awards were presented representing 335 cumulative years (and 67,361 callouts!) of volunteer service for the honored recipients! Further, two Ladies' Auxiliary service awards was also presented representing an additional 25 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.

The Fire District established a new Community Service Award to recognize that business or individual that meaningfully and consistently has shown support for the Fire District and the Fire Company. The first such award was presented to Metro Bis Restaurant for their long track record of sponsoring Fire Department events as well as their help in feeding at the community shelter during the storm response.

Service Awards were presented as follows:

Chief's Award – Ken Boudreau

Carl Banks Engineer Award – Ryan Esthus

Lea Hutchinson Service Award – Chris Burkett

45 Year Award

Ken Myers

40 Year Award	Tom Post
35 Year Award	James Baldis Rich Bonczek
30 Year Award	Tim Gilbert Mark Jacobs
20 Year Award	Robert Rust
15 Year Award	Todd Myers Adam Libros
10 Year Award	Fred Cosgrove Jay Dixon Nick Civitillo
5 Year Award	Steve Hess Joel Warren Petra Weibrich Addison Brown Kyle Testerman Jeff Holmes Maggie Boudreau Mark Sperandio

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

15 Year Award	Bonnie Anderson
10 Year Award	Roz Gordon

- 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.
- Early in this year's budgeting process, the District actively discussed the continuing 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. If the budget proposal coming before this meeting is adopted, the mill rate for 2012/2013 will increase from 1.02 mills to 1.03 mills, just shy of a 1% tax increase. This follows a mill rate decrease of 1 percent last year.

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