

THE SIMSBURY VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY

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ANNUAL REPORT OF THE FIRE CHIEF MAY 13, 2013

I am proud to present the annual Chief's report for the Simsbury Volunteer Fire Company. The citizen's and businesses of Simsbury continue to benefit from a well trained abled bodied group of residents who volunteer their time to provide emergency fire & rescue services. A tradition & service that started in 1944, residents have stepped forward to volunteer time and effort to be trained to handle our local emergencies. No longer just Firefighters, these men and women are truly emergency first responders as they attend to rescues from motor vehicle accidents, mountain side falls, water incidents, aircraft accidents, and around home incidents such as a child's finger stuck in a wooden toy, or person falling when a stairway collapsed below them. Our members are trained and respond to hazardous materials incidents both in town and as part of the Capital Region Hazmat Team supporting our surrounding communities. They are also fully trained firefighters who understand the complexity of fires today that consume plastics and chemicals which can produce poisonous gases. The direct and often unrealized benefit to this community is the countless millions of dollars that has been saved by not having to fund the payroll for a compliment of professionally trained firefighters. Our membership numbers stand strong with approximately 100 active members. We continue to monitor our membership response to calls especially during the weekday hours and as long as we feel we can adequately

provide the expected level of protection, the tax payers will continue to reap the financial benefits of an all volunteer firefighting force. We continue to maintain exceptionally high performance standards, training requirements, and operational readiness which position us to provide the highest level of service to the community. We could not achieve this level of readiness and professionalism without the passion, dedication, and generosity of each member who volunteers countless hours of personal time to train and respond to emergency calls. We must also recognize the generosity of our member's families who provide support and understanding when the call comes in for help.

This year we responded to 659 calls for assistance from the community. Highlighting this year's calls was the preparation, standby and response to two major weather events. Super Storm Sandy in October of 2012 and the February Blizzard of 2013. Officers, Firefighters, and the Ladies Auxiliary prepared for the worse with the anticipation of Storm Sandy reaching Connecticut with expected flooding rains and hurricane force winds. All stations were staffed during the storm in the event emergency service was needed. Beyond some isolated areas Simsbury was spared the brunt of the storm and we did not have to deal with much of the aftermath. The southern part of Connecticut was not so lucky and was struck with historic flooding along the Connecticut coast. Through our statewide mutual aid task force system we deployed our Tower 12 with a full crew to Westport, Connecticut as part of a response team to help this area in possible rescue and recovery efforts. The February Blizzard of 2013 once again required preparation and a full station stand-by effort from our membership. While receiving record amounts of snow upwards of 3 feet we received relatively few calls for help. The stations remained staffed until all the roadways were opened.

The Simsbury Volunteer Fire Company is committed to training, knowledge, and resources in order to respond to the variety of emergencies that we are called upon to handle. Regular Monday night training drills are held each week. We continue to require that all new members become state certified to the Firefighter I standard and are encouraged to become licensed apparatus drivers. During the year various levels of advance training have been achieved by our membership which includes Firefighter II, Fire Officer I & II, Firefighter Instructor, EMR, EMT, and more...all this in addition to the regular weekly drills.

Firefighter development begins through our Junior Firefighter program which is offered to Simsbury teens from the ages of 15 to 18. Through this program we instill the value of volunteering to the community, teach fundamental firefighting support skills and fire behavior theory which will help them to fully participate as a firefighter when they turn 18. In addition we continue to support our members continued education through our academic leave program which allows firefighters who are attending school away from home to continue their membership and training when they return home for visits or summer breaks.

Beyond the training and readiness of our members we rely on the support of equipment and apparatus to get the job done. Our fleet management program continues to excel with regular maintenance and preventative care being performed by the fire districts' full time mechanic. This program provides for timely work on our fleet and significantly reduces down time as this work is done on site. We continue to have a third party DOT safety inspection check of our apparatus and our aerial devices, ladders and hoses are tested annually and certified by an independent testing agency to ensure compliance to NFPA safety standards. Our pumps are also

tested annually to NFPA standards to ensure safety and reliability. In addition, each apparatus is assigned to a member who serves as an apparatus engineer and is responsible to conduct weekly readiness checks on our fleet and equipment. These checks, which are also a part of our ongoing maintenance documentation, ensure each and every apparatus is ready to respond fully equipped and functional. We recently established a new apparatus replacement committee to work on replacement specifications for our Engines 5 & 6 which have reached their replacement threshold.

Beyond responding to emergency calls we remain committed to the community through our hosting of the Simsbury Celebrates Torchlight Fire Truck Parade, participation in the June High School Graduation Ceremony by providing a color guard of members all of whom are alumni of the high school and participation in the annual Memorial Day parades in Tariffville and the town center.

I thank the officers, firefighters and juniors members for the hard work, dedication and professionalism they continue to give me, the Fire District and the community. I would also like to thank the members of the Ladies Auxiliary for their continued support of our members during emergencies and drills and for the work they do for the community by providing burn bears to emergency services and for raising funds for the children's burn camp. I wish to acknowledge and thank the employees of the Simsbury Fire District for the outstanding level of support given to the Fire Company through the Fire Marshall's Office, professional dispatching services, and maintenance of our fleet and facilities. I thank the Officers of the Fire District and The District

Commissioners for their continued support and commitment to ensure we are well equipped with the necessary resources to properly respond to emergencies and to do it safely.

In closing I remind the residents of Simsbury that our website at www.simsburyfd.org continues to report on the Fire Company and Fire Districts activities and provides valuable public information on fire safety and emergency preparedness.

Respectfully Submitted,

James A. Baldis, Chief of Department