

THE SIMSBURY VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY

871 HOPMEADOW STREET SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT 06070

James A. Baldis
Chief of Department



(860) 658-1971
(860) 658-5611

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE FIRE CHIEF MAY 14, 2018

It is my honor to present the Annual Report of the Fire Chief for the Simsbury Volunteer Fire Company. For the past 74 years, The Town of Simsbury and Simsbury Fire District continues to be supported by a well-trained and able-bodied group of Volunteer men and women that make up the membership of the Simsbury Volunteer Fire Company. These incredible residents and neighbors of Simsbury provide fire protection and rescue services as volunteers, which is saving the taxpayers millions of dollars in labor costs that would be incurred for a fully paid service. This volunteered time goes well beyond the time responding to over 600 calls for help each year and includes training and public events. As the demands for our services increase so, do our need for training and skill development. Our Volunteers, thanks to rigorous training, dedication and desire to help others, stand ready to respond to a constantly changing landscape of emergencies that can affect our community at any time.

I would like to share a few highlights of the past year:

Our membership ended the year at 89 active members, which include 7 junior firefighters. This is an increase of 5 over the previous year. We are fortunate that we are able to maintain a solid force of first responders but also recognize the constant changes in the demand for our member's time and the impact this can have on our ability to respond. Our recruitment and retention committee implemented a number of programs, which included new recruitment signage, participation in a statewide volunteer firefighter's recruitment drive, hands on demonstrations at our annual open house for prospective members, station specific open houses and hosting a recruitment event at a recently opened apartment complex. While the results have been mixed, there is definitely an improved community recognition of our service as volunteers and the need for more. The committee and the entire fire company remaining committed to this effort.

I wish to recognize for his extraordinary service, Captain Paul Kelley who retired after 35 years of service and is now an Honorary Life Member of the fire company.

With the approval of the budget last year, we continued with the installation of new gear washers for each fire station and completed a program where our hose dryers were refurbished and upgraded to become hose and gear dryers. With the ever-increasing dangers faced by cancer causing chemical and byproducts of fire, the ability to quickly wash and dry gear has become a necessity. To aid in this health and safety practice most

firefighters have received a second set of Firefighting gear so they have a serviceable set of gear for responding while the other set is being properly washed and dried.

Training is the foundation of our readiness and the members of the Simsbury Volunteer Fire Company dedicate countless hours training. Every Monday night the entire membership gathers for training and or education. In addition, many members attend additional training programs throughout the year. The Training Division reported the following additional training for last year:

Nine members attended the 180-hour State Firefighter 1 Certification Training

Two members attended the 90-hour State Firefighter 2 Certification Training

Eight Members attended RIT Command and Control training through the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control.

One Member attended Prevention of and Response to Suicide Bomber Training

One Member attended Fire Investigator Training

One Member attended Certified Pump Operator Training

One Member attended Certified Rescue Core Training

One Member attended Certified Confined Space Technician Training

Four Members attended Firehouse Expo

There are many more hours that our members spend learning and being educated by attending local seminars, product shows and networking among other departments.

The committees to replace Engine 16 and Rescue 15 continued to work with the manufacturers on the build outs of the apparatus. New Rescue 15 was completed by CT based Gowans & Knight and was just delivered May 1st. It will be on the line sometime in May once equipment is moved off the old rescue 15. New Engine 16 is in production at 4-Guys Apparatus Company in Pennsylvania and is expected to be delivered the end of June. Due to corrosion concerns on our heavy rescue 14 and the timing of the delivery of new rescue 15, we have proposed, in the 2018/19 budget being presented, the transfer of reserve funds to allow work to be done on Rescue 14 that will extend the expected service life for at least 5 additional years. During the time Rescue 14 is being worked on old Rescue 15 will remain in service and will respond as Rescue 14. Once Rescue 14 is back in service old, Rescue 15 will be sold. Finally, we took delivery of a new Ford F350, which replaced S-19, the District Maintenance Truck.

During 2017, we responded to 631 calls for assistance a decrease of 47 over the previous year.

This year was a difficult year for the fire company with the passing of two fire company icons. Deputy Chief Mike Jepeal and Retired Captain Robert Hintermister. Both served this fire company with the passion to serve and help others. Their legacy will live on through the continued commitment to training and education of our firefighters and community.

Beyond the training and readiness of our members, we rely on the support of administration, equipment and apparatus to get the job done. I wish to thank our District Fleet Mechanic Dan Flanagan for the outstanding job he continues to do to ensure our apparatus is maintained, kept up to standards, and will perform to our expectations. To our District Maintenance person Ron Kasulaitus for his continued efforts to maintain the grounds and buildings in addition to the hydrants throughout town. Our District's Dispatching Staff and Fire Marshalls office for the continued professional service and support given to the Fire Company.

Outside of responding to emergency calls and training, we remain committed to the community through a number of company-involved events. This past year the company, with the cooperation of the Rotary Club and the Town of Simsbury, purchased, assembled and dedicated a custom-designed Firetruck children's playscape at Rotary Park. We continue to host the Simsbury Celebrates Torchlight Fire Truck Parade, which is the town's largest publicly attended event. We continue to provide the color guard for the June High School Graduation Ceremony and assist in the annual Duck Race for Toot'n Hills Schools held on the Farmington River. We participate in the annual Memorial Day parades in Tariffville and the town center and also provide and maintain the American flag at the new Veteran's Memorial. We hold our annual open house in conjunction with fire prevention week in October, and many stations support their local

school's P.T.O. activities with apparatus and equipment displays throughout the year.

We host the annual Fisherman's Breakfast on the opening day of fishing season and co-host with the Ladies Auxiliary the annual Fire Company Golf Tournament, which raises funds for charities and helps support special equipment purchases by the Fire Company.

I cannot thank enough the officers, firefighters and juniors members for the hard work, dedication and professionalism they continue to give The Fire Company, The Fire District and this community. I would also like to thank the members of the Ladies Auxiliary for their continued support of our members during training exercises and emergencies. I thank the Officers of the Fire District and The District Commissioners for their continued support and commitment to ensure our fire company is well equipped with the necessary resources to properly respond to emergencies and to do it safely. Finally, I want to thank our tax payers for their continued support in funding the dollars needed for today's fire and emergency response services.

As we move ahead into next year, we will be celebrating our 75th year of volunteer service to The District and Community. Truly a milestone to be proud of and one that every member of this organization is to be congratulated. However, our work does not end there. We look forward to continued dedication and service levels that our community expects from us and we will be ready when the call for help comes in.

In closing, I remind the residents of Simsbury that our website at www.simsburyfd.org continues to report on the Fire Company and Fire District activities and provides valuable public information on fire safety and emergency preparedness. I also invite any of our residents who may be interested in becoming a member of this incredible organization to contact us or stop by any Fire Station for more information.

Respectfully Submitted,

James A. Baldis, Chief of Department