

# THE SIMSBURY VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY

## 871 HOPMEADOW STREET SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT 06070

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### ANNUAL REPORT OF THE FIRE CHIEF MAY 8, 2017

It is my honor to present the Annual Report of the Fire Chief for the Simsbury Volunteer Fire Company. Since 1944, 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. This incredible all volunteer organization saves the taxpayers of Simsbury millions of dollars each year in labor costs through the donation of time and effort to become properly trained and respond to meet the emergency service demands and expectations of our community. Our Volunteers, thanks to rigorous training, dedication and desire to help others stand ready to respond to a vast number of emergencies that can impact our community at any time.

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

Our membership ended the year at 84 active members, which include 7 junior firefighters. This is an increase of 6 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 is working on new ideas and programs to bring new members into our organization and to keep our existing base of valuable firefighters.

I wish to recognize for their extraordinary service, Wally Banzhaf who became a Honorary Life Member having reached the mandatory retirement age and Dave Driscoll who also retired from the fire company and became an Honorary Life Member.

With the approval of the budget last year we were able to replace all of our two way portable radios and we were able to assign them to every qualified firefighter to enhance communication and safety on the fire-ground for each member.

We also purchased brand new pagers for all active firefighters which includes multiple frequencies and play back capabilities.

Our newly installed Computer Added Dispatch System now allows for an interactive phone app which gives the responding volunteer information on the alarm type, location including a map, and the ability to acknowledge their response to a fire station or to the scene.

2016 also included our continued commitment to health and wellbeing and specifically cancer awareness risks by beginning to issue a second set of gear, which allows a firefighter to properly wash and dry soiled gear and still have a serviceable set of gear to

still respond with. Bushy Hill Station had a new gear washer installed and gear dryers are slated for each station in the spring of 2017.

The training division was presented with a once in a lifetime opportunity with the deconstruction of the former Hartford Insurance building in Weatogue. Countless hours were spent in negotiating with the new owners for a chance to use the building as training site while the building was being decommissioned and eventually razed. With the proper agreements in place we were able to use the building for multiple hands on training events which included, search and rescue, firefighting, door and wall breaching, locating and rescuing a downed firefighters, extended hose advancement, use of stand pipe systems and even live fire training. We invited and worked with mutual aid fire companies from the surrounding towns. We also used the facility as the site of a multiagency response for a town wide exercise which included the Police, Ambulance, Regional Haz Mat Team, Multiple mutual aid towns, Board of Education and Public Works. My thanks to Emergency Management and our training division for taking full advantage of this training opportunity and maximizing its effectiveness.

During the year an apparatus replacement committee was established to create bid specs for the replacement of Engine 16 and Rescue 15 both stationed in Tariffville. Engine 16's replacement was awarded to 4 Guys Apparatus in November and Rescue 15's replacement was awarded to Gowan's and Knight this past February.

During 2016 we responded to 678 calls for assistance an increase of 56 over the previous year.

In addition to regular Monday Night Drills I am happy to report that 2 new firefighters successfully completed the 180 hour CT State Firefighter 1 / Haz Mat Operational Certification, and 1 new firefighter successfully completed the 96 hour CT State Firefighter 2 Certification through Hartford County Regional Fire School. In addition we hosted our own Firefighter 2 training program with 7 members being certified to the CT State Fire 2 level. We trained and licensed 4 new apparatus drivers this past year. All fire officers attended a two day management class called Helmet and Hoses held in Simsbury and was sponsored by International Association of Fire Chiefs.

I would also like to recognize in my report members who served our organization and have passed in 2016. That being Honorary Member Dr. John Cannon.

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 events. We continue to host the Simsbury Celebrates Torchlight Fire Truck Parade, participate in the June High School Graduation Ceremony. We continued to 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. We participated in the dedication of the new Veteran's Memorial through the donation of the Flag Pole and Flag. 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 the 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. And

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.

In closing I remind the residents of Simsbury that our website at [www.simsburyfd.org](http://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. In addition I would be remiss if I didn't extend an invitation to any of our residence who may be interested in becoming a member of our organization to contact us or stop by a Fire Station for more information.

Respectfully Submitted,

James A. Baldis, Chief of Department