

# 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 11, 2015

I am pleased to submit 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 volunteer organization saves the taxpayers of Simsbury millions of dollars each year in labor costs that are generously provided by those who serve. Our Volunteers stand trained and ready to respond to a vast number of emergencies that can impact our community at any time. These include fires, vehicle accidents, swift water rescues, high angle rescues, confined space and trench rescues, hazardous materials incidents, medical support, wires down, flooding, lock outs and lock ins, police assists... and a number of other potential manmade or natural events.

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

Our membership ended the year at 92 active members, which include 10 junior firefighters. We are also supported by 35 members of the Simsbury Volunteer Fire Company's Ladies Auxiliary.

During the past calendar year we accepted 7 new Junior Members and 6 new Probationary members. We promoted Lieutenant Todd Kelley to Captain of the Weatogue Station and promoted Firefighters Steve Hess and Jeff Holmes to the position of Lieutenant.

I would like to acknowledge the retirement this past March of Firefighter Ken Myers who served 48 years as a Simsbury Volunteer Firefighter. By a unanimous vote of the membership Ken joins the ranks of our Honorary Life Members who are recognized for their long standing service to the organization. I would also like to recognize in my report members who served our organization and have passed away this past year. Honorary Life Member Asst. Chief Fred Pignone, Honorary Life Member Captain Terry Beliveau, Honorary Life Member Firefighter Don Christensen, Honorary Member Billy Engleke, Honorary Member Lillian Mitchell, Honorary Member Gus Engleke and Honorary Ladies Auxiliary Member Marion Kerr.

During 2014 we responded to 592 calls for assistance. In order to be prepared to handle each and every call in a swift, effective and professional manner it requires a great deal of training and preparation. Regular Monday night training drills are held each week. In addition to regular Monday Night Drills the Training Division reported that 6 new firefighters successfully complete the 180 hour CT State Firefighter 1 / Haz Mat Operational Certification, in addition we also had 3 firefighters successfully complete the 100 hour CT State Firefighter 2 Certification, there were 4 firefighters who obtained their Emergency Medical Technician or Emergency Medical Responder certification and we recertified 6 Emergency Medical Responders. We

trained and licensed 6 new apparatus drivers this past year. 1 firefighter obtained their confined space technician certification and 5 firefighters attended the CT Fire Academy's June School. We sent 4 members to Firehouse Expo Conference in Baltimore and had 4 members attend a special training program on responding to suicide bombing terrorism in New Mexico. We continued the development of firefighting skills through the use of realistic live fire training at our training tower. This past fall with the help of The Town of Simsbury who provided an acquired home (known as the Dewey Farm) we were able to use an actual house for live fire training. This cooperative effort lead to a successful training event where over 60 new and veteran firefighters were given the opportunity to fight a building fire under realistic conditions. This effort also saved the Town of Simsbury significant disposal costs of the property destined to be torn down. We also planned and participated in a joint emergency services training exercise held at a local facility. Additional improvements were also made to our training capabilities through the purchase of a vehicle fire training prop. This unit allows for the training of firefighting techniques on a vehicle by using propane gas as the fuel source. This eliminates the previous practice of burning real vehicles which created environmental concerns due to the burning of plastics and fuels contained in the vehicle.

Our Firefighter membership development continues to begin early 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 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 optimum performance 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. This past year we took delivery of new Engine 5 and Engine 6 which replaced 25 year old engines that had reached the end of their reliable life cycle. In addition to our ongoing maintenance of equipment to maximize its value and life, we also look at new safety standards and technology that require us to upgrade or replace equipment sooner. Our Air Packs which our firefighters must wear in hazardous atmospheres are in need of replacement as they are 15 years old and are no longer able to be upgraded to meet current standards. Our plan is for replacement in the upcoming budget year which we began funding last year. Also in this year's proposed budget is the funding of capital dollars for fire apparatus

replacements so we can stay on track with our replacement program and not resort to borrowing when the apparatus and equipment is replaced.

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 by providing a color guard of members all of whom are alumni of the high school. We participate in the annual Memorial Day parades in Tariffville and the town center. 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 can't 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 emergencies. 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, dispatching, 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 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 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.

Respectfully Submitted,

James A. Baldis, Chief of Department