

**Report of the President
Simsbury Fire District
May 11, 2015**

On behalf of the entire Board of the Simsbury Fire District I am pleased to present to you this report of the Fire District for 2014. Last year marked the 70th anniversary of this Fire District. I am proud to report that after 70 years the fire protection provided by this Fire District along with the Simsbury Volunteer Fire Company to the Town of Simsbury continues to be of the highest caliber and the dedication shown by the men and women of the Fire District and Fire Company is in my estimation second to none. It is important to note that in the 70 years since the Ensign Bickford Company turned over Simsbury's fire protection to the Fire District the responsibilities have grown immensely. In addition to fire protection today's fire service here in Simsbury shoulders the tasks of brush fires, vehicle rescue and extrication, swift water, mountain, search, and confined space rescue, flood evacuation, medical assistance, hazardous materials responses, shelter assistance and more.

This all would not be possible if not for a group of volunteer firefighters with the Simsbury Volunteer Fire Company. The amount of time dedicated to this profession by these members is truly outstanding. It is easy to understand why the citizens of Simsbury have in the past nominated this group of men and women as "Simsbury Hometown Heroes" – and they truly are. Rarely a Monday evening passes without the gathering of that membership to continue the relentless chore of training in every aspect of the duties they carry out each and every day to protect the residents of this town and I thank them all for this. The remarkable aspect of this operation is that the fire company is a volunteer organization. When the siren sounds and these individuals respond they do so as volunteers. While there is of course a fiscal responsibility to the Fire District for the facilities and the equipment the impact to this town would be many times what it presently is if we had to include paid firefighting staff.

In addition to the emergency responsibilities provided, the fire company members also take the time to give back to this community. Their involvement in events such as Opening Night with the Torchlight fire truck parade is a prime example. Once again, thanks go out for these efforts.

I would also like to thank the board members of the fire district, who are volunteers themselves, for the time they invest to ensure that the fiscal part of this business is done in a most efficient manner.

Last but certainly not least is the paid staff we have in the Fire Marshals office, our maintenance and dispatching divisions and emergency management. We have the distinct pleasure of working with a handful of talented individuals that on a daily basis get their jobs done and interact with the residents and businesses here in our community professionally providing the services they do.

The following are some highlights from the previous year and some insight into future goals

- The Fire District operated within budget and without borrowing of any funds as has been our standard for 70 years.
- In 2014 the Fire Company responded to 592 call outs.
- New Engine 5 and Engine 6 were delivered and added to our fleet replacing engines that had been in service for 25 years.
- Our new 91,000 lb lift came on line last January and has enabled our mechanic to work more safely and efficiently and on every vehicle in the fleet.
- The car fire prop was installed and has added a great new dimension in the training of our firefighters with respect to vehicle fires.
- Large scale drills included the Dewey house and a joint emergency response exercise with the Police Department and Ambulance Association at Westminster School.
- A license was granted and work began on a low power FM radio station for use in local town wide emergencies. We plan to have this operational this summer.
- After many years of service President Kevin North and District Clerk Bill Ketchabaw announced their respective retirements. This resulted in my assuming the office of President and the appointments of Dan Coppinger as Vice President, John Solury as Clerk and Geoff Giddings as Commissioner. I am honored to have been given the opportunity to step up to the presidency and it is my goal to continue to work to improve the efforts of this district toward the benefit of the members of the Fire Company and the taxpayers of the Town of Simsbury. I hope you will join me in welcoming our new members, new ideas and renewed energy in the District.
- The upgrade of all self contained breathing apparatus and testing equipment is scheduled for this year.
- A town wide disaster preparedness training exercise is scheduled for later this year.
- We are pleased that we are able to present a budget that continues to provide this town with outstanding fire and rescue protection while continuing to hold the present mill rate with no borrowing of any funds.

Respectfully submitted

Gary N Wilcox, President