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**FINDLAY FIRE DEPARTMENT**  
**2008 ANNUAL REPORT**  
Thomas R. Lonyo, Chief

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Findlay Fire Department provides response to a variety of emergency situations including fires and explosions, rescues and medical calls, hazardous conditions (electrical, chemical, structural, etc.) and requests for special services.

A pro-active approach to reducing losses to life and property due to fire is under-taken by the Department's Fire Prevention Bureau, which focuses on public fire safety education, code enforcement, and arson investigation.

The Department's primary coverage area is defined by the Findlay City limits. Fire protection is also extended to facilities outside the City limits by private contract and through mutual aid agreements with neighboring fire departments. Findlay Fire Department maintains a Class 3 Public Protection Classification.

**ORGANIZATION**

Authorized manning for the Fire Department consists of 74 full time professional firefighters, a receptionist, and a non-uniformed administrative assistant; staffing four stations located throughout the City.

Emergency response duties are assigned to sixty-nine of these firefighters, divided into 3 shifts of 23, with each shift covering a 24-hour period. Individual firefighters are organized into 4- to 7-man companies, supervised by a Captain. Each shift has four Captains reporting to a shift commander, or Battalion Chief. Shift personnel currently work an average of 50.4 hours per week and belong to the Local 381 Chapter of the International Association of Firefighters.

The remaining seven Department personnel, the Fire Chief, Deputy Chief of Administration / Training, Receptionist, the Administrative Assistant, and three Fire Inspectors, handle administrative duties, training, record keeping, and Fire Prevention activities.

For more information, visit our website: [www.ci.findlay.oh.us/Fire/Index.htm](http://www.ci.findlay.oh.us/Fire/Index.htm)

**PERSONNEL**

Fire Inspector Gary Braund retired after 25 years of service with the Department. Gary served as the Departments primary Fire Investigator. Following Braund's retirement, Inspector Matt Pickett assumed the primary role of Fire Investigator. Fire Captain Eric Habbegger transferred to the Prevention Bureau and in addition to fire inspections, Eric provides the Departments life safety and education programs to schools and businesses in the community. Firefighters Travis Traxler, David Meronk, and Scott

Horns resigned from the Department in 2008 to pursue other careers. The Department hired and trained Quinci Copeland, Brian Smith, and Denver Weihrauch to fill the voids created by the resignations. These three firefighters completed the required Firefighter I & II training at the Ohio Fire Academy in December of 2008.

## **TRAINING**

Emergency activities require expertise in areas such as fire suppression, medical care, equipment operation, technical rescue, and chemical hazards, as well as a working knowledge of legal issues and governmental regulations. On the non-emergency side, the Fire Prevention Bureau deals with fire safety education, building plan review, code enforcement, and arson investigation. All these areas require specific and continuing training, often mandated by State and Federal agencies.

Federal requirements including the Department of Homeland Security involve at least 24 hours of initial training. Once the initial training has been completed, firefighters must have at least 4 hours annually of continuing education. Federal requirements also mandate that new hire firefighters must complete a 144 hours of specialized training over a three year period.

The State of Ohio requires that firefighters complete 54 hours of continuing education in fire related topics. Firefighters are also required to complete 40 hours of EMS training every three years in order to maintain State certification. Fire inspectors must secure an additional 30 hours of training in the related field.

To meet the requirements of the Insurance Services Office (ISO), the department must have a combination of 14 single/multiple company drills of at least 3 hours each and two night drills of 3 hours each. Each member of the Department must also complete 3 hours of hazardous material training and 20 hours per month of monthly in-service training.

Each new recruit is also required to complete 40 hours of emergency driver / operator course and at least four, three hour training sessions on safe driving. FFD Officers are also required to complete 12 hours of officer training. In addition, ISO requires that each commercial structure is entered by FFD personnel and a pre-plan inspection completed twice annually.

The Department utilized several structures which were purchased by the City during the flood mitigation program. Although the homes could not be utilized as controlled burn / live fire structures due to their stability, FFD personnel trained in areas such as search and rescue, ventilation, forcible entry, and other fire related tactics.

## **FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU**

Three firefighters, certified through the State of Ohio as Fire Safety Inspectors, make up the Findlay Fire Prevention Bureau. The public has come to view the Fire Prevention Bureau as its fire protection and safety experts.

While all perform fire safety inspections within the City, each inspector focuses on a specific facet of the operation. The three specialty areas are fire investigation, code enforcement, and public fire safety education. All three inspectors work closely with other agencies and with the public in carrying out their assigned duties.

Fire Investigator Gary Braund retired from the Fire Department in 2008. Fire Inspector Matt Pickett assumed the duties of lead Fire Investigator for the Department. Inspector Pickett turned his duties of Public Education and inspection of current commercial structures over to Eric Habegger.

## **FACILITIES**

Fire Department operations are conducted out of four fire stations located within the City limits:

Station 1, 720 South Main Street, serves as Department Headquarters, as well as housing an engine and a ladder company, a rescue truck, and the Battalion Chief's vehicle. Station 1 provides first due response for the area south of Howard Street and west of the CSX Railroad. Station 1 was built in 1958.

Station 2, 2610 North Main Street, was built in 1976. It houses an engine company and is first due in the area north of Howard Street and West of Crystal Avenue. A Sheriff's communication vehicle is also housed at Station 2.

Station 3, 1001 Tiffin Avenue, was located at the eastern edge of the City when constructed in 1958. Since then, the station sits in approximately the geographical center of the City. The station houses an engine company and the Department's water rescue equipment. It provides back-up to the other three response districts as well as primary coverage to the area east of the CSX Railroad, north of Blanchard Avenue, south of Crystal Avenue, and west of the Findlay Village Mall.

Station 4, 7047 County Road 236, is the newest station, built in 1997. The facility houses an engine company, a ladder company, a reserve engine; the Department's apparatus repair shop, and training facilities. Station 4 provides primary coverage for the rapidly growing eastern edge of the City.

## **APPARATUS**

The compliment of firefighting apparatus and other vehicles assigned to the Fire Department consists of six 1500 gallon per minute pumping engines, one 2000 gallon per minute engine with a 75ft elevated ladder, two 1500 gallon per minute aerial trucks

with 75 ft. platforms, a rescue truck, a hazardous materials trailer, a water rescue unit, 3 utility pick-up trucks, and 6 staff cars.

In January of 2008, Council appropriated money to replace the Department's 1974 Sutphen aerial platform known as Ladder #1. Cracks in the Ladders yolk were deemed un-repairable by the manufacturer. In addition, the apparatus suffered severe damage when the driveshaft broke while responding to a series of car fires in the early spring. The unit is currently being stored at Station #4 and is awaiting auction.

A contract with Sutphen Corp. was entered into by the City in May for construction of a 100 foot Sutphen SPH. The City took advantage of a pre-payment discount offered by the manufacturer which reduced the cost of the project by \$34,875.00. This prepayment reduced the original costs of \$929,994.00 to \$895,119.00. Construction of the unit began in December 2008 and will be completed by May 2009.

A new F-250 Deputy Chief vehicle was purchased in 2008 replacing the older suburban which was formerly used as the Battalion Chief vehicle. The vehicle has been outfitted as a Safety / Rehab vehicle carrying supplies and equipment for incidents of long duration.

## **EQUIPMENT**

Expenditures for Fire Department equipment in 2008 were very limited due to the economic downturn and rising fuel prices. Any equipment which was budgeted for in 2008 could not be replaced. The money from this line item was transferred to cover the Departments high fuel costs. The Department was able to purchase several sets of new replacement turn-out gear and SCBA mask replacement parts.

With the spending freeze enacted by City Administrators in September 2008 and no foreseen equipment purchased in 2009, the Department will have had at least two full years of no new purchases of equipment. Continuing to delay replacement of equipment for extended periods of time will place the Department in a catch-up mode in the future; purchasing equipment at higher prices.

## **INCIDENT PROFILE**

Call volume amounted to 1759 calls in 2008, an increase of approximately 8.7%. This number is twice that of just five years ago. Emergency medical (EMS) calls account for this jump in call volume.

One of the four fire stations is assigned primary responsibility, depending upon location, for each emergency call. Below are listed the primary responses made by each of the four stations:

- Station 1: 648
- Station 2: 406
- Station 3: 324
- Station 4: 381

Structure fire loss increased in 2008. The Department estimates fire loss in the City of Findlay at approximately 1.8 million dollars. This is an increase from 2007 by approximately \$500,000.000. The Department also responded to another Flood in February 2008. The flood was the fifth highest recorded flood within the City, but did not generate a large request for assistance from the Fire Department. Many residents had still not returned home following the Flood of 2007.

The following information details the general categories of emergency calls and their percentages in relation to the total number of calls handled in 2008.

<b>Number of Calls</b>	<b>Type of Calls</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
42	Structure Fires	2.4
20	Vehicle Fires	1.1
164	Miscellaneous Fires	9.3
214	False Alarms	12.2
1065	Rescue / EMS Calls	60.5
189	Hazardous Condition (Spills, leaks, explosions, electrical)	10.7
65	Good Intent Calls	3.7
1759	TOTALS	100%

## **BUDGET**

The 2008 budget for the Findlay Fire Department was approximately \$6.8 million. Employee salaries and benefits make up over 93% of the Department's budget. These fixed costs allow little room for adjustments. The Departments budget reflects a 10% decrease in manning in 2009. Seven firefighters will not be replaced in the near future as part of the budget reduction.

The significant activities of the Findlay Fire Department Fire Prevention Bureau for 2008 are summarized in the chart below:

<b>FINDLAY FIRE PREVENTION</b>	
<b>SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES 2008</b>	
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Number Completed</b>
Inspections	536
Re-Inspections	197
Fire Suppression System Tests	190
Complaints	71
Building and Site Plan Reviews	26
Fire Investigations	63
Misc. Activities:	
- Meetings	92
- Interviews	254
- Code Consults	291
- Fire Follow-up Actions	211

## **2009 OUTLOOK**

In 2008, the Department will continue to concentrate on training fire personnel. With a majority of the Command staff currently eligible or soon eligible for retirement the Department must create an atmosphere which encourages our young firefighters to train and become much more comfortable with command. Ten command officers are eligible or will be eligible for retirement within two years. The new Collective Bargaining Agreement allows the City to hire Outreach Instructors from the Ohio Fire Academy to teach Officer Development Courses in Findlay. The new agreement also waives any overtime for Firefighters as a result of this training, greatly reducing the cost of providing quality education to our Firefighters.

In addition to the arrival of new Ladder #1 in May of 2009, the Department was recently awarded a DHS Assistance to Firefighters Grant in excess of \$301,000.00. This money will be used to purchase a new propane fueled "live" fire training simulator. Bid specifications will be developed and the project sent out to bid in early spring of '09. Once bids have been received the construction of the simulator should take approximately six months to complete.

The Department has attempted numerous time in the past to acquire a live training site for the Findlay Fire Department, either through the City's Capital Improvements fund or through grant requests. The new simulator will allow firefighters to train routinely in live fire situations and training opportunities will be offered to neighboring fire departments.

Seven members of the Department have been assigned to the Technical Rescue Team. The team has been formatted to respond to low occurrence-high risk incidents such as high angle rescue, confined space, structural collapse, commercial vehicle extrication, and other incidents such as fast water rescue and large scale rapid intervention. The team received extensive training in 2008 in these areas of expertise. In 2009, the remaining members of the Department will receive support role training by members of the TRT.

Seven retirements will occur within the Department in 2009. Battalion Chief Pat Ball, Deputy Chief Tom Jorgensen, Captain Dave Hover, Captain Robin Cooper, Inspector Jim Holmes, Firefighter Gary Coppes, and Firefighter Terry Coppes have notified the City of their intent to retire. Amongst these members a combined total of over 186 years of firefighting experience will leave the Department.