

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Philip E. Crombie, Jr.
Fire Chief

The Department responded to 635 incidents between July 1, 2006 and June 30, 2007. These included structure, vehicle, and outside fires (116), motor vehicle accidents with injuries or fluid spills (107), non motor vehicle rescue calls (19), non fire hazardous conditions (45), business and residential fire alarms (129), hazardous materials spills or leaks (55), carbon monoxide detector activations (24), open burning complaints (10), mutual aid responses (2), public assistance calls (79), and smoke or odor investigations (49).

In September we responded to one of our more unusual incidents, the crash of a single engine plane in the backyard of a home on Jacques Lane. Our comprehensive training program prepared us for even this unusual and infrequently occurring circumstance.

The Department has been active in the formation of regional fire and rescue response teams. South Windsor along with Manchester, Glastonbury, Marlborough and Colchester make up Task Force #57 and Strike Team #57. Each fire department supplies one apparatus and a crew of firefighters to these response teams. These teams operate as part of the State-wide Fire Rescue Disaster Plan. Task Force #57 was deployed for the first time in July to the mill fire in Windsor Locks.



The Department, in cooperation with the Pleasant Valley Condominium Association, developed its first multi-family residential complex evacuation plan. Residents of Pleasant Valley Condominiums participated in the kickoff event in October. This plan establishes meeting places in the complex in the event of fire or other emergencies. This helps both emergency personnel and condo association staff identify and assist those who may be displaced.

In an effort to further enhance our fire safety and education efforts the Fire and Life Safety Unit was formed this year. This group of volunteers will dedicate their time and efforts specifically to fire safety programs. They will concentrate on helping our citizens prevent fires as well as educating them

on surviving a fire should one occur. The formation of this Unit highlights the importance of the fire prevention and education aspects of the Fire Department's mission.



Firefighter Scott Fine was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant in July. Lieutenant Fine was assigned responsibility for Company 5, Explorer Post 838. Company 5 is the Department's group of 14 to 18 year olds. These individuals provide fire ground support and receive training in firefighting tactics. They are a large part of the Department's recruit-

ing efforts. Like all the Department officers, Lieutenant Fine was promoted after successfully completing both written and oral exams.

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A group led by Deputy Chief Jay Knipple developed bid specifications for a tower ladder to replace the Department's 1986 aerial apparatus. That process included traveling to other fire departments to examine their recent ladder deliveries as well as evaluating the future needs of our community. This new vehicle is designed to provide the Fire Department with elevated fire suppression and rescue capabilities for the next twenty years. The bid was awarded in October. Given the complexity of these types of vehicles, construction time is about one year. Once delivered, department members will spend several months training with the new apparatus before it is placed in service.

Congressman John Larson visited the Department in February to announce his introduction of House of Representative Bill 943, the Volunteer Responder Incentive Protection Act. The event brought representatives of the National Volunteer Fire Service to South Windsor. The Bill would exempt benefits to volunteer fire and medical responders from federal income tax. These benefits play a large role in the recruitment and retention of volunteers. The benefits received are diminished because volunteers are now required by the IRS to pay taxes on them. Congressman Larson chose South Windsor as the location for his announcement because the Fire Department

and Town Council have advocated for this legislation since 1999.

Fire Department staff spent much time during the year working with the Public Building Commission and our design team completing plans for the fire and ambulance facility to be built on Sullivan Avenue. Inland Wetlands Agency and Planning and Zoning Commission approvals were received in

January. Construction was expected to begin in the Spring of 2006 but has been delayed due to requirements being imposed by the State Department of Environmental Protection and the Army Corps of Engineers.

The Fire Department is staffed by more than 100 residents who volunteer their time, energy, and enthusiasm to help their fellow citizens. These individuals contributed over 24,000 hours of time to the community. Six of our fellow townspeople made the decision to become members of the Fire Department this past year. We encourage anyone who is interested in learning more about volunteering, either as a firefighter or in an administrative, support, or fire prevention education capacity, to join us at Fire Headquarters any Tuesday evening.

