



HoseLine

FALL 2018

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Thank You Voters!

On the March 20 voters approved our request for a 4% increase in the annual fire district tax. The vote was 1,254 yes votes and 841 no votes. The Prospect Heights Fire Protection District takes its responsibilities seriously. Not only when it comes to responding to your emergency but as equally important when it comes to spending your tax dollars.

Since the recession a decade ago the PHFPD hasn't been able to fully fund its operation. This resulted in putting off vehicle replacements and cutting staffing, both reducing our reliability. Fortunately, we've been lucky- but luck won't last. This tax increase will be used to ensure proper staffing of fire apparatus each and every day, as well as contribute to the apparatus replacement fund.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees and all the members of the PHFPD, we thank you for your support, your confidence in us, and your trust.

Prospect Heights Fire District Annual Open House 2018

Since 1922 the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has sponsored the Fire Prevention Week. This year, Fire Prevention Week runs from October 7 – 13. It's held every year during the week starting closest to October 8 – 10, the dates of the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. The concept is to teach fire safety to the general public in hopes of reducing fires and deaths associated with it.

Every year on the last Saturday of Fire Prevention Week the Prospect Heights Fire Department hosts its annual Open House. This is our chance to welcome our residents into your fire house. There will be many activities for families to participate in as well as fire safety demonstrations given by our members, slide pole, photos with Sparky, free hot dog lunch, squirt house, and many others.

When: Saturday October 13, 2018 from 10am till 2pm

Where: Prospect Heights Fire Protection District Headquarters
10 E. Camp McDonald Rd.

So come on out and bring your families.





Message from the Fire Chief

Chief Drew Smith

For the past six months lots has been going on here at the PHFPD. We started last spring with our information campaign to explain the financial needs of the fire district. Given the strong "yes" vote in the March 20 referendum we appear to have done our job well and we say "thank you" to our residents for their vote of confidence in us.

As mentioned in previous newsletters, we continued our ambulance rechassis program and took delivery of our second remounted ambulance. By reusing the "box" and having it placed on a new chassis we saved nearly 50 percent on the cost of a new ambulance. We now have two ambulances that will serve you for the next 7-10 years before needing replacement.

June marked the one-year anniversary of the Grandbrier, an assisted living and memory care residence. This addition to Prospect Heights has added many additional ambulance calls but we are more than capable of providing the service and gladly do so.

Between emergency calls firefighters conduct maintenance on the fire trucks and equipment to ensure they are ready at a moment's notice. Training drills are also conducted to ensure their knowledge, skills, and abilities are also top-notch. You never know when disaster will strike.

July 18 saw us fight not only the largest fire in the history of Prospect Heights but one of the largest fires in the history of the north/northwest suburbs. It is extremely rare (and thankfully so) that any fire department need assemble nearly 200 firefighters to battle a blaze. Firefighters battled the blaze for more than ten hours. Over the next two to three weeks firefighters spent much time addressing residents' questions and restoring equipment to its ready state. We are thankful for the community support of the fire district but also their fellow mankind. Many residents of River Trails Condos lost everything and the generosity of our community has been felt.

We have begun planning to replace one of our two main pumper trucks. A 2001 model, it has seen significant duty

over the past 17 years and is in need of replacement before it experiences a catastrophic failure. Despite aggressive preventive maintenance, we are faced with a vehicle whose manufacturer went bankrupt several years ago and now vital parts are nearly impossible to find when needed.

On September 11 we celebrated Patriots Day. We honored the sacrifice of those civilians, military members, firefighters, paramedics, and police officers who were killed on September 11, 2001 when terrorists attacked our country and changed our way of life forever. We can never forget these men, women, and children.

On the evening of September 11 we were the recipients of an appreciation dinner presented by PH Kids Care, a parent-child community organization that instills values and responsibility. The kids prepared and presented dinner to our firefighter-paramedics and police officers then joined them to eat and share time together. It was truly a pleasurable time to spend with the girls and boys.

Please join us on Saturday, October 13 from 10:00 until 2:00 for our annual open house. Have a hot dog on us while you meet your neighbors and learn something you maybe didn't know about the PHFPD and fire safety. We look forward to seeing you and your family at the fire station.

Please never hesitate to contact me should you have a question or concern. I am happy to listen and talk.



Drew Smith
Fire Chief

www.phfire.com

Our Fire of the Century

River Trails Condominiums

On July 18 at about 1:20 p.m. the Prospect Heights Fire Protection District was dispatched to 848 McIntosh Court in the River Trails Condominiums for a reported fire in the building. As firefighters dashed to the scene, thick smoke could be seen in the air rising from the complex. Even before they arrived, the on-duty commander requested assistance from area fire departments. On his arrival additional assistance was again requested. Ultimately the fire would become the equivalent of seven extra alarms.

Our first arriving pumper, Engine 39, had a hose on the original fire in a few minutes after arrival and put that fire out. Unfortunately, the fire had already spread in to the attic prior to this.

The PHFPD is no stranger to this type of fire. On Christmas Eve 2006 a similar fire in the same complex destroyed one building and severely damaged a second. The lessons learned at that fire were applied to this fire. However, a number of additional factors such as wind, no access to the backside of the building by fire trucks, and the wide-open attic challenged firefighters. There was no shortage of work on this fire that lasted past midnight. Despite all this only one firefighter suffered heat exhaustion and two civilians with minor injuries required medical care. No firefighters or civilians were killed or seriously injured. That's something we are proud of.

Quick facts:

- Time line: Dispatch at 1:22, Box at 1:23, Second alarm at 1:56, Third alarm at 2:17, Fourth alarm followed by Fifth alarm at 2:57 and 3:00. Additional special alarms at 4:50 and 5:38.
- Rough calculations: nearly 50 departments and 200 firefighters fought this blaze.
- With dozens of firefighters in both the rear of the building, on the roof, and inside using multiple hoses the interior fire conditions continued to deteriorate and it was evident that the risk to firefighters was too great. At about 2:30 p.m., more than 60 minutes after the attack was launched, operations switched to an all exterior mode. Efforts then focused on separating the buildings on each side from the original building. This too proved unsuccessful.
- We know where the fire started. The cause was determined to be accidental and unintentional.

92 condos damaged leaving hundreds of residents displaced. Recovery will be long, slow, and painful for these residents. The outpouring of community support was tremendous.

Working smoke alarms save lives. Have a family escape plan. Insist on fire sprinklers in all new homes.



Celebrating 75 Years of Fire Protection

The Prospect Heights Fire Protection District was formally organized on July 6, 1944 pursuant to Illinois law. In 2019 the PHFPD celebrates its 75th anniversary of serving the citizens of Prospect Heights. Much has changed over those 75 years. Here's a few historical facts:

- The first fire truck was a 1926 Chevrolet with two 40-gallon soda acid tanks.
- In August of 1948, construction started on the fire station. The volunteer firemen performed all the labor themselves.
- For the year of 1956 the department responded to 30 calls. In comparison, 2018 is estimate to see around 2400 calls.
- There have been six fire chiefs of Prospect Heights: Jim Carol, Francis Foor, William Andrew, Donald Gould, Sr., Donald Gould, Jr., and the current fire chief Drew Smith.
- In 1971 a referendum was approved by voters to expand the fire station and purchase additional fire apparatus and the first-ever ambulance.
- In 1981 the PHFPD joined the Regional Emergency Dispatch Center. 9-1-1 was not yet available and the

prior system relied on volunteers to answer the emergency phone, a less-than-reliable method.

- In 1985 ambulance service was upgraded to include paramedics and the PHFPD would begin to pay for a skeleton crew to staff the ambulance while volunteers continued to fight the fires.
- In 1991 another referendum was approved by voters to add living quarters to the fire station, expand the training classroom, and purchase modern equipment including the first aerial ladder truck.
- Between 1995 and 1997 the former Palwaukee Area Fire Protection District merged with the PHFPD unifying much of the city into one fire department.
- With the number of calls having risen from several hundred to a nearly 2,000, nine full time firefighter paramedics were hired in 2005 to provide additional staffing.

In 2019 we will celebrate 75 years of serving you, our residents. You are the purpose of our work and we are proud to help should you ever need us. In our Spring 2019 newsletter we will present additional anniversary information. **Stay tuned!**

Ambulance Transport Fees

The Prospect Heights Fire Protection District (PHFPD) has charged a fee for ambulance transportation for many years. Those fees were last updated in 2014 from rates set in 2012. A periodic review of actual costs and comparison to fees charged is conducted by the PHFPD administration. Fees are charged to those transported to defray the whole cost of making paramedic service available and keeping taxes paid to the PHFPD as low as possible. The actual cost per transport is over \$2,200. Property taxes paid by residents defer a significant portion of these costs.

In August the Board of Trustees voted unanimously to raise ambulance transportation fees. The new fee is \$1,300 per patient transported. Regional rates can exceed \$1,800. The rates charged by private ambulance companies can be double or triple the regional rates.

The PHFPD transports routinely to Northwest Community Hospital, Glenbrook Hospital, and Advocate Lutheran General Hospital. Most times paramedics can honor the patient request for one of these hospitals. When extenuating circumstances exist other hospitals may be an option. Under state law, when a patient is in critical condition he or she must be transport to the closest hospital. Critically injured patients are taken to a Level 1 trauma center, Advocate Lutheran General Hospital being the closest one.

For Medicare patients, we agree to accept assignment at Medicare's rate. Similar to Medicare, we agree to assignment at Private Insurance's rate. Currently, we waive any co-pays owed by residents as taxes paid satisfy these co-pays under Medicare rules. Residents are not expected to pay any amounts not paid by their insurance provider or Medicare. If a resident receives a bill, it is accompanied by instructions to supply insurance or Medicare information. For residents with no insurance or a hardship, those situations are evaluated on case-by-case basis. No one is ever sent to a collection agency.



Winter Fire Safety

DID YOU KNOW...

- Eighty-two percent of all fire deaths occur in the home.
- Electrical fires are a special concern during the winter months, which call for more indoor activities and increased use of lighting, heating and appliances.
- Install a smoke alarm on every level of your home. Test smoke alarm batteries every month and change them at least once a year. Consider installing a 10-year lithium battery-powered smoke alarm, which is sealed so it cannot be tampered with or opened.
- If you smoke, please use a proper ashtray, we (Prospect Heights) have seen three fires on balconies caused by improperly discarded smoking materials in 2018
- Have your furnace and chimney professionally inspected annually and cleaned if necessary. Chimney tar build-up is a common cause of chimney fires.
- Use a glass or metal screen in front of your fireplace to prevent sparks igniting nearby carpets or furniture.
- Never thaw frozen pipes with a blow torch or other open flame. Use hot water or a UL listed device such as a hand-held dryer.
- Live Christmas trees need special attention, keep the tree stand filled with water at all times.
- If there is a fire hydrant near your home, keep it clear of snow for easy access.



Fire District Wins Major Award



The Prospect Heights Fire Protection District was presented with Illinois Public Risk Fund's "Member of the Year Award" at the June Board of Trustees meeting. IPRF is our Worker's Compensation insurance provider. Of its 758 member units of government, we had just a two (2) percent claim rate. IPRF mentioned that there are some members with claim rates of 500 percent. We attribute our low claim rate to the professionalism and safety-consciousness of our members. Most members are thinking about their safety, the safety of their brothers, and the safety of the public as a critical component of their activities. Low Worker's Compensation rates results in a lower budget keeping expenses lower also.



Prospect Heights Fire District

10 East Camp McDonald Road
Prospect Heights, IL 60070

Non-Emergency Phone: 847-253-8060
Fax: 847-253-4759
Email: phfd@phfire.com

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Patriot's Day Dinner

On the evening of September 11th, The Prospect Heights fire fighter-paramedics and police officers were honored with a Patriot's Day appreciation dinner. It was prepared by Prospect Heights Kids Care, a parent-child community organization that works with these children to inspire good values and character. *A good evening was enjoyed by all!*



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