



# HoseLine

SPRING 2017

**IN THIS ISSUE:**

- 2016 Year in Review...
- *Message from the Chief; Doing More with Less*  
Fire Departments are Responsive Models, Not Production Models
- Fire Department Ambulance Repairs Underway
- Fire Department Receives High OSI Grade
- A Little History on Our Main Fire Station
- 2016 Call Statistics

**Save the Date!!  
June 3rd  
Community Day  
9:00 a.m. - Noon**

## 2016 Year in Review...

2016 was a year of significant developments, accomplishments, and change. As reported in our last newsletter, our long-time fire chief retired and a new fire chief appointed. PHFD firefighters conducted several community events including our annual open house, community day with the city and community organizations, attended numerous block parties and gave fire station tours. Our paramedic-firefighters resuscitated several residents who suffered cardiac arrest and extinguished some rather significant fires involving homes in the city.

Ensuring the public knows how to react when faced with an emergency is our top priority. Responding when called is essential but prevention is better. Nearly every day one or more persons visit the fire station to have their blood pressure checked. In 2016 we conducted:

- 40 child car seat installations ■ 9 school visits ■ 20 CPR classes
- 11 Fire station tours ■ ... and 20 other related events.

Besides these activities which you may have seen or participated in, our members did much more. On a daily basis every ambulance and fire vehicle is checked to ensure it is ready at a moment's notice. There is also daily training and practice to ensure the knowledge and skills are up-to-date. Besides these ongoing programs there were other achievements. To name a few:

- We improved the way we document patient care with new a new computer program specially designed to do so.
- Our members made numerous repairs to our fleet and facilities saving thousands of dollars in expense.
- We upgraded our self-contained breathing apparatus – SCBA (air masks used in firefighting) after being awarded a grant for \$221,000. The net cost to the PHFD was only \$10,000 to acquire more than \$200,000 of this new protective equipment.

***We also recognized some milestones at the Annual Employee Holiday Lunch held in December:***

**Firefighter John William Thomson** was selected by his peers as the 2016 Firefighter of the Year.

**Lieutenant Patrick Murray, Jr.** was recognized for 25 years of service.

**Lieutenant Scott Olsen** was recognized for 20 years of service.

**Firefighter Brian Bos** was recognized for 10 years of service. He has since resigned due to personal commitments.

**Firefighter James Stempien** was recognized for 10 years of service.

**Firefighter Thomas Bauer** completed one year of service.

The fire district also welcomed two new members, **Michael Lynch** and **Daniel Leszka**. Dan is a paramedic. Mike is an EMT. Both recently completed their 10 weeks of training at the fire academy and are now being oriented to all fire department operations and will be working shifts along with our other firefighters.

On the remaining pages you will see statistic regarding our annual number of responses, our Insurance Services Office (ISO) grading, and the replacement of one of the ambulances. We hope you find this interesting and informative.





# Message from the New Fire Chief

## Doing More with Less



This is a familiar phrase in our society. For government agencies like the fire district, it's part of the way we do business. Every year the PHFD has done more with less. While each year the taxes you pay have probably increased due to inflation, the prices effecting fuel, commodities, insurance and other services required to run the fire district have risen at a greater pace. Even without these cost increases the number of emergency incidents handled by your fire-fighter/paramedics is has been increasing each year. The number of incidents handled in 2016 was 21 percent higher than in 2007. Each incident places wear on the fire trucks, ambulances, tools, and protective clothing as well as the increased use of gas and diesel fuel.

Since 2009, the assessed value of property in the fire district has decreased 37 percent, a more than \$199 million decrease, resulting in a nearly flat increase in total tax revenue received by your fire district. This is the lowest level of assessed value since 2000. As a result, the fire district has reduced staffing by two full time and six part time positions to save nearly \$500,000 and balance the budget. At least once each day we have more than one emergency call occur at the same time. This is 19 percent of the time. Sometimes it's a third or fourth unrelated emergency call happens. Every call requires a response of Prospect Heights Fire District resources. Our members respond using their advanced knowledge, skills, and abilities to mitigate the emergency. For the past three years we have been doing this with less people.

We will continue to use our part time staff to save money on pensions, insurance, and wages, the biggest part of the fire district's budget. We will continue to provide this highest level of service you depend on while staying fiscally responsible; this is no small task. We will continue to keep you, our residents and customers, appraised of how we are doing.

## Fire Departments Are Response Models, Not Production Models

In a recent article by Eric Saylor titled "Fire departments are response models, not production models" he writes "Fire departments are not meant to maximize efficiencies; they are meant to be resilient. Efficiency results in fragility; resilience results in survival." He goes on to explain in a metaphor that while your red blood cells are carrying oxygen nearly 100 percent of the time, your white blood cells are a waste of "excess capacity" since they only work a few times a year when you are sick. However, no doctor would suggest you get rid of them to make your body more efficient. While doing so would improve overall production and efficiency, the body would never be resilient when faced with an illness. "Efficient systems are not designed to be resilient or redundant, but rather to be profitable, optimized, and low cost." When you stretch a system to its maximum, it becomes fragile and cannot respond to the exceptions of its design.

The fire department can never predict when the next fire, heart attack, car wreck, plane crash, or choking child will occur or where it will occur. The fire department must be resilient and agile. Another metaphor posed by Saylor is that of a sand pile. As you add more sand to the top (more calls for service to the FD) or take sand away from the bottom (firefighters, fire trucks, or fire stations) the sand pile eventually collapses. "Efficient, optimized systems fail from unanticipated shocks. Resilient systems survive shocks. Response models need to be resilient to survive the shock that overturns the efficient system. The mission of the fire department is to be resilient and fast, not necessarily efficient" says Saylor.

The Prospect Heights Fire Protection district operates under this premise, that we are resilient. We are the ones our citizens can and do count on when tragedy strike, be it large or small, naturally occurring or man-made. We take this responsibility seriously and plan accordingly because there are no "time outs" or "do-overs" in our work. We have many challenges and we plan for them, training in the appropriate response to the multitude of possible scenarios that may present to us. Unlike a store, we cannot maintain a "just in time" inventory as we have no idea when we will have a surge in demand. While some are common, others are rare and infrequent but demand equal attention in planning, preparation, and response.



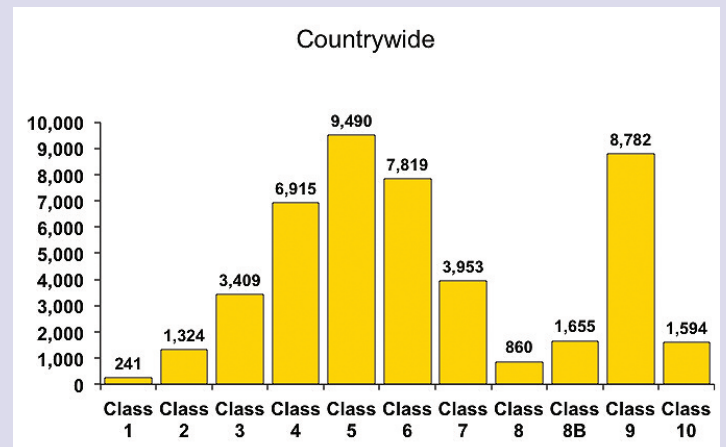
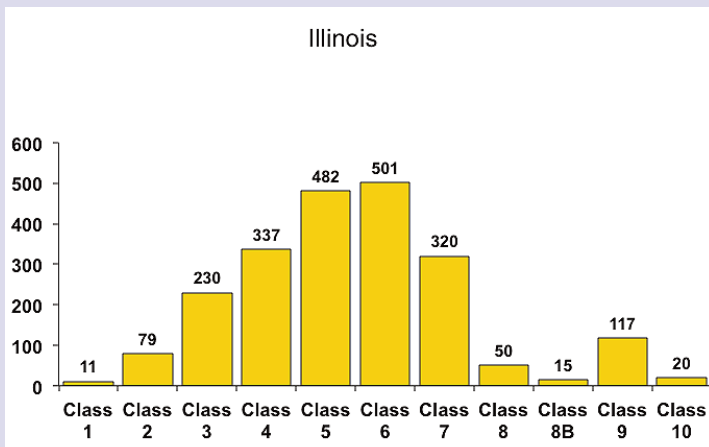
# Fire Department Ambulance Repairs Underway

The PHFD is in the process of having a new chassis installed on its oldest ambulance. This involves disconnecting the ambulance patient care compartment (the box on the back of the ambulance) and remounting it on a new chassis. A committee of six members has determined that the box of the ambulance is in good shape and has lots of life left but the chassis is in need of replacement. A new chassis with new motor, transmission, frame, and tires will provide significant cost savings without sacrificing safety or quality of service. The expenditure for a new ambulance is over \$200,000 but installing a new chassis reduces the costs by about half. The PHFD's currently has three ambulances that are 8, 10, and 11 years old. Typically, an ambulance provides 5-7 years of service before maintenance costs become excessive. The PHFD has been fortunate to have low maintenance costs on these emergency vehicles. Our goal is to remain fiscally responsible, while maintaining the safety of our equipment for all of our citizens.



# Prospect Heights Fire Protection District Receives High ISO Grade

One factor used to set policy rates by many homeowners' insurance companies is the ISO class. The ISO or Insurance Services Office, is a private insurance industry organization that grades every community in the United States. ISO assigns a grade for the community's fire protection. Class 1 is the best and Class 10 is for those with no fire department. ISO grades three components: The fire department makes up 50 percent of the grading. Water supply makes up for 40 percent. The 9-1-1 dispatch system is the remaining 10 percent. Prospect Heights' is a Class 3. Only 11 percent of the 46,000 communities in the United States hold a Class 3 or better. In Illinois, it's only 15 percent. Historically, the PHFPD has improved its score from a 9 to a 6 back in the 1980s, then to a 4 in 1996, and a 3 in 2012. The main reason for this improvement was the switch from volunteer to paid firefighters who staff the stations 24-hours a day as well as the improvements in our water supply tactics. In order for the grade to further improve, additional firefighters and a city-wide water system are needed. Because roughly 70 percent of the city is without fire hydrants, firefighters must transport water to the fire by truck requiring some of the current firefighters to perform this task versus directly fighting the fire. If or when a city-wide water system is installed, these firefighters can be repurposed improving service.



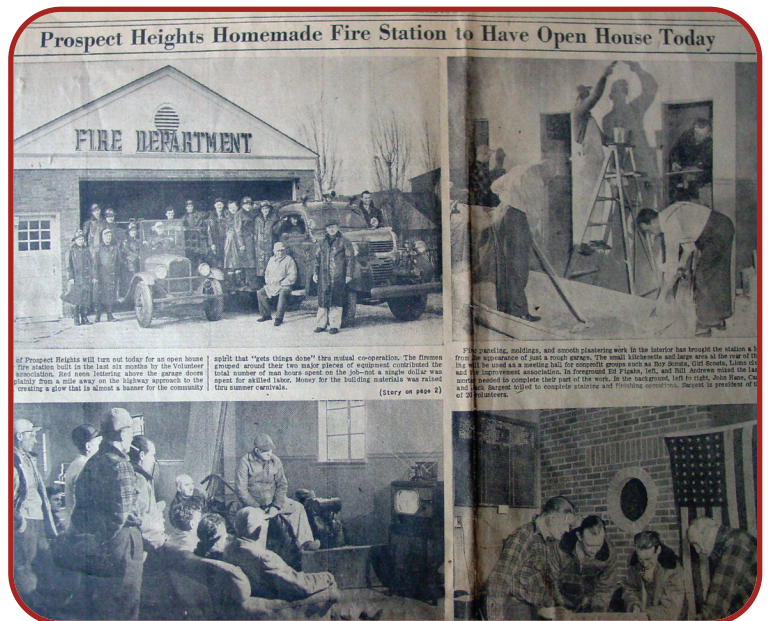
# A Little History on Our Main Fire Station

The current fire station headquarters, located in the heart of Prospect Heights, was originally built in 1948. It was constructed using a single page blueprint, and 95% volunteer manpower. Funding for the construction was raised by the annual firemen's carnival. Prior to construction of this original fire station, the two vehicles owned by the Fire District were housed at the local Sinclair gas station. This original double bay fire station was under the leadership of then Fire Chief Fran Foor. In 1973, a bond referendum allowed for an expansion of the truck storage garage and remodeling of the original fire station area to include meeting and office spaces. At that time, Chief Donald Gould Sr. and his staff designed the expansion for the function of a basic volunteer fire department. Fast forward to 1985, when firefighter/paramedics starting sleeping in the station, remaining on duty 24 hours a day. With no bunk room area, once again the firefighters pulled out their tools and remodeled some office space into a bunk room. At that time, the station manning was a constant 3 members, working 24 hours a day.

The current station was remodeled again after the 1991 bond referendum. This remodel expanded the rear of the station to allowing sleeping areas for male and female firefighters, expanded shower facilities, and a small fitness room and training area in the new partial basement.

Today, the manpower is a constant 6 personnel operating 24 hours a day, with areas for administration in the front of the station.

We are very proud of the facility we consider home, yet parts of the building are now 73 years old. The main-functioning areas, such as the truck garage and main service areas, are 44 years old. There is a constant struggle to maintain our facilities and keep them as up to date as possible with the expanding mission of a modern fire service. In 2017 we are working to retrofit to LED lighting in the main fire station using grant funding in the hopes to reduce our energy costs.

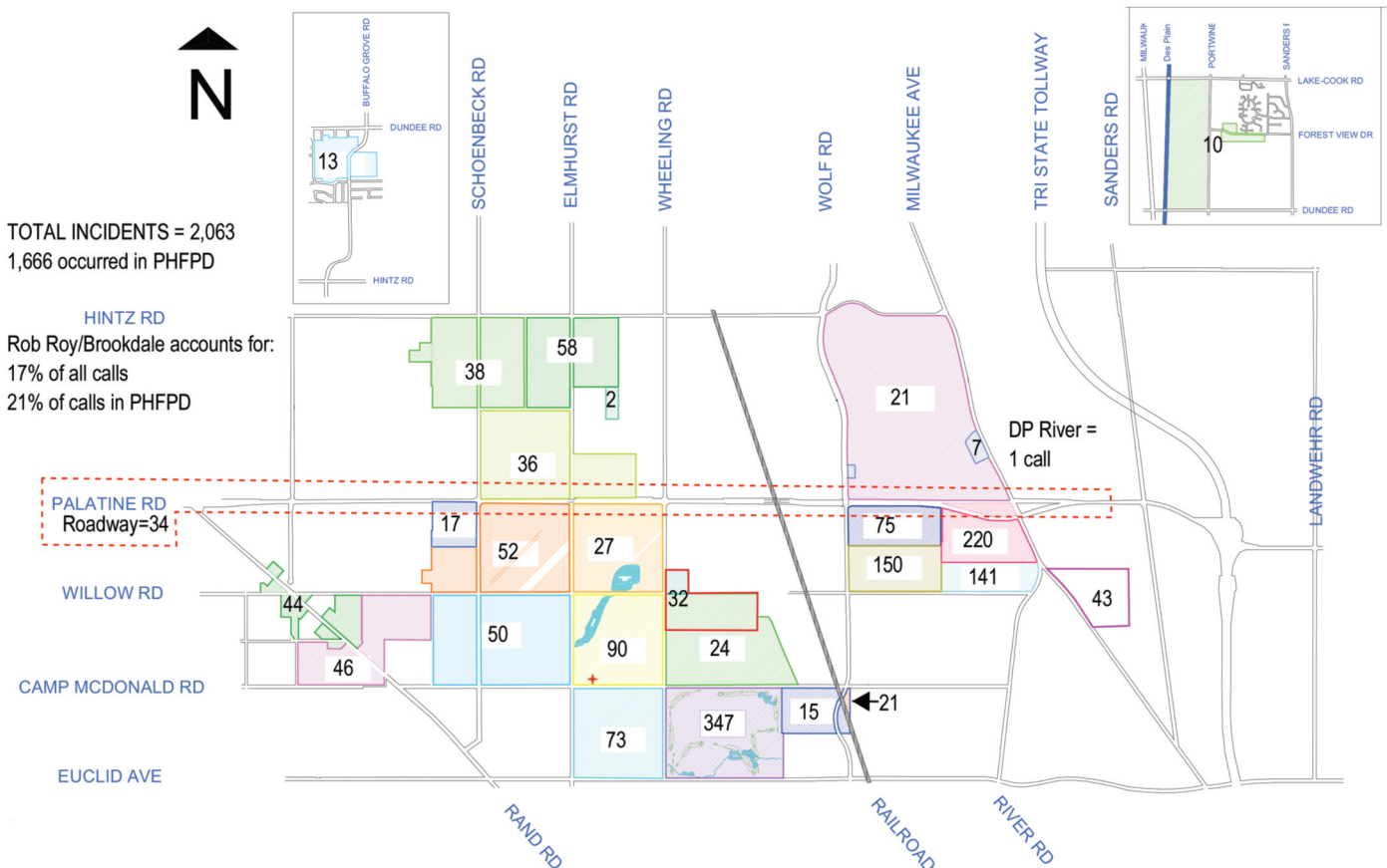


# During 2016 there were 2,063 emergency calls

TYPE OF INCIDENT	NUMBER OF RESPONSES
Ambulance Calls	1,026
Ambulance Response to Another Community	237
Assist Invalid	82
Vehicle Accident	72
Vehicle Accident with Person(s) Trapped	5
Carbon Monoxide Alarm with Illness	5
Carbon Monoxide Alarm without Illness	70
Service Call	99
Trouble Alarm	95
Vehicle Fire	6
Reported Structure Fire	13
Activated Fire Alarm	168
Indoor gas leak, oven fire	21
Structure Fire - Confirmed	5
Aircraft Crash	2
Fire response to another community	157
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES IN 2016 =</b>	<b>2,063*</b>

\*Of these 2,063 calls, 394 times the PHFD assisted another community and 189 times the PHFD received assistance from another fire department.

## Prospect Heights Fire District 2016 Incidents by Area





## 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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## Community Day is coming June 3rd...

Over the last 10 years, members of the Prospect Heights community have come together with the fire department for its annual "Community Day." The event takes place on the Fire District and Police Center property at Camp McDonald and Elmhurst Roads. This year's event will take place from 9 .m. to noon on Saturday, June 3 — rain or shine.

Firefighters and police officers will be on hand for equipment and station tours, but our expanded group will include representatives from the park districts, library, garden and natural resources commission, as well as Rotary and Little League, offering many different children's games and inflatables to explore.

We hope you have a chance to stop in for an awesome pancake breakfast provided by the Prospect Heights Lions Club, and have fun with the kids while learning about all the amazing resources here in Prospect Heights.

Children's events are free, except for the cost of the pancake breakfast. Food tickets cost \$5 for adults, while children under 3 are free. Additional parking for the event will be on Maple Street, north of Camp McDonald Road.

**Mark your calendar now — and save the date!**



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