

Ann Arbor Fire Department

Quarterly Newsletter

www.a2gov.org/fire

September 2007

Message from the Chief

I am thankful that we did not have to face personnel cuts during the current budget cycle and that we were approved to hire three firefighters to fill current vacancies. At a time when other departments faced personnel cuts, fire was able to maintain their current staffing levels and for that I am grateful. As you know, our department has endured budget cuts throughout the years which have resulted in the elimination of positions.

The department is currently budgeted for 94 full-time employees as compared to 126 in 2000.

We have managed to maintain the same service level to the citizens of Ann Arbor despite personnel losses; however, the condition of our fleet has deteriorated, and action needs to occur in order to maintain that service level. As you know, station 2 closed in 2003 because staffing levels did not allow enough coverage for that station to operate. When a station closes, other stations absorb more calls. More calls equate to more runs per truck. Our current personnel-to-station ratio and truck-to-run ratio is not meeting National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards. Our trucks are functioning in a front-line status far beyond the allotted years designated by NFPA.

According to the current replacement schedule, front-line apparatus are scheduled for replacement every 20 years, and there is no replacement schedule for reserve apparatus. The NFPA recommends that all front-line apparatus are replaced every 10 years and then they can maintain a "reserve" status for five additional years. All of our reserve apparatus are well over 15 years old. The department desperately needs a new ladder truck in order to maintain our current ISO rating which dictates that we must have an operating ladder truck with the ability to respond to a high-rise within four minutes. Our current reserve ladder truck is 22 years old



and does not comply with NFPA standards. This may soon cause problems when the tower (station 1 ladder truck) goes out of service for repair.

We are trying to maintain our fleet as long as possible by managing our calls more effectively. The

manner in which fire is dispatched and the relationship with Huron Valley Ambulance (HVA) will play a key role in the department's success for managing the fleet while maintaining service levels as we continue to see an increase in call volume. Even so, the replacement schedule needs to be updated to more accurately reflect the needs of the community so that the department can maintain its current service level in a safe manner.



Fire Department Open House

The department's annual Open House will be held at station 1 on Sunday, Oct. 7 from noon – 4 p.m., to kick off National Fire Education Week. The NFPA has identified this year's theme as "Practice Your Escape Plan."

The station will be open for tours with the majority of the activity being held on the apparatus floor. Along with many educational displays, there will be a variety of hands-on activities for children of all ages including: Hector the Detector robot, a vehicle extrication demonstration, and a practice your escape plan event. The newest and biggest member of the department will be "walking around" and guests will have a chance to choose his official name!



The 2007 Open House is being held in conjunction with the Hands-On Museum's Sciencepoolooza Street Fair: Explosive Science, and the University of Michigan Trauma & Burn Center's nurses will also be on site to answer questions.



Public education

As of Sept. 14, the department has hosted 30 station tours since the beginning of the year and has attended 56 other events such as neighborhood ice cream socials, senior center education seminars, etc. The fire prevention division works in conjunction with the operations division to educate the public on fire safety. The department has reached over 4,000 people so far this year. The following is the breakdown of people based on age:

Age	Total
0 – 5:	1,707
6 – 10:	1,327
11 – 15:	527
16 & over:	417

Statistics show that children make up 15 – 20 percent of all fire deaths. They are curious about fire and what often begins as harmless curiosity can lead to tragedy without proper education. Amelia Moshier coordinates all public education events/tours for the department, and she can be reached at 734-994-4976.



On Aug. 10, 22 children from Community Day Care and Preschool toured the station. Many of them drew pictures to thank the firefighters. This was 4-year-old Nia's photo of a firefighter putting out a fire.

Cat's meow...thanks

The cats at a local residence are alive today because of the Ann Arbor firefighters! The department responded to a fire on the northeast side of Ann Arbor. The crew from Engine 6 went in search of the owner's cats. Lt. Dan Krueger and firefighter Mark Hanselman found one cat in a backroom hiding under a set of mattresses and the other cat was found underneath a bed. The cats were safely transported outside and they were provided oxygen by Huron Valley Ambulance as well as some TLC from department members.



The owner of the home (and the cats), called the fire marshal to extend her heartfelt thanks and gratitude to the crews for their hard work. She particularly wanted everyone to know how "wonderful" and "terrific" they were to her during her difficult situation. Last the department heard, the cats were getting medical treatment and, thanks to the crews, are hoping to have a full recovery.

Statistics (January 1 – September 23, 2007)

Call Type	Rescue/ Medical	False Alarm	Hazardous Conditions	Fire	Other
Number of calls	2,899	591	315	224	636
% of call total	62%	13%	7%	5%	13%

Total Calls: 4,665 (16% increase in call volume compared to 2006)

Jan. 1 – Sept. 23, 2006 total calls: 4,031



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Technology

The 3M™ Opticom™ Priority Control is a system that uses a coded, infrared signal, to give any authorized vehicle, emergency or transit, the exclusive advantage of a green light to get through traffic quicker, smoother and safer. One of the major benefits of this system is the ability to safely control traffic for emergency vehicles responding to life-threatening situations. Nationwide, there were an estimated 15,885 collisions in 2005, involving fire department emergency vehicles while responding to or from incidents, according to the National Fire Protection Association.

Opticom now uses a GPS-based system, which uses satellites to calculate speed, heading, and turn signal monitoring. The apparatus is recognized by the system just under a half mile, to ensure a first-come, first-served priority. When multiple apparatus are responding, all apparatus will be recognized and numbered by the system as to who is next for the green light. This type of technology has reduced firefighter injury and deaths as well as increased response time to citizens in need.

Firefighter Rugg has been meeting with city departments and traffic engineers in an effort to identify possible funding sources for something like this. He's also working with AATA to possibly access their "Scoot" system which is similar technology that may help the department in the short term.

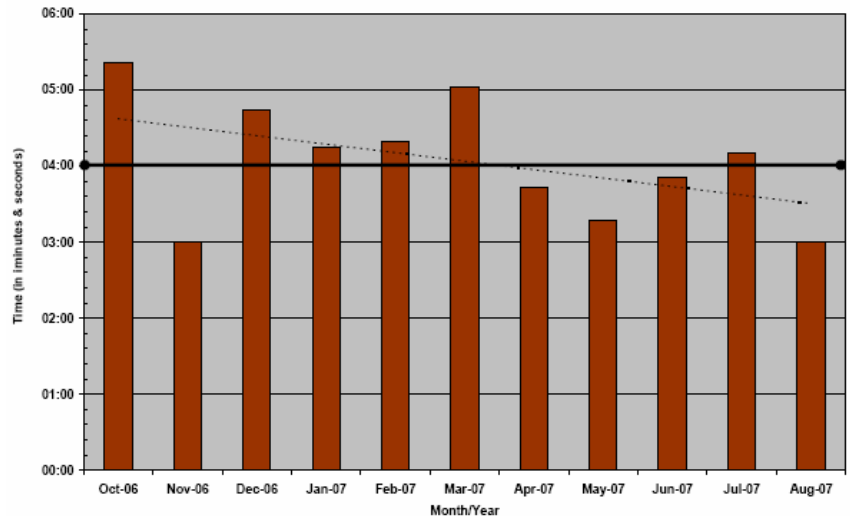
One of the departments Wildly Important Goals (WIGS) is to have the first arriving company for fire calls to respond within four minutes of being dispatched; technology such as opticom could help the department meet the goal more consistently. According to a study by the City of Houston and the City of Denver, Opticom improves emergency response times by 20 percent! The department continually looks for ways to improve services to the public while ensuring safety to the crew and citizens.

WIGS:

An update on the departments Wildly Important Goals

Over the past six months, the operations division has reduced its average response time for fire calls. The average response time for the last quarter (June – August) was three minutes, forty seconds, whereas the average response time for the previous quarter (March – May) was four minutes, one second. August had the best response time with three-minute average for the month. This is a full minute less than the NFPA standard recommendation which is for the first arriving company to respond within four minutes of dispatch at least 90 percent of the time.

Average Response Time Trend (fire calls)
October 2006 - August 2007



ResQ trial

The department is participating in a research study evaluating the effectiveness of two investigational biomedical devices that may change the way cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) is administered. The two devices are called ResQPod and ResQPump. Preliminary studies indicate that the devices improve blood flow during CPR, which may improve survival rates after cardiac arrest.

The lead research institution on the study is St. Joseph Mercy Hospital. Researchers will compare survival rates and neurological outcomes in patients with cardiac arrest receiving conventional CPR along with the use of ResQPod and ResQPump. This study is important because it may provide vital information for FDA approval for a more successful method of administering CPR.

Department personnel attended a four-hour training session to learn how to use the devices. The two-year study is scheduled to begin mid-October.



Highlights

- Administration recently purchased three new thermal imaging cameras to replace the two that were not repairable, as well as an additional camera. The cameras are beneficial to the department because they can more quickly identify sources of heat, which could be fire hiding in the walls, or even people who are trapped.
- The training division worked with Safety Bob, in the city's public services area, to train the department on how to use their new tac sticks. Tac sticks allow crew members to identify live wires to ensure safe handling.
- The Safe Delivery of Newborn Act was passed in 2000 and then updated with Bill 1292 in 2007. The department has trained its members to comply with the updated act, which means that fire personnel are now able to respond to the home of a person if they do not want to keep their newborn baby.
- The department has developed a new internal purchasing process to more efficiently process approvals and payables as well as a more detailed expenditure tracking process. It will provide critical information during the budget process.

Employee news

- Amy Brow was permanently promoted to training chief and Kathleen Chamberlain was permanently promoted to fire marshal. It is the first time that women have held these positions in the department.
- Baby Mya Karolak was born on June 28. Mya's father, Tim, is a firefighter.
- Firefighter William Gamble welcomed a baby boy on Aug. 20.
- On Sept. 12, firefighter Rob Porter welcomed his son, Joshua, into the world.
- Daniel Stabley received a commendation letter for his assistance to the Howell Area Fire Department when a fire broke out in his neighborhood. The department was low on staff that day and Dan's quick actions helped save property.
- The recognition committee approved a nomination for Allen Bruck to receive a Distinguished Service Award for his life-saving efforts during a vehicle accident near his home. The passenger would likely have perished if it weren't for Al's quick actions.

Who's who in the Ann Arbor Fire Department?



James Baldwin began his career in the fire service as a volunteer at the City of Howell Fire Department in 1980. At the time, he was serving as a police officer for Livingston County. He really enjoyed his volunteer time with the fire department and decided he wanted to become a career firefighter.

He was 31 years old when he became a full-time career firefighter at the Ann Arbor Fire Department. During his tenure at the department, he's served as a firefighter, driver/operator, lieutenant, and training chief. During his time as training chief, he led the initiative to have the initial fire training center built. He also provided the first rapid intervention team (RIT) training to the department. The biggest changes he's witnessed at the department, are the reduction in staffing and the closing of a station. He was one of the first people to graduate from Eastern Michigan University's "staff & command" program.

Lt. Baldwin currently serves as a lieutenant in the department and would really like to see the department obtain basic life support (BLS) licensure. The department currently has a medical first responder (MFR) license, but could offer more services with BLS such as: EPI pens (for allergic reactions), albuterol (for asthma attacks), combi-tube (for CPR or unconscious patient), and glucometer (for blood sugar testing – diabetic). This change is something that the department is considering.

In his spare time, Lt. Baldwin teaches for the School of Criminal Justice at Michigan State University, which offers courses in fire, rescue and incident management throughout the US, Canada, and Mexico. He also has two sons: Adam who is 23 and Bryan who is 21.

