

2013

City of Findlay

FINDLAY FIRE DEPARTMENT



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FINDLAY FIRE DEPARTMENT
2013 ANNUAL REPORT
Thomas R. Lonyo, Chief

RESPONSIBILITIES

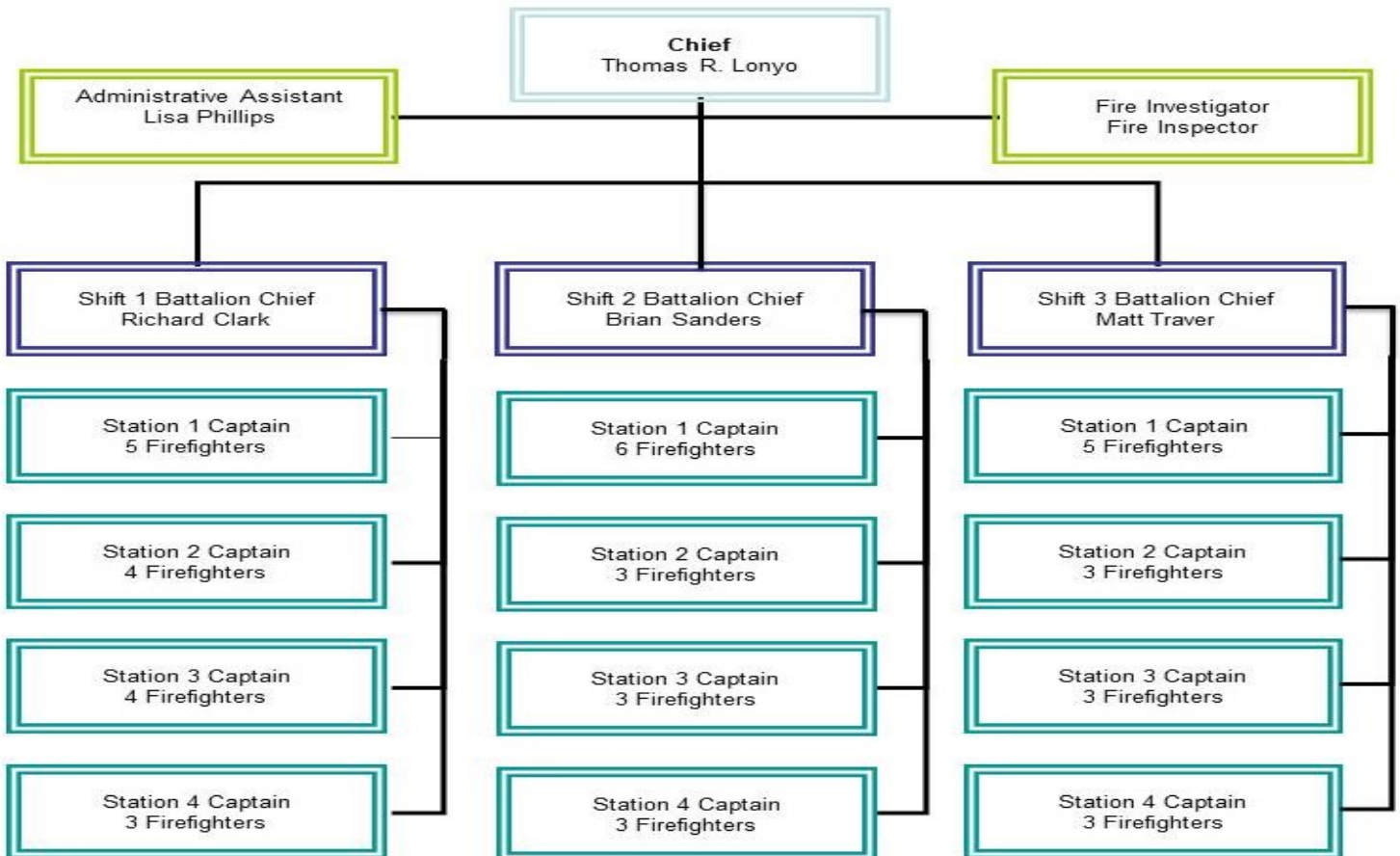
The Findlay Fire Department provides response to a variety of emergency situations including fires and explosions, rescues and medical calls, hazardous conditions (electrical, chemical, structural, etc.) and requests for special services.

A pro-active approach to reducing losses to life and property due to fire is the primary responsibility of 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 at times 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 as provided by the Insurance Services Office.

ORGANIZATION

When fully staffed, the authorized staffing for the Fire Department consists of 74 full time professional firefighters, 20 part time firefighters and a non-uniformed administrative assistant. These personnel staff 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 four Department personnel, the Fire Chief, the Administrative Assistant, and two 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

ADMINISTRATION

The key responsibilities of the administration are accomplished by the Fire Chief and Administrative Assistant. The Chief's office compiles data including fire loss, life loss, and property loss which are recorded annually. Personnel functions, policy development, human resources, hiring and promotional activities are all accomplished through the Fire Department's administration.

Financial costs associated with the fire department are planned, budgeted and tracked by the administration. Fire department expenditures and revenue are tracked and accounted for by the administration and consistent with projected financial revenues.

The Fire Administration also tracks training certification of personnel, implements and maintains a OJT program for new hires, as well as development and revision of employee job descriptions based on rank and responsibilities.

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS



The Findlay Fire Department's key objectives include fire suppression, providing basic EMS response, Hazardous Material Response and Domestic Disaster Planning. The department utilizes the National Incident Management System (NIMS) as a standardize response to all threats and emergencies the community faces. The department attempts to match the community's risks through the deployment of personnel and apparatus located in four fire stations.

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. The station also houses a water rescue unit and the Hancock County Hazardous Materials Response trailer and equipment.

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 a staffed engine company, an unstaffed 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 four 1500 gallon per minute pumping engines, one 2000 gallon per minute engine with a 75ft elevated ladder, one 1500 gallon per minute aerial truck with an 85 ft. platform, a 2000 gallon per minute 100 foot aerial, a rescue truck, a hazardous materials trailer, three water rescue units, 3 utility pick-up trucks, and 4 staff cars.

The department's fleet maintenance is handled by a firefighter who is certified in several aspects of emergency vehicle maintenance. A thorough inspection of all apparatus was completed in 2013. Several costly repairs were identified and completed in 2013 which included: suspension work, brakes, tires, springs and a turbo charger. Additional money was budgeted in the department's 2014 operational budget to complete transmission and suspension work on Engine 2 and Engine 4. These two vehicles were purchased in 1997 and have shown a need for increased costs of maintenance. The department's only reserve engine is a 1984 Sutphen and was used in a front line role due to extensive maintenance on other apparatus. The reserve engine is reaching the end of its service life. Ladder 4 was refurbished in 2002; however the snorkel is an original 1974 tower and is now 40 years old. The department has only replaced on piece of fire apparatus since 2006. Engine 4 and Ladder 4 should be considered for replacement and are currently included on the City's five-year Capital Improvement Plan.

PERSONNEL

The Department began the year with a staffing level of 69 sworn full time personnel. Original revenue projections presented to the City by the Auditor's office indicated a deficit would occur due to the roll off of the temporary quarter percent tax increase. The department laid off ten members in May of 2013 at the expiration of the DHS SAFER grant. Firefighter Donovan Hill was brought back to active duty because the department experienced several non-duty related long term medical absences. Firefighters Nicolas Scoles, Philip Hindall and Matt Morgan were included in the 2014 fire department operating budget. These personnel were recalled in late December to alleviate overtime associated with long term medical absences and pending retirements. To date five full-time firefighters remain laid-off.

Fire department staffing ended in 2013 with 61 full time firefighters. The department was only capable of staffing four fire stations by taking a front line engine and aerial out of service. This reduced the department's response capabilities and established fourteen on-duty firefighters as a new minimum daily staffing level. The department remains thirteen firefighters less than the authorized statutory limit of 74 full time firefighters.

Firefighter Robert Holmes and David Hefflinger retired after each served 29 years on the Findlay Fire Department. Each was recognized by Findlay City Council for their dedication and service to the City of Findlay.

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 conducts 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 Ohio Department of Public Safety 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.

In 2013, Captain Josh Eberle and Captain Jeff Rampe provided several sessions of hands-on training in acquired structures. Several county acquired flood properties scheduled for demolition were utilized to provide vital training in the following firefighting disciplines:

- Hoseline Advancement
- Search & Rescue
- Forcible Entry
- Mayday Drills
- Wall Breaching

- Cellular Nozzle Use
- Rapid Intervention Tactics
- Positive-Pressure Ventilation

Over 155 hours of hand-on training were completed by personnel on these various topics much of which was accomplished on duty.

The department also hosted two Ohio Fire Academy Direct Delivery Courses. Personnel attended and completed the two-day Incident Safety Officer course as well as the two-day Health and Safety Officer course. Instructor Steve Westcott from the OFA provided these courses at Fire Station 4. A collaborative training session was held between Hanco EMS and the Findlay Fire Department. An Auto-Extrication course was held at Fire Station 4 for these two agencies.

EQUIPMENT PURCHASES

Several pieces of small tools and equipment were purchased in 2013 including two cold-water emersion suits a ResQMax line delivery gun, and several sections of large diameter supply hose, rope rescue carabineers, electrical detection sticks and high performance K-12 saw blades.

HANCOCK COUNTY HAZARDOUS MATERIAL RESPONSE TEAM

A collaborative effort has been underway since 2012 to equip and staff a Hancock County Hazardous Material Response Team. Ohio EMA contacted the Findlay Fire Department in 2012 and requested the department head up an effort to create a Type III Hazardous Material Response Team for Ohio Region 1. Ohio EMA determined the need for a Type III team in the area due to the interstate and rail systems. The Hancock County Team will supplement the Allen County HazMat Team which is a Type I response team for Region 1.

A steering committee was created by the Hancock County Fire Chiefs under the umbrella of Hancock EMA. Findlay Firefighter Troy Stoner headed up the team which sought members from multiple fire county fire departments. In 2013, \$85,000 dollars was granted to Hancock EMA to purchase a trailer and equipment for the team. The team was comprised of twenty-five firefighters from various county agencies. Both the City of Findlay and Hancock County have agreed in principal to contribute \$2,000.00 per year as needed to replenish expendable supplies used by the team.

Team members received their initial HazMat technician training at University of Findlay's Emergency Response Training Center in Findlay. Training was provided to team members and funded by LEPC dollars. The HazMat team continues to train on a regular basis and is awaiting certification by Ohio EMA as a Type III team. An annual application period for new membership has been established to replace any member who can no longer commit to the team.

TECHNICAL RESCUE TEAM (TRT)

The Technical Rescue Team is a team of seven dedicated members who have sought out training in technical disciplines such as high angle rope rescue, trench rescue, confined space rescue, commercial vehicle rescue, swift water rescue technician and structural collapse. These events are low frequency in nature but are very high risk to responders and victims. The department has adopted to train a select team of individuals versus attempting to train an entire department to level of skill needed to safely respond to the low frequency emergencies.

TACTICAL EMS (TEMS)

The Tactical Emergency Medical System (TEMS) was created at the request of the Findlay Police Department in 2010. TEMS members assist the Findlay PD's Emergency Response Team during high risk police operations. TEMS members have received training at Owens Community College's Center for Disaster Preparedness and train monthly with the ERT unit.

Five FFD members are assigned to the TEMS detail and are outfitted with personal protective equipment, tactical uniforms and equipment and medical supply kits. TEMS members do not carry weapons and are perimeter support team members to the ERT.

FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU

Two 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 and life safety education. The Department's two inspectors work closely with other agencies and with the public in carrying out their assigned duties.



Fire Inspector Matt Pickett assumes the duties of lead Fire Investigator for the Department. In addition Inspector Pickett focuses his efforts on code enforcement and plan reviews. He is also an active member of the Planning Commission and attends regular meetings. Inspector Eric

Habegger primary tasks are building inspections, live fire extinguisher training, life safety education, and code enforcement.

The Fire Prevention Bureau's comprehensive breakdown of significant activities is summarized below:

**Findlay Fire Prevention
2013 Summary of Activities**

Additions & Renovations:	125	Inspections (cont.)	
<i>Code Interpretations</i>	43	<i>fireworks</i>	7
<i>Inspections</i>	34	<i>Institutional</i>	1
<i>Plan Reviews</i>	5	<i>Mercantile</i>	27
<i>System Acceptance Tests</i>	43	<i>Pre-Fire Plan</i>	1
		<i>Residential</i>	80
Construction	110	<i>Adoption / Foster Care</i>	26
<i>Code Interpretations</i>	42	<i>Storage</i>	4
<i>Inspections</i>	14	<i>Utility Mobile Food Vendors</i>	73
<i>Plan Reviews</i>	37	<i>Utility Outbuildings</i>	11
<i>System Acceptance Tests</i>	17	<i>Vacant Structures</i>	19
Fire Investigations	26	Miscellaneous	51
<i>Accidental</i>	18	<i>Meetings Attended</i>	31
<i>Undetermined</i>	5	<i>School / Seminars Attended</i>	20
<i>Incendiary</i>	1		
<i>Natural</i>	0	Prevention	483
<i>Assists</i>	2	<i>Code Interpretations</i>	127
<i>Interviews</i>	110	<i>Complaints</i>	88
		<i>Fireworks Exhibitions</i>	6
		<i>Knox Box Consults/Maint.</i>	57
		<i>Other</i>	52
Inspections	440	<i>Fire Plan Updates</i>	18
<i>Assembly</i>	31	<i>Property Research</i>	57
<i>Business</i>	122	<i>Safety Presentations</i>	78
<i>Education – K-12</i>	19		
<i>Education – Pre-School</i>	16	Re-Inspects	285
<i>Factory</i>	3		
		TOTAL INSPECTIONS	1209

HIGH HAZARD OCCUPANCIES

In an effort to further identify known risks to the community, the department spent a considerable amount of time in 2013 identifying High Hazard Occupancies. NFPA defines high-hazard occupancy as a structure which poses a risk to the community due to a large amount of occupants, a structure of multiple heights, a structures size, complexity and chemical storage. Examples of a high hazard structure would include a school, hospital, nursing home, warehouse and manufacturing facility.

A list of approximately 100 High-Hazard occupancies was compiled in 2013 so that the department could focus its pre-incident planning activities around these structures. Each company officer is charged with completing a pre-incident plan for various High-Hazard occupancies. These plans identify means of egress, locate utilities, list chemicals, identify structural weaknesses and provide contact information of key holders.

This information is key component in fire suppression activities. Once a pre-incident plan is completed the information and site drawing is entered into a database and is easily accessible on a laptop carried in fire apparatus. The list of High-Hazard occupancies can be a key tool in matching fire suppression resources to identified risks to the community.

DOWNTOWN FIRE TASK FORCE

The Downtown Fire Task Force was created in 2012 following a fire which destroyed the historic Argyle building in the 600 block of South Main St. The department collaborated with downtown stakeholders, business organizations and the Findlay/Hancock Chapter of the American Red Cross and elected officials in an effort to reduce the amount and severity of downtown structure fires.

The Task Force has focused its attention in two key areas: fire and life safety education as well as code enforcement and increased inspections. A brief description of accomplishments is as follows:

Fire and Life Safety Education: In addition to his fire suppression assignments, Captain Jerry Greer has engaged the downtown community and collaborated with the Chamber of Commerce and American Red Cross. Captain Greer and the Red Cross hosted several public events in the downtown area and provided information/discussion around disaster planning as well as fire safety. Life fire extinguisher training was also provided to attendees who also received free smoke detectors and fire prevention literature. Additionally, Captain Greer attended and



represented the department at over twenty-seven meetings hosted by associations, groups and organizations.

Increased Building Inspections: Firefighter Jason Wilkins also took on additional job tasks by assisting Fire Inspector Eric Habegger in downtown the rate of downtown building inspections. Firefighter Wilkins completed inspections in twenty-five business in an effort to increase the department's inspection rate in the downtown area. Wilkins was tasked with "triaging" structures for critical code violations such as blocked means of egress, emergency lighting, and working smoke detectors. Wilkins efforts aided the department in inspecting over 170,000 square feet of buildings in the downtown area.

Wilkins was also tasked identifying key structural issues, excessive fire loads and building access. Those items which might hinder firefighter safety and fire operations were relayed to fire suppression forces. For example, a building with an excessive amount of stored materials increasing the fire load and speed of a potential collapse was photographed and noted on that building's pre-incident fire plan.

SPARKY THE FIRE DOG

Jim Mossing owner/operator of 1-800BoardUP of Toledo, Ohio generously donated an interactive Sparky the Fire Dog costume to the Findlay Fire Department. The new department mascot made his debut at the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure held in downtown Findlay. The costume which had been long sought after by the department was a welcome addition and will enhance the department's capability to educate the children of Findlay and Hancock County. Mr. Mossing received a Findlay City Council Resolution commending him for his dedication to life safety and for his generous donation to the Findlay Fire Department.

PROJECT S.A.F.E. – SMOKE ALARMS FOR EVERYONE



Project S.A.F.E. – Smoke Alarms for Everyone was a collaborative effort which was initiated out of the Downtown Fire Task Force. The Findlay City Schools, Hancock County American Red Cross and the fire department collaborated with several private partners to establish an initiative which would provide a free smoke detector to every Findlay City School elementary student. Funding for the project was provided by Wal-Mart, Hancock Federal Credit Union and the Hancock County Community Foundation.

Project S.A.F.E was a tremendous success. Over 2,200 free smoke detectors were given away at a safety presentation put on by the

Fire Department and Hancock County American Red Cross. Each student was given a homework assignment which included installing each smoke detector and returning a form signed by the parent or guardian attesting the detector was installed. Northview Elementary School had the highest installation rate of 70% and was rewarded with a pizza party and visit from Sparky the Fire Dog.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

The department continues to promote positive public relations with the residents of not only Findlay, but Hancock County as well. The department participated in numerous events such as parades, public safety sponsored events, National First Night Out at Riverside Park, the Flag City Balloon Fest, and other various public gatherings.

Additionally in 2013, IAFF Local 381 continued the long standing tradition of handing out teddy bears to children who unfortunately had to spend Christmas Eve in the Blanchard Valley Hospital. The Local 381 also collaborated with Wal-Mart and hosted a Shop-with-a-Firefighter. Ten children selected from Hope House and Job and Family services. Each child was paired up with a firefighter and was given the opportunity to purchase gifts for their families. Money for this event was provided by Wal-Mart.

Annually, Local 381 also provides the Retiree's Dinner which was well attended by former members of the department. They also participated in the Muscular Dystrophy Association's Annual Fill-the-Boot campaign and last year they also participated in the Cancer Patient Services Chili Cook-Off and was awarded the "Best Booth" and second place overall for their chili recipe.

INCIDENT PROFILE

Call volume amounted to 1959 calls in 2013, a decrease of 84 calls from 2012. The amount of total fire loss experienced in the City of Findlay in 2013, totaled \$984,691.00. The estimated value of properties that experienced fires in 2013 totaled \$87,756,128.00 for a property save value totaling \$86,771,447.00 or 98.88%.

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: 625
- Station 2: 492
- Station 3: 370
- Station 4: 472

The largest fire responded to was located 2928 N. Main Street on November 25, 2013. The Hillcrest Apartments experienced a fire and caused over \$200,000 in damage. On July 10, 2013 a late afternoon severe thunderstorm caused damage to several structures, downed multiple power lines which generated twenty-five 911 calls the department responded to. On December 22, 2013 another major flood inundated the City of Findlay. Department personnel were called to rescue stranded motorists on multiple occasions.

The following information details the general categories of emergency calls and their percentages in relation to the total number of calls handled in 2013.

Number of Calls	Type of Calls	Percentage
49	Structure Fires	2.50
10	Vehicle Fires	0.51
29	Miscellaneous Fires	1.48
178	False Alarms	9.09
1328	Rescue / EMS Calls	67.89
122	Hazardous Condition (Spills, leaks, explosions, electrical)	6.28
240	Good Intent Calls	12.25
1959	TOTALS	100%

EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS

The Fire Department continues to foster quality relationships with other strategic agencies within the city, Hancock County and State of Ohio. Examples of our external relationships include but are not limited to:

- Hancock County Fire Chiefs
- Findlay/Hancock County Red Cross
- Hancock County EMA Advisory Board
- Hancock County LEPC
- City of Findlay EMS Committee
- Ohio Fire Chiefs Association
- State of Ohio – Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee – Midsize City Representative
- Region 1 Communications Committee – Vice Chair

The department continues to work with other Hancock County Fire Departments in an attempt to share and reduce costs. In 2013, Allen Township Volunteer Fire Department and the Findlay Fire Department coordinated efforts to conduct our annual pump tests at the same time. By coordinating one site to conduct the test, the third party vendor reduced the cost to each agency.

EMS COMMITTEE

Hanco EMS completed the first year of being the primary EMS provider for the City of Findlay. The department has taken an active role of participating on the EMS committee which is comprised of Findlay Police, Findlay Police Dispatchers, Hanco EMS, Blanchard Valley Health Systems and the Findlay Fire Department. Regular meeting are conducted to identify deficiencies in the EMS system and to recommend and implement changes to enhance the overall quality of patient care.

Establishment of direct communications between FFD and Hanco, collaborative training sessions, command personnel interaction/crew familiarity, a new firefighter Rehab policy are some examples of improvements made in 2013.

The department and Hanco EMS also continue to share facilities during natural disasters such as flooding. In December, the department provided two additional stations to house EMS crews. This reduces response times and increases patient care during disasters.

OUTLOOK

The department will continue to focus on identifying threats and risks to the community and relaying this information to the Administration. Medium-Hazard structures will be identified in an effort to ensure the department's capability to respond to emergencies is adequate. The department will seek funding to install a VFH radio system, replace apparatus by station heating systems at Fire Station 1 and 2, and seek grant funding to replace the department's self-contained breathing apparatus.

The department is also reviewing its key processes and identifying improvement measures which is a direct result of the City of Findlay's strategic planning process. Run response times will be evaluated on a monthly basis as well to ensure the department continues to meet nationally accepted response time standards.

Two retirements are expected in 2014 in the rank of Captain. A promotional examination will be requested to replace these two members of the department.