



South Bend Fire Department Annual Report for 2014

1. **Opening of the Luther J. Taylor Sr. Fire Training Center.**

Assisted contractors and developers with final construction of the facility during the first half of 2014. Facility opened on July 1, 2014. This facility has allowed the SBFD to implement a training program developed with requirements of ISO and the Fire Commission on Accreditation in mind. Since opening the facility, tens of thousands of training hours have been logged by members of the SBFD. Prior to opening the facility, this department has never had access to this level of training. The facility has also opened the door to public education opportunities such as hosting CPR training and fire prevention week open house. A dual credit co-op program for high school students is in the development stages with the hope of starting the program this fall. The facility was also used to host the Candidate Physical Agility Test for the SBFD hiring process in 2014. The most recent recruit class started in the facility on February 9th of this year and is being conducted with recruits from LaPorte Fire under contract with the City of LaPorte. Further collaboration is expected with other fire departments for future recruit training.

2. **PSAP Consolidation.**

Work has progressed through 2014 with groundbreaking of the new St. Joseph County PSAP. Anticipated move in will take place later in 2015 with improved services expected for 911 and public safety call taking and dispatching.

3. **Fleet management.**

The additions of two new pumper trucks and a new aerial ladder truck have allowed the department the ability to get rid of a 1985 aerial ladder truck and 2, 20 year old pumpers. The new additions add technological advances in safety equipment for the firefighters and added reliability along with updated pumping capabilities. The EMS division also sent out an ambulance to be refurbished. This allows the department to purchase a new chassis for the ambulance but reusing the patient compartment. This process saves on cost while upgrading the ambulance and once delivered, the ambulance is like new. The new aerial ladder truck was a demo unit with minimal miles that allowed the department to save approximately \$200,000 versus the projected cost of a new custom aerial.

4. **Public outreach and education.**

The SBFD Strategic Plan pointed to more dynamic outreach in the community. The plan also suggested creating the position of a full time public education officer. This was created in 2014 and Captain Gerard Ellis has taken this role and completed a tremendous amount of outreach. He initiated a program to install 500 smoke alarm and carbon monoxide detectors in private residences which was completed in the second half of the year. He also has expanded fire prevention activities in the apartment complexes in South Bend with a decrease in damage from fire incidents in those occupancies as these programs have been implemented. Captain Ellis has also increased the SBFD exposure in the local media by creating a plan to improve our relationships with the media outlets and working on PSA's to enhance our prevention activities.

5. **2014 hiring and recruitment activities.**

In 2014, the SBFD conducted recruitment activities that included faith based outreach, outreach in various ethnic communities in South Bend and recruitment at military installations to improve veteran recruitment. The new hiring list for the SBFD includes female and minority recruits and applicants from veterans of each of the armed forces. However, with the importance of recruitment for the department, a Recruitment Committee was created in 2014 to improve the department's outreach activities in its search for good, qualified applicants. This committee's

goals are multi-dimensional. First, there is a need in the improving economy to actively recruit the best applicants in the job market. As jobs become more abundant, this will become more difficult for public safety agencies. Additionally, the SBFD has had difficulty in attracting minority and female applicants to the workforce. Since 2012 (when Mayor Pete was sworn into office), 30% or 7 of 23 new hires have been either female or minority, however, this administration is not satisfied. New and more aggressive outreach is being planned and implemented by our recruitment committee in order to increase the percentage of these demographic groups in hiring in order to better reflect the face of the community that we serve. In spite of the fact that more than 10% of the department are veterans of the armed forces, we intend on improving the recruitment of these applicants as this group deserves better access to good paying jobs. Recruitment is a top priority of the SBFD administration.

6. Wellness/Fitness initiative.

Progress has been made on this program. The department now has a work out facility at the Training Center that is available for all departmental personnel to work out, on or off duty. There are personnel scheduled to receive peer fitness trainer certification training in March of 2015, in anticipation of the Work Performance Evaluation process. This process was slowed by the fact that the PFT program was overhauled and will be new in 2015. We held off on scheduling the training until our personnel were assured of receiving the new curriculum. This program will increase the availability of fitness instruction for members of the department in order to improve the collective level of fitness for the SBFD. Other departments that have implemented these programs have realized decreased on-duty injuries, less sick time usage, and fewer worker's comp claims. It also gives the department access to a skills-based competency course for sworn members of the department. The program builds on fitness and health instruction that new recruit firefighters receive in recruit training.

7. Special Operations.

Members of the SBFD instructed multiple river rescue training courses that attracted students from throughout the Midwest. The SBFD hosted the first International Association of Water Rescue Professionals Conference in 2014. There were 80+ attendees from the U.S., Canada, and Australia. There are plans to host the second annual conference in 2015 with an increased attendance. The SBFD HazMat team hosted the Hazardous Materials Technician Course which included 7 members of the SBFD and an additional 9 students from area departments. The HazMat team took part in multiple drills in 2014 to include a full-scale exercise at the South Bend Post Office that included responders from many agencies.

8. EMS.

The EMS Division implemented a new electronic patient care report that allows crews to spend less time completing reporting requirements by improving the ease of use of the report. This is incredibly important as this allows crews to get back in service more quickly so they are available for emergency calls. The department has continued its relationship with Memorial Hospital's car seat program by increasing the amount of car seat technicians trained and assisting with car seat installations at the fire department. The SBFD hosted two TRIAD pill drops and a flu shot clinic during 2014 as well.

9. The SBFD responded to more than 20,000 emergency calls for service in 2014. Each of these calls represents a citizen's need for mitigation of their emergency. This falls in the "basics are easy" category. We respond professionally, compassionately, and without hesitation so members of this community don't have to worry about whether they will be taken care of in their moment of need.