

# South Bend Fire Department

## Memorandum

April 22, 2014

TO: South Bend Common Council

FROM: Fire Chief Stephen Cox

SUBJECT: 2013 Annual Report

1. Fire Station 5 was torn down and rebuilt. The same piece of property was used after analysis of fire and EMS run volume in Engine 5's response district showed that that location was best suited relative to other available property. The building itself was constructed with firefighter safety and wellness in mind, adding a much improved ventilation system to eliminate potentially harmful fumes and a fitness/workout room which allows firefighters to exercise while on duty.
2. Construction of the new Luther J. Taylor, Sr. Fire Training Center began in 2013 and will be completed in the Spring of 2014. This facility will give the Sbfd a resource to provide top level training to its staff. Along with the creation of a strict training regimen for all department personnel, this will create a paradigm shift in the culture of the Fire Department. With an emphasis on readiness for all-hazards responses within the City, this addition to the department's arsenal creates a venue for personnel to train and evaluate our programs for continuous improvement.
3. The first phase of the Sbfd Wellness/Fitness program was completed in 2013, with the completion of physical exams for all Sbfd personnel by Public Safety Medical in respect to NFPA 1582 (Standard on Comprehensive Occupational Medical Program for Fire Departments). The second phase, to be completed in 2014, will encompass creation and validation of Work Performance Evaluations for all Sbfd personnel at the new Training Center. Again, the Training Center will be the hub for this program which will not only emphasize wellness, but relies heavily on the fitness component to ensure personnel are healthy and capable of functioning in the difficult and challenging conditions often encountered in the Fire Service.
4. With the purchase of 2 new pumpers, 1 used pumper, and 1 used Aerial platform (ladder truck), the Sbfd was able to address aging fleet needs. An additional ladder truck was purchased to replace a 1986 ladder truck this spring. Considerable savings were realized by purchasing a demo unit. The department had not replaced any of its fire apparatus since 2003. This was creating a large burden on the repair and maintenance budget and led to personnel using less reliable equipment. The department is working closely with Equipment Services and the Controller to continue to find best cost-effective ways in which to upgrade the fleet, and begin to utilize a regular vehicle replacement schedule which assists the department in finding a balance between reliability and affordability.
5. The Indiana River Rescue School, which is staffed and run by the Sbfd, continued to provide training to response personnel from throughout the nation. The school held 5 classes in 2013, including one dedicated to personnel from the Fire Department of New York. This school is self-funded by charging course tuition fees to students in attendance. Work has continued to improve relationships with vendors to increase the School's exposure and benefit from performing research and development for new products in the water rescue arena. Work is also being done to bring an annual, national swift-water rescue conference to South Bend.
6. All personnel achieved national certification as Certified Ambulance Coders in the Sbfd EMS Billing Office. This national certification keeps our billing professionals current with trends and compliance issues related to accurate and timely filing for ambulance reimbursement. These

efforts, along with new leadership in the Billing Office, have directly led to efficiencies and updates to methods and procedures which increased the department's EMS reimbursements to over \$3M in 2013.

7. Completed Recruit Academy of 8 individuals, including 2 new female firefighters.

8. Responded to over 20,000 calls for service including the plane crash and confined space rescue from which Sbfd personnel rescued live victims. Also included, were other special operations responses such as swiftwater, hazmat, and technical rescue responses that involved less dramatic, but successful rescues of victims.

9. The Fire Prevention Bureau continued to provide outreach in the community in the form of 1,673 building inspections, 421 hours of training with local organizations performing safety drills, 2,500 individuals were led through station tours, mostly children, and over 200 smoke and carbon monoxide detectors were installed in homes for citizens in need. The goal, as always, is to prevent any injury or death from fire or other disaster.

10. The Sbfd Training Bureau placed a focus on job performance evaluation and implemented training regimens that are required for international accreditation. State certification classes were conducted for Aerial Operators and Fire Instructor, along with a Fire Investigator class that was funded through District 2. Chief Officer and Company Officer development classes were also conducted to promote leadership within the ranks of the department.

11. The Sbfd participated in the development of the Operations Board for the new consolidated PSAP project. This project, upon completion should be a tremendous upgrade for dispatching for the Sbfd and the Fire Service in St. Joseph County as a whole, and allow for flexibility in the service model provided by the department regarding both EMS and fire responses.

12. The Sbfd EMS Division provided recertification training for all personnel in need. This included CPR, Advanced Cardiac Life Support, and Pediatric Education for Prehospital Professionals certification classes. The department also had to bring all personnel affected by changes in state EMS certification classifications into compliance with new rules. This affected approximately 1/3 of the department and included an opportunity to provide an internal bridge class for Intermediate EMT's to increase their level of certification to paramedic. This was a one-time offering by the state and the Sbfd had 15 individuals take advantage. The EMS Division also hosts monthly EMS training for all department personnel to keep current on EMS issues and skills.

13. The contract to provide drivers for the Memorial Hospital Children's Hospital Pediatric Transport Team was renewed through 2017. This is an important partnership which allows us to provide a tremendous service for very sick children in our community and throughout Northern Indiana.

14. Sbfd personnel continue to provide EMS coverage for most Notre Dame sporting events including football, basketball, hockey, and soccer. Along with special event coverage, all campus 911 EMS calls for service are covered by Sbfd. These services are provided by the Sbfd under contract with the University.

15. The St. Joseph County mutual aid agreement (MABAS) was implemented in 2013 with an emphasis on readiness for larger scale and special operations responses with area agencies.