

PLAINFIELD FIRE DEPARTMENT



2010 ANNUAL REPORT

OUR MISSION:

"TO PROVIDE THOSE SERVICES, EITHER PROACTIVE OR EMERGENCY, NECESSARY TO PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR THE RESIDENTS AND VISITORS TO PLAINFIELD CHARTER TOWNSHIP."

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY-Chief David Peterson

When I started with Plainfield Township in 1993, one of the things that impressed me was the condition of the equipment and apparatus. I have always felt that a person can learn a lot about a fire department by the way that its apparatus and equipment are maintained and replaced. It indicates to me that the personnel are proud of their department and work to show that pride and that the administration has worked to support the department with tools that will allow firefighters to perform their duties in a safe and professional manner. The department had a Capital Plan for the replacement of apparatus that was developed by the previous chief. At a Township Board meeting that year, I asked how that plan was funded. I was told by one of the Board members, "Chief, you're new here so you may not realize that the Board has **always** supported the fire department's needs; you don't have to worry about replacing equipment." That was in the 1990's; the view of the future showed growth and expansion for many communities and Plainfield Township was one of those. Well, things have obviously changed in the 2000's. Home prices are falling, jobs are leaving and the jobs that are left are not paying as well as they once were, State revenue sharing has decreased significantly and other governmental units are cutting back in their services or charging for them. Municipalities have, in some cases, severely cut services or asked for tax increases to continue providing what had been the previous norm.

The Plainfield Fire Department was not immune from these actions; we eliminated two positions to keep the budget balanced, we have postponed purchasing equipment in an effort to balance a shrinking budget. As is mentioned in the Administration section, we were fortunate enough in the past two years to get Federal grants that allowed us to avoid two capital expenditures, replacing old and badly worn rescue equipment and Self Contained Breathing Apparatus. We were operating with loner rescue tools and several of our SCBA had been removed from service for safety reasons. We were also successful in our request to fund the two positions that were vacated for the next two years. These grants are very welcome band aids that helped forgo more painful decisions for a time. We once planned on replacing apparatus on a 16 year schedule; that has now been extended to 20 years. Rather than replace the aerial at 20 years, I am soliciting bids to have it refurbished with the intention of it lasting another 10 years. I have been asked to consider other ways to cut our spending and will be looking for any option that won't place the residents or firefighters at unreasonable risk.

From a programmatic point of view we have strove to provide the same services we have in the past. This is true with the exception of some minor, non-emergency tasks such as blocking traffic for events. We are using our resources in the best way possible to avoid eliminating the programs that protect our residents, businesses and visitors. In some cases, the fire departments have eliminated or greatly reduced the efforts put into training or fire safety programs. I think this is short sighted as it may make the firefighters less prepared to perform their duties, create MIOSHA rule compliance issues and make fires more likely due to safety issues that are not addressed. Cutting training and inspections are absolute last resort measures.

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Training

PFD has a reputation as a progressive department relative to training. We were fortunate to be able to save a portion of the old Ward's Auto building to use as a training center. Department members have worked steadily to add props and challenges to the center to give our firefighters as realistic an experience as possible. It is important to require and provide training for our personnel to maintain their proficiency performing fire and rescue activities.

One major addition in 2010 was the inclusion of a physical ability test to our regular training schedule. The test is identical to the one given to new applicants. It consists of six stations intended to test cardio vascular capacity and upper body strength. The intention of giving this test to existing personnel is to encourage everyone to maintain themselves physically fit. This benefits the Township, fewer insurance claims & employees who are better able to do their job; and the employee, less potential for injury & better quality of life. The program has shown positive results. One employee who was unable to complete the test started going to the fitness club; as a result he lost 39 pounds and now can complete the course in a very acceptable time.

There were twenty five training subjects scheduled for the 2010 calendar year. Eleven of those trainings were fire related; twelve trainings were medical related and two trainings were a combination of fire and medical. Trying to

minimize the amount of overtime paid for the annual training of our fire personnel, most subjects were offered three times a month, once on each shift. There were a total of 49 training sessions that were available. In addition to those 49 trainings, once a month each shift performs a shift training which is open to everyone but is

focused on the concerns of each shift. In 2010, each firefighter participated in approximately 50 hours of training adding up to a total of 3,340 hours for the department.



On August 19, the fire department was involved in a large training exercise located at Northview High School. Over 300 bus drivers from around the region were in attendance. This training simulated a bus/passenger vehicle accident involving a large number of patients classifying the accident as a mass causality incident (MCI). Multiple agencies from fire departments to ALS agencies were involved. The purpose of this exercise was to provide training to the emergency responder agency on large incidents and also train the area bus drivers on their responsibilities at a bus accident. As the responders worked, Chief Peterson narrated what was being done and why, as well as answering questions. He explained what the bus drivers and school representatives could do to make an actual incident response more successful. Fire extinguisher training was also delivered at this exercise for the bus drivers. The fire extinguisher training props that were purchased with the FEMA Grant were used to teach the drivers

the proper techniques for using an extinguisher. When the extinguisher training was completed, a fire



was started in several of the bus seats to demonstrate how quickly a fire can make the interior of the bus uninhabitable. Training sessions that allow us to work with multiple agencies in realistic scenarios are very valuable. In this case, we were able to have the training recorded by multiple video cameras as well as having an evaluator review our actions and submit a report. The resulting report and video will allow us to review our actions, illustrating positive examples as well as areas of necessary improvement.

The fire department sponsored a fire academy again this year after taking one year off due to the changes made at the state level involving curriculum. The fire academy began the first week of October with 28 students registered, 4 of whom are PFD Apprentices. These students are sponsored by fire departments throughout Kent County. As of the holiday break for Christmas, there were 25 students still involved with the fire academy. All students are meeting or exceeding the standards set forth by the State of Michigan regarding fire fighting. There are 31 instructor/assistants involved with the delivery of the subject matter for the fire academy; for a total of 326 instructional hours at the end of 2010.

Fire Safety Bureau

In 2010 there were 1908 fire inspections performed, with 1486 violations cited; 1354 of the violations have been corrected. The outstanding violations are in the process of being corrected.

As part of our efforts to be more efficient, the Fire Safety Bureau has requested that key boxes be installed on the exterior of buildings. These key boxes (more accurately described as safes due to their construction) allow the fire department easy access to commercial structures. 178 key boxes are currently installed on structures allowing quick response to the interior of a building increasing the probability of reducing property loss or being able to address an emergency medical situation without delay.

A major project undertaken by the Fire Safety Bureau this year was the identification and correction of fire separation walls; particularly in multifamily residential structures. Several buildings throughout the township had compromised fire separation walls located in attic space; in one instance, the fire separation walls were completely missing. These walls were required when the building was built. They are intended to minimize the spread of fire and smoke allowing the fire department to deal with fires that are somewhat contained to an area of less than 3000 sq. ft. Typically, the walls are damaged by utility or HVAC repair technicians who must access the attic space. Rather than go down out of one attic space and back up into another they cut access holes that allow them to get from one space to another directly. Unfortunately, this compromises the intent of keeping the fire contained to a more manageable area resulting in faster fire spread and larger fire losses. The correction of these separation

walls have been made and provide a safer building for their occupants and during fire suppression activities.

The Fire Safety Specialist continues to locate and placard vacant structures to indicate if the buildings are being maintained and safe for fire and rescue operations. The fire code allows the fire department to placard vacant buildings providing firefighters with valuable information in the event of a fire. The placarding of vacant buildings is directly beneficial to the safety of firefighters.

In 2010, more than 13,000 gallons of hazardous chemicals were identified. The business owners were ordered to provide containment as required by the fire code or remove the chemicals from the site.

A program to do nighttime and weekend inspections was initiated this year. The intent of the program is to allow us to observe these occupancies when they are at their maximum capacities rather than during the day when there are fewer customers. These visits were performed at all assembly occupancies in the township. Several concerns were found during these inspections; overcrowding, blocked exits, blocked fire lanes, etc. These concerns were addressed and corrected at the time of the inspection.

The MIOSHA Firefighter Right to Know Chemical Survey was mailed out to all the businesses in the township. The business owner is required to fill out the survey and return it to the fire department. At the end of the year, 92% of the business had filled out and returned the chemical survey to the fire department. The remaining businesses are receiving personal visits by the Fire Safety Specialist who will assist in the completion of the chemical survey so that our goal of 100% compliance with this MIOSHA regulation is obtained.



APPARATUS AND BUILDING MAINTENANCE – Lieutenant Jeff Drake

2010 did not bring any new or replacement apparatus or staff vehicle purchases for PFD; thus, the current vehicle inventory remains at five staff vehicles, eight front line apparatus and two reserve apparatus.

Apparatus Pump testing was completed in April using a vendor who tests the pumps, as required by NFPA, on site. Having the vendor perform this function at our facility certainly made the logistical side of this operation much easier and did not change the economics. Included in the testing process was a pump and components mechanical inspection and fluids change prior to testing. Detailed records were provided and testing was completed in the time and cost estimate as promised. Critical equipment testing was also completed, including annual hose testing in April and Non-Destructive Testing of all ladders in June. Normal failure results of hose testing resulted in a \$ 2,500 purchase of attack hose while our large diameter supply hose (LDH) hose was replaced with existing stock hose.

Apparatus maintenance issues with large price tags included:

- P-3: Transmission, radiator, and fuel injector replacement with tune-up
- R-1: Repair of steering control arm and replacement of damaged belly trays
- E-4: Steering gear box replacement

In 2010, a number of items were corrected in the buildings of PFD.

Station #1

- Repaired boiler due to issues regarding gas pressure, combustion sensors, and burner element

Station #3

- Caulked the EIFS (Exterior Insulation Finishing System) seams and repaired roof panel seals
- Installed “ice stars” on the roof to stop chunks of ice from falling to the man service doors below. This measure was chosen versus “electric heat tape” partially due to an erroneous contractor bid to install the heat tape, the bid was ¼ of the actual cost, as planned. Lack of snow in early winter 2010, has not provided an opportunity for good test results.
- Repaired the make-up air handler gas valve in the apparatus bay
- Installed ceiling fans in the admin level in an effort to move heat from the ceiling to the occupant area in the winter
- Repaired and painted all service man doors and the South Hallway wall

Training Center

- Installed a 50 amp 240 volt outlet
- Purchased a remote control operator for the overhead door
- Installed ceiling fans to move heat from the ceiling of the apparatus bays in an effort to lower heating costs
- Painted hand rails



EQUIPMENT & SUPPLIES – Lieutenant Pat DuVall

Equipment

Major equipment purchases for 2010 included 40 new self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) and new hydraulic rescue tools. Both were purchased with Assistance to Firefighters Grants from FEMA.



After a rigorous evaluation process, the SCBA committee recommended the purchase of the Sperian Warrior SCBA from Douglas Safety Systems as replacements for our aging inventory. Sperian offers a good warranty and they allowed us to send four personnel to a repair technician's class at no charge. The evaluation process allowed everyone involved to have an equal voice in selecting the best air packs for fit and function. The committee came to its final decision based upon the Warrior's excellent design and list of impressive features. We didn't take possession of the new SCBA until May 2010 because we were waiting for the manufacturer to update a new shoulder gauge design.

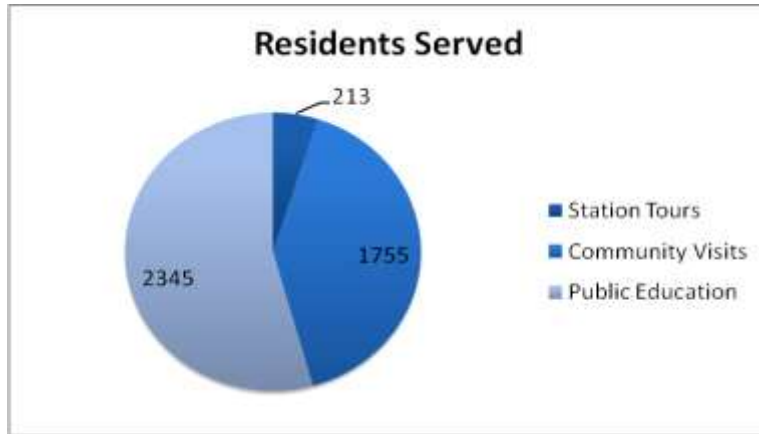
A committee consisting of the department's lieutenants was established to evaluate and select new hydraulic rescue equipment. The nearly 20 year old equipment that we replaced was located on our heavy rescue truck. Both sets of Jaws of Life were out of service due to worn parts requiring our borrowing a set from a vendor. This type of equipment is used to dismantle a vehicle from around a victim involved in a crash. We met with four representatives of the leading manufacturers of rescue equipment and evaluated their equipment by actually using it to cut apart vehicles. Most of these vehicles were donated by East Beltline Towing. New hydraulic tools from Genesis Rescue Systems were selected because they performed well above expectations and were competitively priced so they fit into our grant budget. Our new cutters provide 236,000 lbs of cutting force, over four times that of the old models and the new Jaws of Life provide 74,000 lbs of spreading force, over twice that of the units they replaced. This is important as the car manufacturers are using metals that are much stronger and have a higher tensile strength. We were able to replace the worn and damaged equipment so we could extricate victims from 2 vehicles at the same time.



Station Supplies

We have saved a considerable amount of money by purchasing station supplies at Sam's Club. These supplies include items such as paper towel, Windex, toilet paper, floor cleaner, bathroom cleaner, etc. Since we purchase the items at the store, there is no charge for delivery and we save by purchasing in bulk.

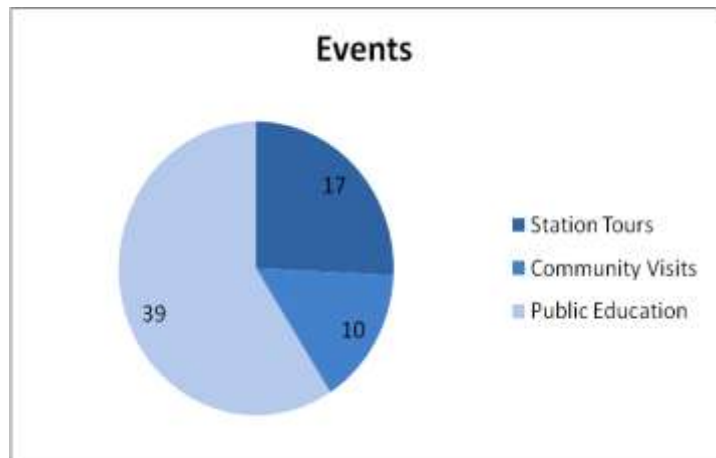
PUBLIC EDUCATION AND FIRE PREVENTION – Lieutenant Don Harkes



PFD serves Plainfield Township in various capacities; one of the more significant efforts is our provision of Public Education. Sometimes this is done through station tours to families, school or church groups or other groups such as the Boy Scouts. Another way that we perform this service is by making visits to schools and neighborhoods; taking part in parades, block parties and other special events that allow us to interact with the public. The

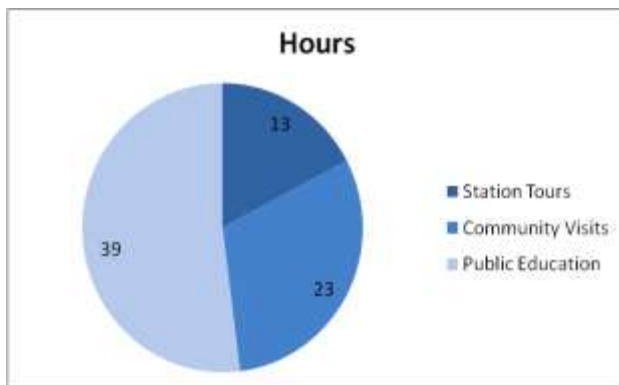
department also provides CPR, fire extinguisher, and fire prevention training to schools and businesses.

We were pleased to be able to deliver CPR classes to staff at Northview Public Schools this past year. We held CPR classes for their Bus Drivers, Food Service Workers, & Pre-school staff. In addition to serving our community, the CPR classes are a way for the department to bring in revenue. This revenue helps offset the cost of running the Training Center as does the rental fees collected for outside use of the Training Center facility. Nonprofit groups are trained for free, businesses are charged at a rate that allows us to recoup our expenses and is consistent with the rates charged by other training sources.



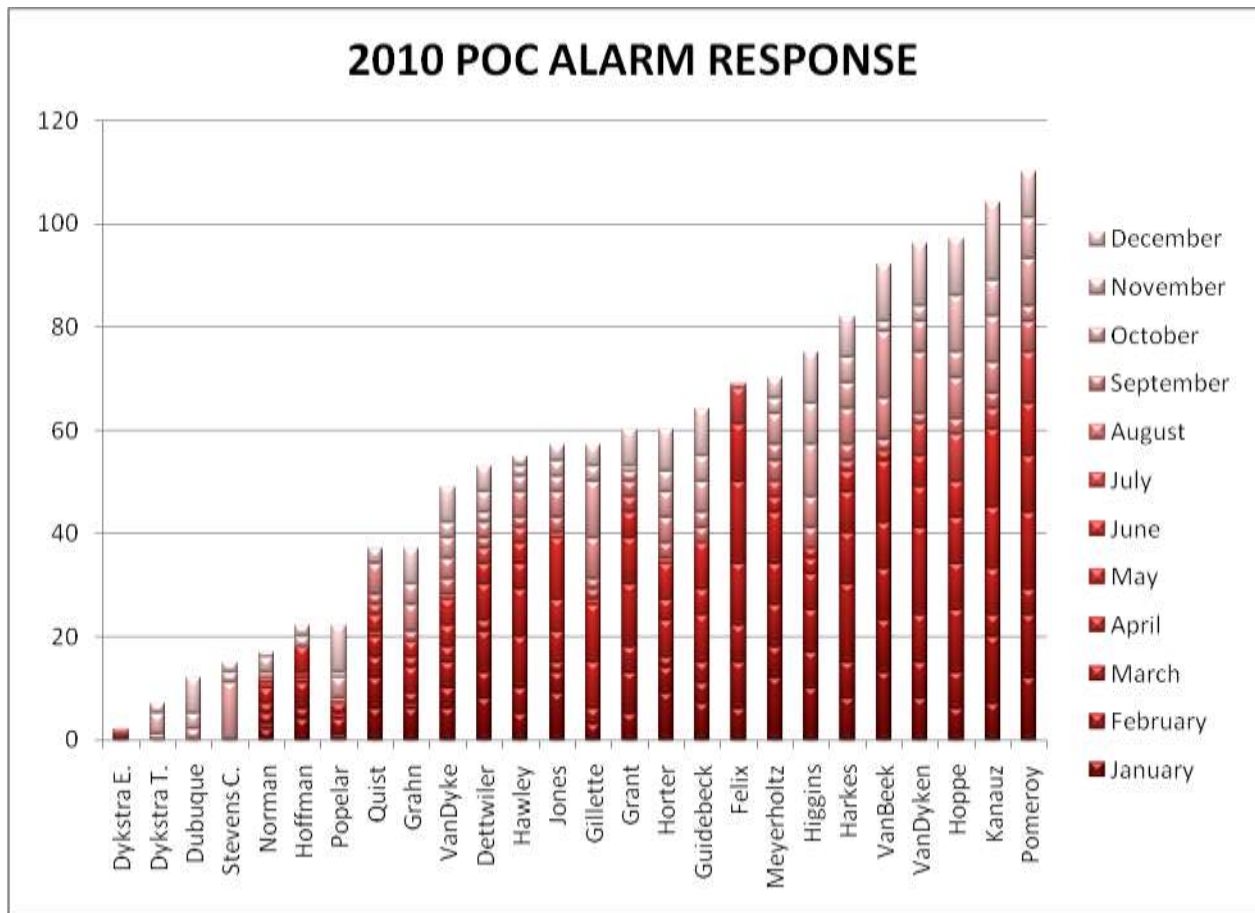
PFD firefighters continue to work with the schools in the township, through the Adopt-a-School

program. Each of the full time Equipment Operators is assigned a school where they are responsible for presenting fire safety lessons. Through this program, we are able to visit the class rooms and talk with elementary students about fire safety. Information is sent home with the students about the importance of Home Escape Plans and changing the batteries in their smoke detectors.



PAID ON CALL ACTIVITIES – Lieutenant Dan Kanauz

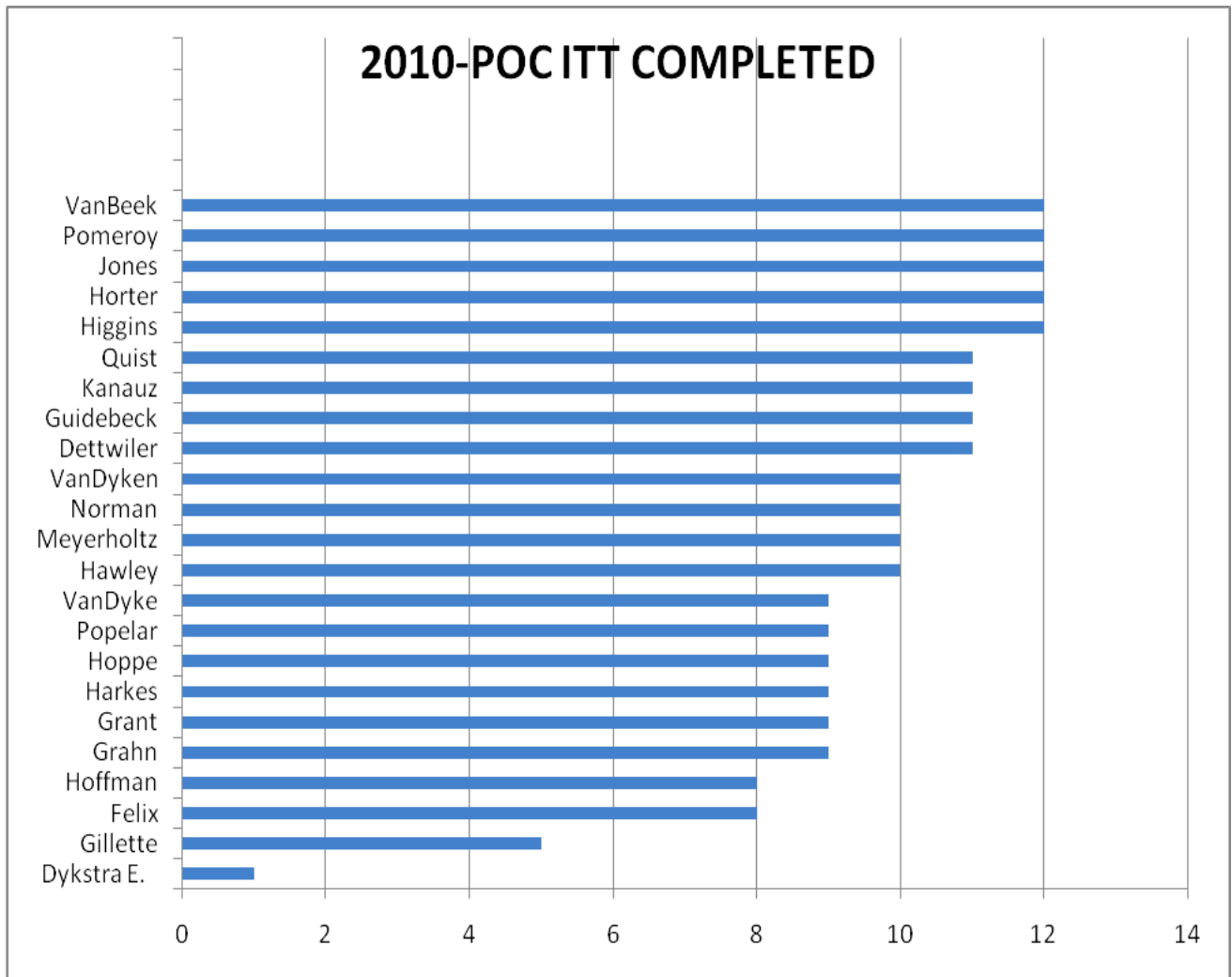
During 2010, I supervised both Stations 1 and 3 until September when Steve Guidebeck was promoted. During this time, a new set of standards for response to overall alarms was established, whereby POC staff is required to respond to an overall minimum of 25% of alarms for the year. In addition, POC staff were required to attend a minimum of nine Individual Training Time's (ITT)(4 hours per month at the station completing specific paperwork and duties including one hour of: videos, DVD's, and apparatus drive time- during the calendar year.) Each month a review of this data was conducted to assure compliance, or mentoring when it was not.



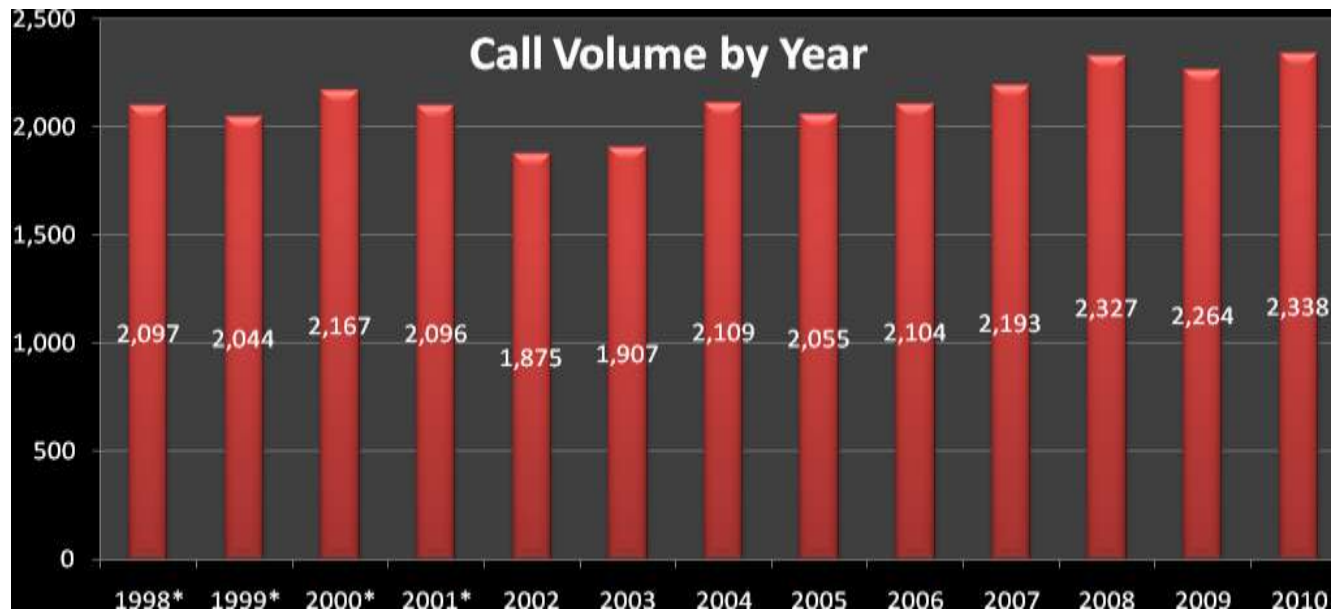
In addition to monthly department trainings, additional specific topic trainings were conducted for POC staff who had five years or less on the department, from either station. These specific trainings included: Platform 3 review, Rescue 1 review, Search and Rescue, Laddering and self rescue. Several of these trainings were a mentoring/educational opportunity for POC personnel, taught by those who had experience with these apparatus. Early last spring, POC staff assisted in the testing and evaluating of several types of self contained breathing apparatus equipment.

Last summer, numerous applicants were interviewed for the position of Apprentice. Three were selected and enrolled in the Fire Fighter Academy provided by this department. In addition, one Cadet (a Northview High School Sophomore) was accepted to observe and learn about the Plainfield Fire Department to help determine if he would like to become a fire fighter.

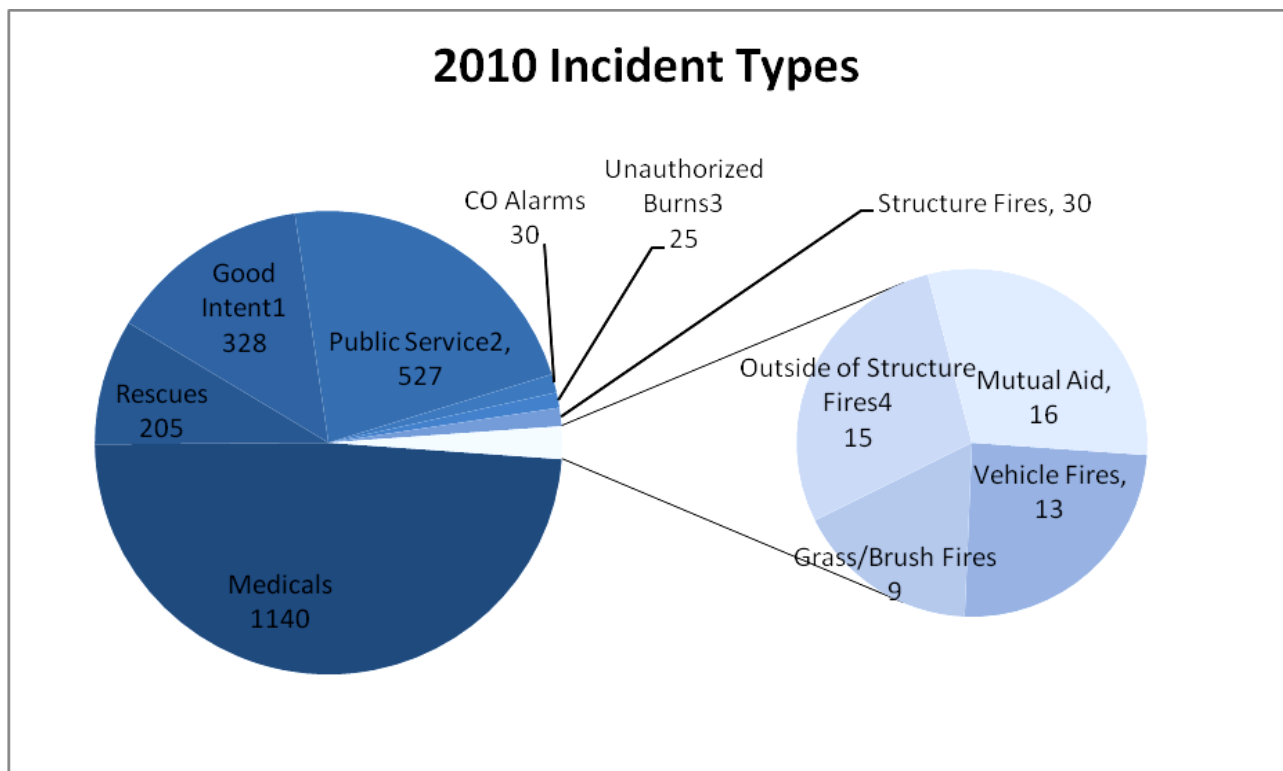
Since the promotion of Lt. Guidebeck in September, I have been mentoring and educating him regarding his role as a POC Lieutenant at Station 1. Some of these areas include: completing monthly payroll, coaching for improved work performance, reviewing monthly data, leadership skills, mentoring staff, procedures and policies, and communication with Chief Peterson and AC McKellar.



EMERGENCY RESPONSE



*Indicates year of Plainfield/Rockford Department Consolidation

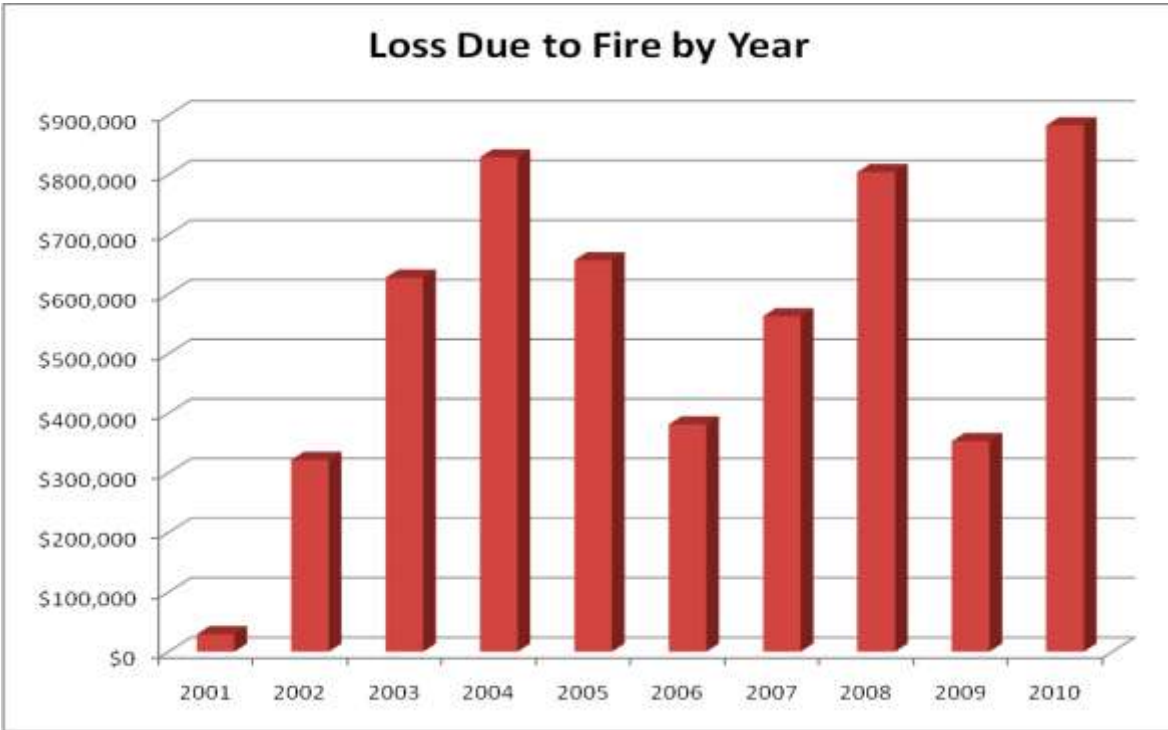
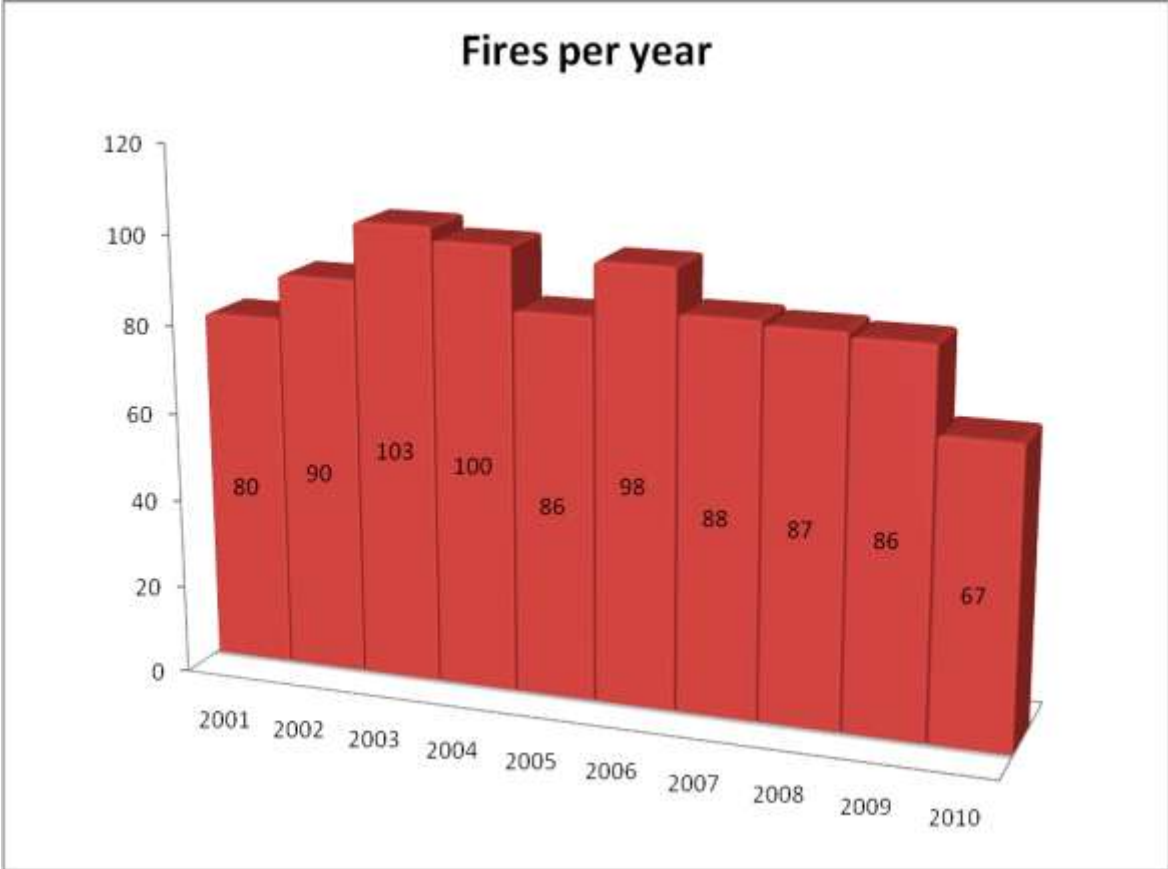


¹Includes Smoke Scares, and False Alarms

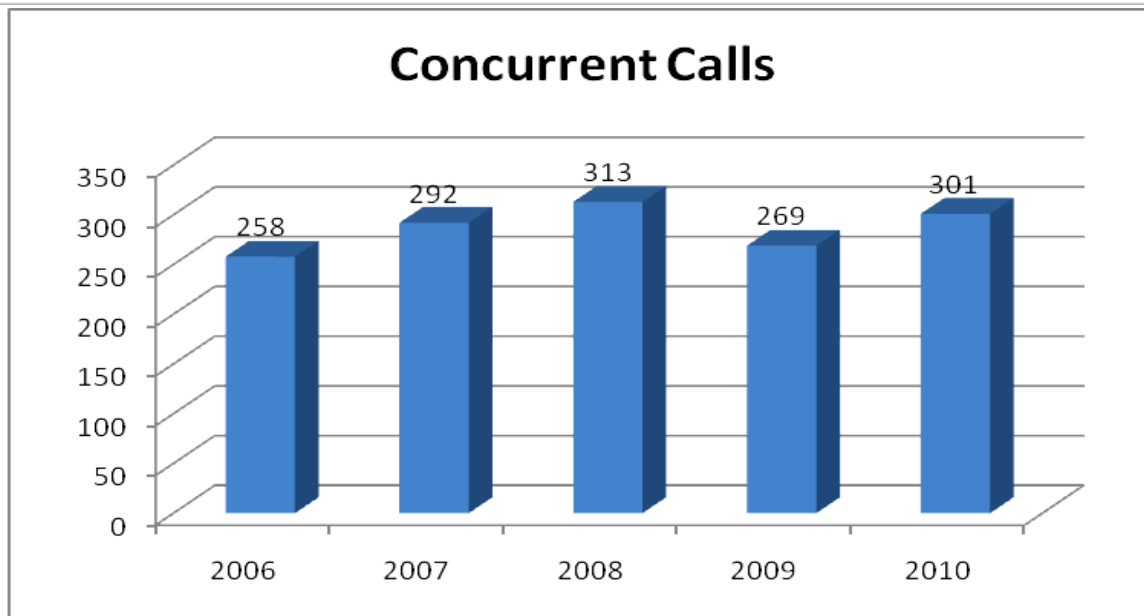
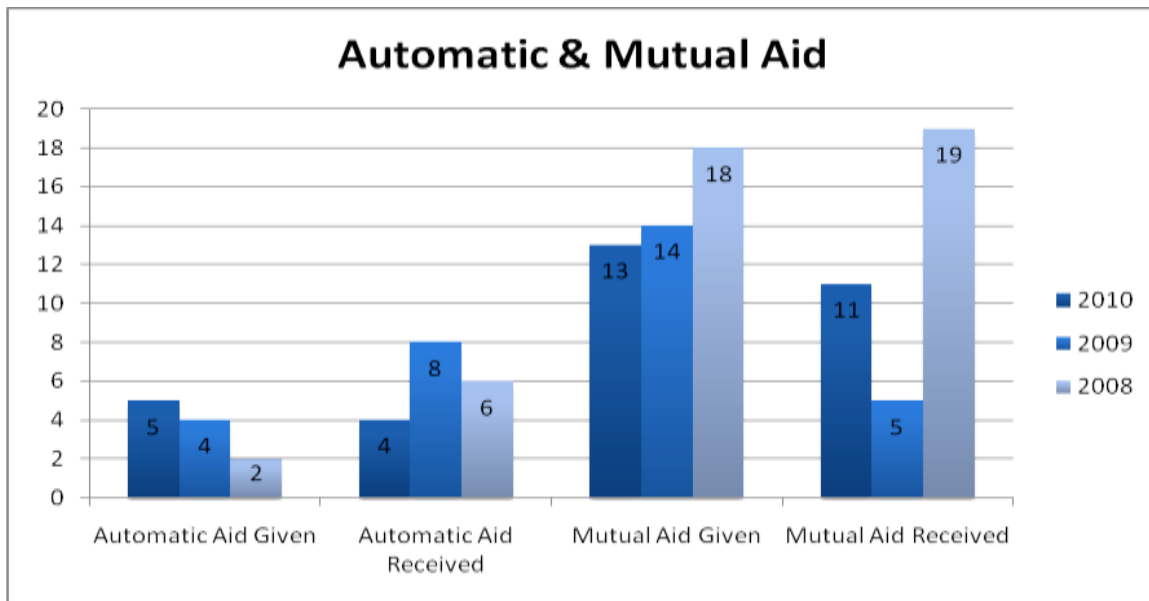
²Includes Hazardous Condition, Assists to Citizens, Police, & Ambulances

³Includes Controlled Burns

⁴Includes Refuse/Dumpster Fires



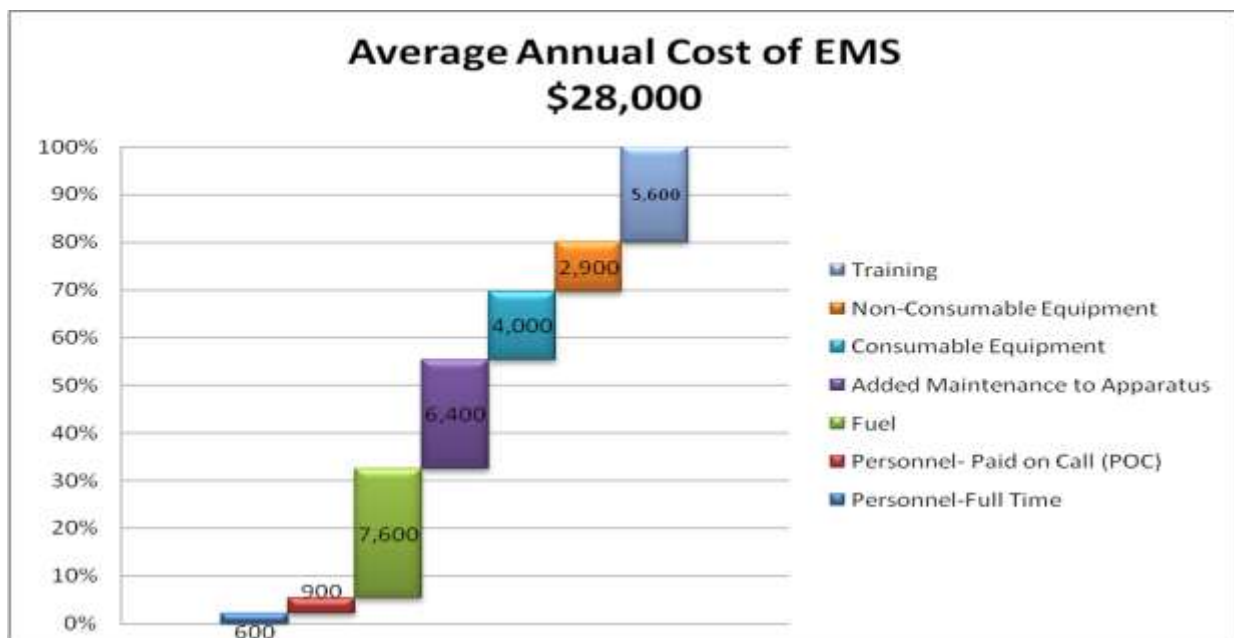
The Fire Department will assist another municipality with emergency services when requested to do so. There are five types of mutual aid: requests for personnel support, requests for apparatus such as an aerial ladder, stand-by for other communities, backfill for another community's station and Automatic Aid. Automatic Aid differs from the other four in that PFD is dispatched to alarms in the City of Grand Rapids north of 3 Mile Road and the City of Grand Rapids Fire Department is dispatched to alarms in Plainfield Township south of 5 Mile Road. PFD also uses Automatic Aid from our rural neighbors for a water supply in non-hydrant areas. Mutual Aid is not guaranteed, it is always dependent upon the availability of personnel and apparatus. In 2010, we received mutual aid from Algoma Township, Alpine Township, the City of Grand Rapids, Rockford and Cannon Township. We provided mutual aid to the City of Grand Rapids, Cannon Township, Alpine Township, Grand Rapids Township, and Walker.



ADMINISTRATION – Kathy Ensley

This has been a year of change in the administrative area. In May, Rebekah VanBeek left PFD to pursue another career opportunity. Rebekah had only been at PFD a few years but was responsible for many positive changes and improvements. I was hired in September to fill her position.

I recently helped Chief Peterson compile information regarding the benefits and costs of the fire department providing EMS to Plainfield Township. The repair and maintenance records for each of the engines was examined to determine how often maintenance (filters, oil changes, tires) has been done since their purchase. Once this information was compiled along with general repair information, the next step was to work with Kendra Cook in accounting to get the accounts payable history from 1997 to present. With the AP history, it was possible to find the costs of the repairs that had been done on the engines to determine the cost of maintenance. The most current cost information was used to arrive at an average rather than actual costs. The engine with the highest total maintenance cost was used as our average. Another area for the EMS report that was looked at was the personnel cost of EMS. The call history was reviewed to see how often an EMS call required on duty personnel to stay late, being paid over time; and how often POC were paid for an EMS call. The number of incidents for both scenarios was insignificant. To get the cost of consumable goods, all the consumable goods costs for 2009 and 2010 were added up. The year with the highest total was used as our average. To obtain the fuel cost, the actual fuel consumption and cost for the first 6 months of 2010 were used to arrive at an average cost per year. For non-consumable items, such as backboards and O2 which are not replaced each year, the cost of purchasing one per year was used to calculate this cost. For each area, we rounded up, resulting in a greater cost.



One of Rebekah's accomplishments was successful grant writing. In the past couple years, PFD was awarded several AFG FEMA grants. The matching funds for these grants are included in the annual department budget. When a purchase is made, the Township pays the vendor, then a request for reimbursement is made to FEMA for the remaining funds. The federal share is then directly deposited in

a Plainfield Township account. It is shown as revenue and disbursement though our normal accounting procedures.

The grant for SCBA equipment has been completed. The Federal Share of this grant was \$209,835 (received in March 2010) and the Township portion was \$23,315. The cost of completing the project was less than approved by FEMA. This allowed the Township to purchase 4 additional face pieces for SCBA packs; a tablet computer with sound system and a fire extinguisher training prop for trainings hosted by PFD to benefit schools and businesses. The fire prevention items, computer, sound system and extinguisher prop were purchased under the guidelines for excess funds from grants.

The grant for rescue equipment has also been completed. The Federal share was \$50,427.00 and the Township share was \$5,603. The grant was used to replace our hydraulic rescue tools (Jaws of Life) and to purchase a highway warning sign that can be towed by SO-3. SO-3 is a light rescue that had been scheduled to be sold but the bids were too low resulting in it being placed in reserve status. Approval of this grant allowed the unit to be repurposed. The new Genesis Extrication Equipment was placed into service on Rescue 1 in October; \$44,510 was received from FEMA in November. The highway warning sign was placed into service in January of 2011; FEMA's share of \$5917 has been requested. The need for the sign to warn traffic of an emergency can be emphasized by the three accidents involving Grand Rapids Fire Department apparatus while blocking the highway in the past year.



The Township received a SAFER (Staffing For Adequate Fire and Emergency Response) Grant which is ongoing through 2012. The Federal share is \$345,646.00 over two years. The Township share of the cost is \$0. To date, the Township has requested and received \$31,925.00 from FEMA for reimbursement of salaries. This grant provides two firefighters who work during our peak response times. The fire fighters work fourteen hour days, four on and four off. The only expense to the Township is for overtime, which is limited to call back for alarms, therefore minimal, and uniforms. The SAFER positions are not used to eliminate overtime as the grant is intended to provide additional firefighters for alarms.

Plainfield has applied for a regional grant to be used by the new Kent County Dispatch Authority for improvements to the call taking and dispatching system for emergency calls. The regional grant would be administered by Plainfield Township and the Dispatch Authority would be the fiduciary through the AFG FEMA grant program. The advantage to Plainfield Township for this grant award would be upgraded equipment for our department, and the displaced cost for the new dispatch system which would trickle down to the local municipalities. The new dispatch system will give the Plainfield Fire Department and other public service agencies significant interoperability that does not exist now. This new system will also improve response times and provide additional avenues for cooperation between fire, EMS and law enforcement. Kent County Dispatch has indicated they intend to charge \$85,000 to \$100,000 per year for the services they offer to participating agencies. This charge is for a service that we previously received at no charge.

We did not apply for an AFG grant this year for any capital items for the department as the items that were top priority from FEMA did not meet our needs. The demand for the AFG dollars is so high that if a grant does not meet the areas that FEMA highlights there is no chance of receiving an award.