

CITY OF MILTON FIRE DEPARTMENT



2012 ANNUAL REPORT

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2012 was a very active and productive year for the City of Milton Fire Department which afforded great opportunities to implement positive improvements, placing the department in a very stable position for coming years. Overall emergency response activity was down from the prior year, allowing members to complete many ongoing projects, while also accomplishing several long-term goals. All of this activity has placed us in an excellent position to accomplish our primary mission of providing emergency services to the citizens of Milton.

EMERGENCY ACTIVITY

Despite a marked reduction in the overall number of emergency responses, 2012 still presented several challenging incidents requiring more than the response of the initial alarm assignment. The total number of emergency calls decreased by over 9%, down to 1,489 calls, from 1,641 the previous year. This follows a rather dramatic increase that occurred the previous year and returns us almost exactly to the number of calls in 2010. The vast majority of this reduction is attributable to two issues: a return to normal rainfall this year resulted in far fewer brush fire calls (10 fewer) and complaints of unauthorized burns (34 fewer); and, a dramatic reduction in the number of “lift assist” type calls (101 fewer calls). This year’s decrease actually reflects a general stabilization of annual activity over the past 10 years to roughly 1,500 calls per year.

Rescue calls decreased this year, now totaling 1,254 calls, but again constituted an increasing majority of our emergency calls, now 84% of our annual emergency activity. Rescue calls include: medical emergencies such as strokes, heart attacks, falls, etc.; all vehicle accidents including those that involve entrapment requiring forcible extrication with specialized hydraulic tools such as the “Jaws of Life”; and rescue calls like a child locked in a vehicle, elderly who have fallen and need help back into bed (lift assist), and even the occasional animal rescue. In 2012 we responded to 1,108 medical rescues, 133 vehicle accidents, and 13 other rescue calls.

Fire responses, while always a relatively small portion of our total emergency activity, remain our primary responsibility, and actually are the segment of our responsibility that requires the greatest resources, in terms of equipment, training and personnel. Although the vast majority of fire related incidents are quickly handled by the on-duty crew, we must always respond with the capacity to bring the full capabilities of the department to bear rapidly to effect rescue, protect exposures, and quickly bring a well-developed working structure fire under control. As we can never know when the next “big one” will occur, we must constantly maintain the readiness necessary to manage that incident. This includes continuous training of personnel and maintenance of vehicles and equipment to ensure that all is ready at a moment’s notice. This year we responded to only 174 fire related calls, amounting to 12% of our total responses. These included 37 structure fires, 7 vehicle fires, 3 brush or wildland fires, 96 false alarms or good intent calls, and 31 other fire related calls, such as illegal burning.

Our smallest category of emergency response, hazardous condition calls, make up only 4% of our emergency activity, but represents potentially the most dangerous aspect of our operations to both our members and the public. These include: natural and liquefied petroleum (LP) gas incidents; electrical problems such as downed power lines, arcing lines, and transformer fires; fuel leaks and spills, and all other hazardous conditions such as chemical releases, train derailments, building collapse, and terrorist acts. These incidents potentially involve very dangerous agents, present almost endless complexity, and often require responders to begin

operations with very little information in a very dynamic environment. In 2012 the department responded to 61 hazardous condition calls, including 26 gas incidents, 10 electrical incidents, 6 fuel leaks or spills, and 19 other hazardous condition calls.

On 109 occasions last year, we were dispatched to an emergency call while one or more units were already assigned to a previous call (concurrent calls). This means that over 7.3 % of our emergency calls were received while we were already responding to, or on the scene of, a prior emergency call. On at least 4 occasions we were dispatched to three or more simultaneous calls during the same period of time. On 8 occasions one or more of the concurrent calls occurred in conjunction with mutual aid provided to another jurisdiction. In one case we were diverted from a response to a structure fire in another district to handle a call in our own district.

In every case an appropriate response was made without undue delay, and no calls have gone unanswered. On several occasions Engine 23 was required to respond to a medical emergency in place of Rescue 23, which was managing a previous call. Each of these incidences of concurrent calls occasionally results in a situation in which Engine 23 is not staffed to respond to fire calls with its normal crew complement of four firefighters, creating extreme operational difficulties in addressing the immediate needs on the fireground.

Several incidents of note occurred during the year. Foremost among these was a residential structure fire occurring very early in the morning of May 13 in the Cedar Ridge subdivision. At the time of the fire the home was occupied by five children, the oldest of which was only 12 years old. The fire had started in the living room area before 2:00 am, and by the time the department arrived the home was fully involved. Thankfully, the children had all escaped and were gathered in a neighbor's yard as Engine 23 arrived to begin the defensive operation to extinguish this fire which totally destroyed the home. The story of this 12 year old who led his brothers and sisters to safety made national news.

A fire occurred in an apartment of the Milton Housing Authority complex on Grace Street on the evening of April 3 which threatened the entire building. Members of the department arrived to find smoke coming from the second floor of this 2-story unit, one of six in the building. Engine 23 initiated an interior attack up the interior stairs and found heavy fire in the bathroom on the second floor. The fire was quickly extinguished and the building checked for any extension. It was found that one of the children in the apartment had set fire to clothes in the bathroom while their parent was downstairs with the other children.

On the morning of July 6 a summer thunderstorm moved through Milton resulting in several lightning strikes throughout the area. One of the buildings struck was a home on Dalton Circle in Taryn's Estates. The occupants of the home were unaware of any problem until a neighbor knocked on the door to inform them that there was smoke coming out of their roof. The fire department was called and arrived to find heavy smoke coming from the ridge vent and eaves, as the occupants were evacuating the home in a driving rain storm. A working attic fire was discovered, but a rapid interior attack limited damage exclusively to the attic area, with no damage to the building's contents.

At nearly 10:00 pm on the very cold evening of November 28, fire was reported at the Milton Carpet store on Glover Lane. Several 911 calls had been received reporting visible flames and smoke as the department responded, along with members of Avalon, Navy (Whiting Field) and Skyline Fire Departments. Engine 23 and Chief 23 arrived to find a working fire in the rear

(warehouse) portion of the building, and an interior attack was initiated with a 2-1/2" hose as water supply was established and additional resources were deployed to support the initial attack. Thanks to an aggressive attack, and favorable auto-ventilation through a skylight, this fire was quickly brought under control, allowing important business records and computers to be saved. Despite the loss, the business was able to open the next day in an adjacent location and begin the rebuilding process.

A tragic incident occurred during the annual July 4th Riverfest celebration on the Blackwater River. Around 7:30 pm, while the banks of the Blackwater River were crowded with people anticipating the beginning of the annual fireworks display, an 11-year old boy was playing in the water near the boat ramp at Russell Harber Landing. He was visiting family in Milton from his home in Alabama. While playing with his cousin, he fell below the water and did not surface. Several bystanders witnessed the boy go under and began a frantic search to find him. Others called 911 as the sun began to set over the river and darkness settled in. As the fire department arrived, it became clear that he had been missing for nearly 20 minutes. Divers from Bagdad Fire Department were requested and began a search, locating his body within a little more than an hour. Sadly it was found that the young man did not know how to swim and had apparently simply stepped off into water over his head.

On the morning of September 10 a school bus was involved in a relatively low-speed collision involving two other vehicles on Highway 90 near Parkmore Plaza. Initially none of the children on the bus complained of any injuries, and all had remained in their seats as fire department, ambulance and police arrived. As the driver of one of the other vehicles was being immobilized and removed to an ambulance, one of the children on the bus expressed concern about their neck, and the child was treated for a possible neck injury, and removed to an ambulance for transport to a local hospital as a precaution. One by one, additional children soon followed suit until 10 children were transported to the hospital, causing this incident to develop into a legitimate Mass Casualty Incident. Ultimately none of the children had sustained any serious injury.

Improbably, on no less than six separate occasions last year we were dispatched to a report of a vehicle that had crashed into a building. While three of these were merely situations in which the vehicle had struck the exterior of the building, the other three incidents involved a vehicle that had crashed through the wall and into the building. The first of these was on June 1, when a stolen pickup truck was driven into the side of a church at Stewart and King Streets while running from the police. The second occurred on October 24 when the driver of a car southbound on Stewart Street passed out and crashed into the conference room of the Farm Credit across the street from the fire station. The final incident involved a pickup truck that lost control while turning from Canal Street onto Caroline Street and crashed through the front doors of the County Probation Office on November 25. Thankfully, in none of these cases were life-threatening injuries sustained.

In late August Hurricane Isaac threatened the gulf coast, and for a few days appeared that it might directly impact Santa Rosa County as a strong Category 2 Hurricane. All normal preparations were made to ready the city and department for emergency operations. Although the hurricane ultimately shifted its track well to the west of Florida, our area began to see tropical storm force winds on Tuesday, August 28. The only direct damage reported within Milton was to the steeple of Isaiah Chapel AME Zion Church on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive. Strong winds had blown the steeple over, it was hanging by a steel cable, and the department was called to cut it free to prevent it from causing damage to the roof of the building. Although the members of the church only ask us to cut it free and let it fall, expecting it to be destroyed, after

examining the situation, we decided to attempt to save it by lowering it to the ground. Despite gusty winds, members of the department mounted the roof and tied ropes to the steeple to allow it to be gently lowered. After a slow, careful operation the steeple was placed unharmed on the ground and moved to safety to be remounted again in the future.

This storm also afforded the department the first opportunity to implement a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with United States Coast Guard Station Pensacola. Due to their location on the water aboard NAS Pensacola, Coast Guard Station Pensacola has to evacuate the station in anticipation of the arrival of storm surge from a storm. In 2010 the City of Milton entered into an MOA with the Coast Guard to allow two 25 foot rescue boats, on trailers, with tow vehicles and crews to shelter at the City of Milton Fire Department during the evacuation, to be ready to redeploy once the storm passes. In this case the station was closed for three days, and 8 Coast Guard crew members quartered at the fire station.

MUTUAL AID

The maintenance of effective mutual aid agreements is a crucial element in our overall ability to meet the needs of our citizens. While we are able to manage the vast majority of emergency calls with on-duty personnel, supplemented when necessary by the recall of off-duty personnel, incidents do arise wherein the resources of the City of Milton Fire Department alone are not sufficient to manage the situation. In these situations we must call on the support of surrounding fire departments to develop a coordinated response structure. During calendar year 2012 the department provided mutual aid to other departments on 45 occasions, and received mutual aid on 20 occasions, amounting to 3% and 1.3% of total calls, respectively. The number of incidents in which mutual aid was provided increased from 21 in 2011. Many of these calls involved working structure fires where department personnel and resources were involved in active firefighting operations, including fully involved structure fires on Banyan Drive, Metz Road, Johnson Road, Webb Circle, Beverly Street and Ella Street. The number of incidents in which mutual aid was requested and received also increased from the 2011 total of only 6 instances.

VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT

Our department maintains a rather small fleet of apparatus, so it is vital that this apparatus always be maintained in a reliable, highly serviceable condition. Over the past several years, the age and routine wear on some of our front-line apparatus has led to mechanical problems. The extreme age of our reserve apparatus had left us with poor back-up capability. Great strides have been made this year to address these issues. Our front-line fire engine, was a 1998 Cyclone II Pumper manufactured by Emergency One Fire Apparatus in Ocala, Florida. This engine was replaced in April 2012, with a new, Typhoon custom rescue pumper from Emergency One Fire Apparatus. The Housing Ceremony for this new engine was held on Saturday, April 21, the 98th Anniversary of the department. This new engine is configured similarly to its predecessor, but incorporates new design features such as a hydraulic generator, roll-up compartment doors, interior ladder tunnel, and increased compartment space. It has been designated as Engine 23, and placed in service as our first-due pumper. This engine was ordered with all hand tools and loose equipment, allowing us to maintain other apparatus in its existing configuration, and providing all modern tools and equipment on this new truck. The previous first-due pumper reverted to second-due status, and was re-designated as "Pumper 23".



Our former second-due fire engine, a 1986 Pierce Suburban Pumper, with open “jump seats” and somewhat limited operational capabilities, reverted to reserve status. Although nearly 27 years old, this vehicle is still a sound fire truck, and is quite suitable to serve as a reserve engine. Our front-line rescue, Rescue 23, is a 2001 Super Lynx Midi-Pumper manufactured by Emergency One Fire Apparatus in Ocala, Florida. This 12-year old vehicle currently has 72,324 miles on it and is by far the busiest vehicle in our fleet, responding to over 1,400 calls and logging over 6,000 miles this year alone. In recent years this vehicle has had its engine, clutch and transmission replaced, and has experienced several other lesser maintenance issues.

Our former reserve engine was a 1979 Pierce Telesqrt with 50’ ladder. A 1984 E-One Mini-Pumper, designated as Service 23, had been maintained as a reserve rescue and service vehicle, equipped to tow trailers. This vehicle had limited capability and reliability, and did not serve either purpose well. We had also maintained a 1991 Chevy Caprice as a staff vehicle, which was also equipped to tow boats and smaller trailers. With the addition of the new engine, we were able to retire each of these three older vehicles, selling them through on-line auction and removing them from the fleet. A 2007 Ford F-150 extended cab pickup truck with topper, which had been previously been assigned to the Purchasing department, was reassigned to the fire department, marked as an emergency vehicle, equipped with radio, lights, and siren, and designated as Service 23. This vehicle is ideally suited to tow trailers and transport equipment, and can serve as staff vehicle when needed.

With these additions, and the corresponding realignment of the fleet, we now find ourselves in the best operational position we have ever been in. Our front-line fire engines are both modern, custom pumpers with enclosed cabs and similar capabilities, providing the all of the capabilities required to meet the demands placed on a small department like ours. For the first time in our department's history we have a fully functional and equipped reserve engine, ready to respond to a fire if needed. While Rescue 23 is aging, and experiencing multiple mechanical problems over the past few years, our reserve engine provides an adequate backup to this vehicle, allowing us to maintain response capabilities at all times. Although we will need to work toward replacing Rescue 23 within the next couple of years, overall, our fleet is in very good shape.

In accordance with the FCC mandate for narrow-banding all VHF radio frequencies by January of 2013, our existing fleet of radios was surveyed, and replacements were purchased for all that could not be brought into compliance. With the purchase of these new radios, we were able to modify the programming of the remaining radios to make our fleet fully compliant by December of 2012. With this reprogramming, identifier tones were added to all portable and new mobile radios to allow them to be identified by dispatch consoles. This is a great added safety feature that the Santa Rosa County Emergency Communications Center recently was equipped to receive. As a radio so equipped is keyed up, the dispatcher can immediately see which radio is calling, even if the caller is unable to speak. Our portables now also incorporate an emergency distress function which allows a firefighter to send a distress call with identifier by simply pushing one button. This could be invaluable in identifying and locating a trapped firefighter.

With the addition of the new engine, six new Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) were placed in service. All existing SCBA facepieces were upgraded with new Heads-up Displays, compatible with new and existing SCBA. In addition to daily and weekly checks to which all SCBA are subjected, Sunbelt Fire Apparatus was called in to perform thorough inspection and testing on all SCBA, along with the breathing air fill system, all of which passed without issue.

Although a detached storage building had been included in the original design of the new fire station to store fuel and lawn equipment away from the main building, this was cut during efforts to reduce overall project costs. As such, all lawn equipment, and associated fuel for this equipment and other small engines in the department, has been stored within the apparatus bays, a less than ideal situation. A very sound 8 by 10 foot wooden storage building had been donated to the Habitat for Humanity's Milton ReStore on Elva Street. Thanks to our department's long-standing relationship with Habitat, the building was offered to the department, and moved in December to our site. With very little work this has given us a safe and secure location to store this equipment and remove a hazard from our building.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

After an extensive promotional examination process, Firefighter/EMT Geoffrey Freeman was selected to fill the vacant Lieutenant's position created when Jim Custred was promoted to Captain to fill the vacancy left when Captain Keith Vinson retired near the end of 2011. Lieutenant Freeman was sworn in by Chief Reble at the regular Council meeting in July and was "Pinned" by his wife.

In September our most junior member of the department submitted his resignation, to be effective on October 2, to deal with family issues. On October 2, Firefighter/EMT Jeremiah Hatcher was hired to fill the resulting vacancy, allowing us to maintain full staffing throughout.

TRAINING

As always, training remains a vital part of the fire department's normal activity. With the wide array of situations to which the department is called to respond, it is imperative that all members of the department remain current and proficient in all areas of firefighting, basic life support, technical rescue, hazardous materials, etc. In accordance with the department's annual training calendar, each member undergoes a minimum of 20 hours of in-service training each month. In addition to this company training, many members have participated in additional specialized training.

Firefighters Scott Snowden and Paul Gilliard both completed Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) training through Midway Fire Department and were certified by the State of Florida and National Registry. This brings us back to 100% EMT level certification among our shift personnel. All personnel completed their required bi-annual EMT recertification through our department's internal program.

In August, members of the department participated in Active Shooter Response Training in conjunction with the Santa Rosa County Sheriff's Office. With the pending demolition of the housing units on James and Grace Streets the members of the department have had the opportunity to conduct extensive fire attack (simulated smoke) and search and rescue training in these vacant units.

In late fall Chief Reble taught a Building Construction for the Fire Service course at the department through the Florida State Fire College. This course, the first of several planned, provides one of the prerequisites for both Fire Officer 1 and Inspector Certification through the State Fire Marshal's Office, and was attended by six members of the department.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

While internal training is a crucial element of department operations, external public education remains a very important element of the department's overall fire prevention program. The department operates with a stated goal to, "Put ourselves out of business through fire prevention and public education." While a lofty goal indeed, the department does consistently see a positive impact from their efforts toward educating the public. We would like to think that the reduced number of fire calls this year is at least partly attributable to our success through public education. The department attempts to offer a diversified public education program in an effort to reach all age groups throughout the community. Fire Prevention is taught through school programs, station tours, fire drills, fire extinguisher demonstrations, fire prevention classes, informational displays, and our Fire Safety Puppet Show. During 2012 the fire department conducted 12 school programs, reaching 862 students, 3 fire extinguisher classes, reaching 90 persons, and 23 other programs, including station tours, reaching 1,941 people, for a total of 38 programs reaching 2,893 people.

This year, during National Fire Prevention Week on October 13, we held our second annual Fire Prevention Open House. This 3-hour program featured equipment displays and demonstrations, station tours, displays and demonstrations by our community partners, our *Fire Safety Puppet*

Show, fire safety demonstrations, and refreshments. This event was attended by more than 500 people and was again deemed a great success.

Our department also provides Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and First Aid Classes to target groups and the general public. With our outstanding classroom facility, we have been able to increase this program to offer a regular schedule of public classes, and again offer the program to all city employees. We generally offer CPR and First Aid to the public on the first Saturday of each month, and will gladly arrange special classes for groups that desire such training. Through the department's Training Center, headed by Firefighter/EMT Steve Maddox, 48 individuals were taught CPR, including 10 city employees, and 25 were certified in First Aid. The 16 members of the department were also recertified in CPR for Health Care Providers

FIRE PREVENTION AND LIFE SAFETY

The City of Milton Fire Department is also responsible for enforcement of the Florida Fire Prevention Code and Life Safety Code. Chief Reble serves as Life Safety Officer and Fire Official for the City of Milton. With the slow economy, development, and the resulting demand for inspections of new construction and new business had dropped off considerably. In 2011 this activity continued to rebound slightly. Chief Reble conducted 55 Life Safety Inspections, 30 Follow-up Inspections, 29 Construction Related Inspections, and 56 plan reviews, totaling 170 inspections and reviews.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The City of Milton Fire Department continued its long tradition of community involvement throughout 2012. In March Milton High School, in conjunction with the city's Education Committee, hosted the Young Americans, a non-profit group of student performers who travel throughout the world providing Outreach Workshops for local aspiring performers. The three-day workshop at Milton High School culminated in a 2-hour concert featuring the workshop participants performing alongside The Young Americans. The department hosted three of these young people, providing food and living space for them during the event. These three individuals were thrilled with this rare opportunity to live in the fire station, adding to the richness of their experience.

Recognizing the need for a local honor guard to support ceremonial functions, the Board of Directors of the Santa Rosa County Firefighters Association established the Santa Rosa County Firefighters Association Honor Guard in 2012, consisting of members of the several fire departments in Santa Rosa County. Two members of the City of Milton Fire Department, Firefighter/EMTs Stephen Steele and Ben Stockdale, were selected as charter members of this Honor Guard. The honor guard made their debut appearance in the Milton Christmas Parade on December 1.

The City of Milton Fire Department supported the Milton High School Quarterback Club by providing standby coverage for their Big Cat Jamboree in August. Fire trucks were displayed at Family First Network's Fall Festival in October, and the annual Blue Waitman Day celebration in November. The department participated in the annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Parade in January, carried the Milton High Panther in the Homecoming Parade in October, participated in the Veterans Day Parade in November, and again delivered Santa Claus at the end of the annual Milton Christmas Parade in December. Also in December, members of the department provided support to the local United Way chapter to help with the Toys for Tots campaign.

INTO THE FUTURE

The work of the past few years has put our department in a very strong position, confident of our ability to meet the demands of serving and protecting the residents of Milton. We will continue to examine department staffing needs in order to insure that we will remain always ready to provide the level of service our citizens have come to consistently expect from our agency. Our new fire station facility provides us with the resources that will be needed to sustain our high level of service for many years to come. The addition of our new fire engine, with the associated realignment of our fleet, puts us in a very strong position from a firefighting point of view. While the department must soon look to replace Rescue 23, our 12-year old first-due rescue vehicle, we find ourselves well equipped to meet the continued demands of protecting the lives and property of our citizens well into the future. We also look forward to planning an appropriate celebration of our department's 100th Anniversary in 2014.

CITY OF MILTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

MONTHLY ACTIVITY REPORT

CALENDAR YEAR 2012

ACTIVITY REPORT

ALARM RESPONSES

FIRE CALLS

TYPE:	Vehicle Fire	Structure Fire	Brush Fire	Alarm*	Other**	Total
NUMBER:	7	37	3	96	31	174

* Includes false and unintentional alarms, smoke scares, good intent, etc.

** Includes fire investigations, unauthorized burns, etc.

RESCUE CALLS

TYPE:	Medical Response	Vehicle Accident / Extrication	Other	Total
NUMBER:	1108	133	13	1254

HAZARDOUS CONDITION CALLS

TYPE:	Natural Gas*	Electrical Problems**	Fuel Leak/Spill	Other	Total
NUMBER:	26	10	6	19	61

* Includes gas leaks, smell of gas, etc.

** Includes downed power lines, transformer fires, arcing wires, etc.

MUTUAL AID:	GIVEN:	45	3.02%	RECEIVED:	20	1.34%
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TOTAL CALLS FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2012:

1489

TOTAL CALLS IN 2012:

1489

TOTAL CALLS IN 2011:

1641

PERCENTAGE INCREASE: -9 %

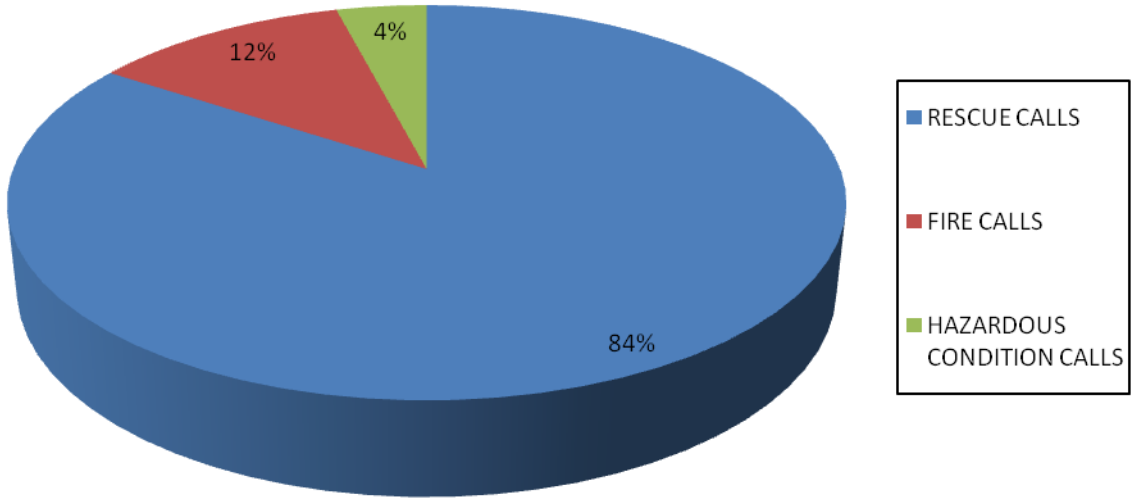
PUBLIC EDUCATION

TYPE OF PROGRAM:	School Class	Extinguisher Demo	Fire Drill	Other	Total
Number Conducted:	12	3	0	23	38
Number Attending:	862	90	0	1941	2893

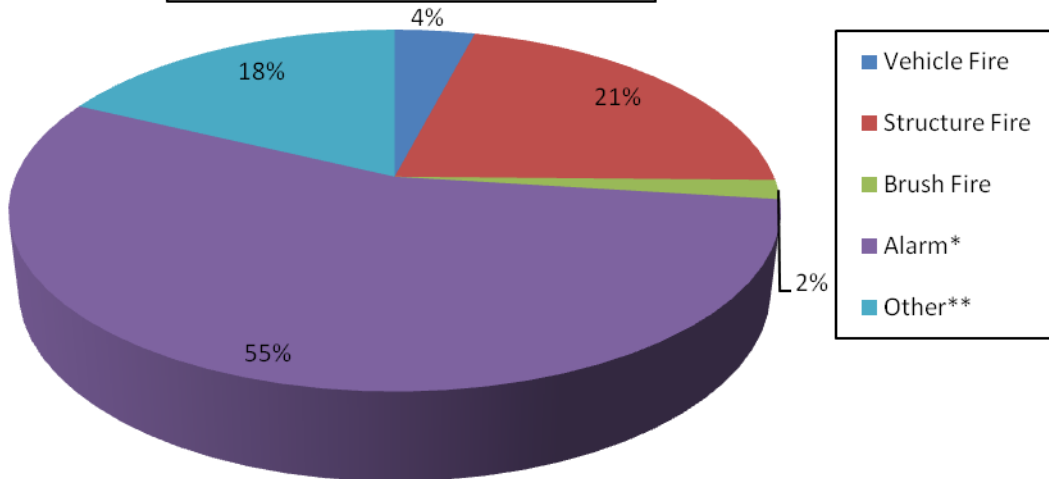
LIFE SAFETY

TYPE:	Life Safety Insp	Follow-up	Construction	Pre-plan	Plan Review	Total
Number:	55	30	29	0	56	170

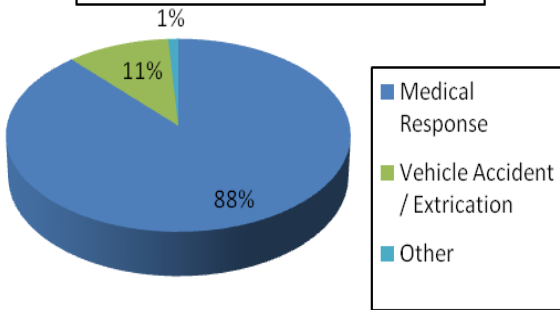
EMERGENCY RESPONSES CALENDAR YEAR 2011



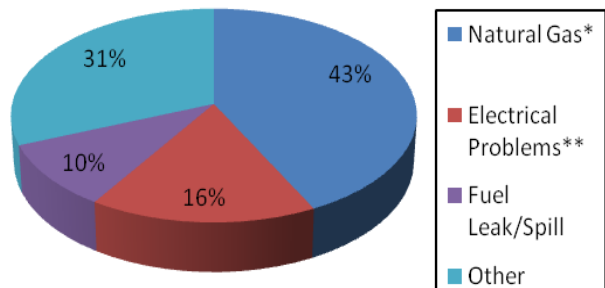
FIRE CALLS



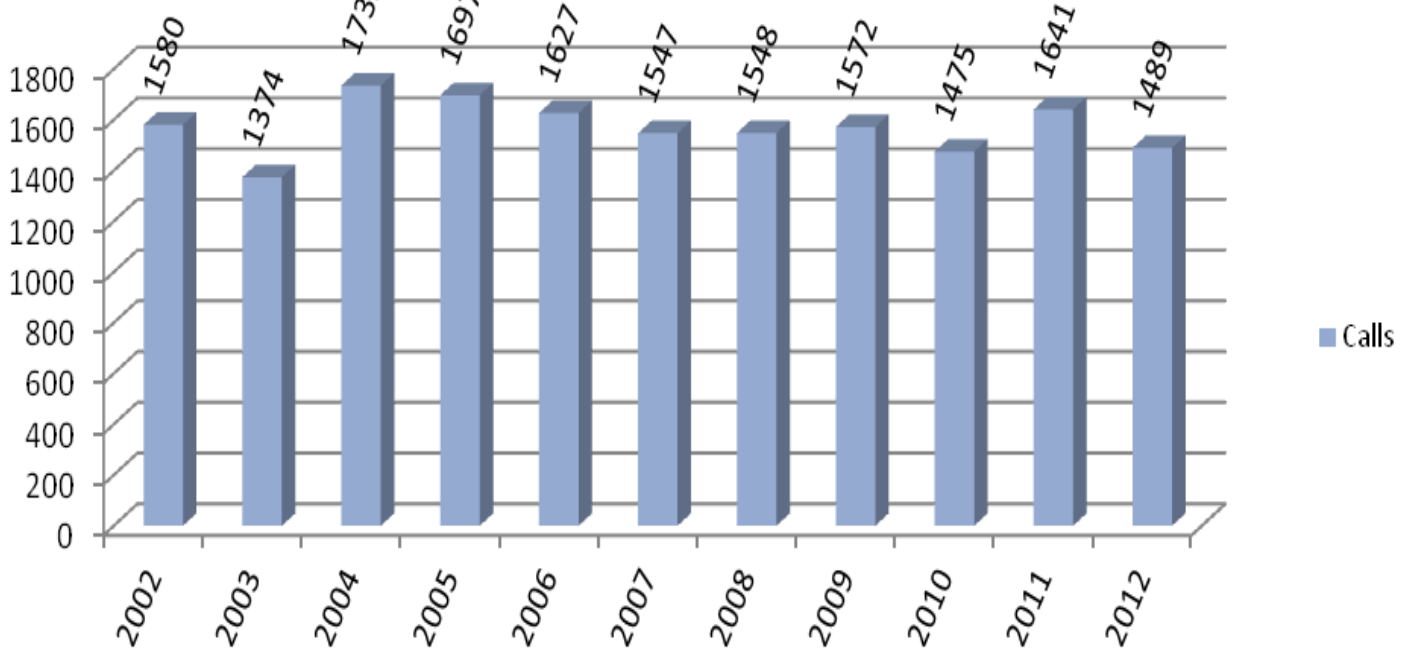
RESCUE CALLS



HAZARDOUS CONDITIONS



Emergency Calls 2002 - 2012



Emergency Calls 1980 - 2012

