



Pentwater Fire Department

Year in Review 2008

Incident Activity

PFD finished 2008 with 242 runs for the year. 207 runs were medical related and 35 were fire department related. 2008 marks the second full year of medical responses for the department and PFD finished very close to the 209 medicals recorded for 2007.

The single largest event for 2008 was a grass and woods fire that went largely unnoticed until it was more than 12 acres large. By the time it was completely extinguished, 18.7 acres burned in the Pentwater Plains on April 29, 2008. While an area of fire origin was determined, the exact cause remains undetermined.

Training Qualifications

Lt. John Sayles and MFR Coordinator Crystal Babbin both completed Michigan Firefighter's Training Council Company Officer I & II class. The seven class, 167 hour series provides the knowledge and skills to meet the job performance requirements for career and volunteer fire officers.

To maintain certification, licensed Medical First Responders on PFD are required by the State of Michigan to attend lectures and practical training on specific topics. Continuing Education Units, or CEU's, are classes conducted by personnel certified to teach these classes. In 2008, PFD began hiring Oceana EMS instructors to conduct CEU training in-house at PFD.

In January of 2008, Asst Chief Ray Hasil completed the first of four two-week classes at the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland. The first class, Executive Development, focused on three primary curriculum themes: leadership, research, and change. Participants learned how to enhance personal/team development and engage in applied research. Ray's first research paper titled, "Demographic and Socio-Economic Factors Influencing Volunteer Fire Department Membership Levels" took a snapshot of the demographic and economic factors and trends in Oceana County and how these levels affect PFD's staffing. The second two-week class "Strategies for Community Risk Reduction" begins in August. Ray is planning on writing his second research paper on the limited access dune communities that are common on the sandy shores of Lake Michigan.

Community Involvement

PFD participated in a number of activities including 4th of July fireworks, Homecoming parade, Homecoming fireworks, public safety awareness at Mears State Park, Halloween parade, Halloween night refreshments and glow necklaces, Santa Claus, and fire & life safety instruction for preschool through 3rd grades at Pentwater Public School.

PFD's non-profit wing, the Pentwater Fire Department Association, provided donations to area charities and in memory of deceased PFD firefighters. Annual events such as the Sweetheart's Dinner, Firefighter's Dinner, scholarships, and poster contest at Pentwater Public School were some of the events we hosted.

PFD Fire Chief Terry Cluchey did not participate with PFD in 2008's homecoming parade with good reason; he rode in a vehicle that proudly displayed the title "Pentwater Citizen of the Year"! Chief Cluchey was named Pentwater's Citizen of the Year by the Pentwater Service Club. The honor is bestowed annually to "honor a citizen of the Pentwater area who has performed outstanding service for the betterment of the community through civic, charitable, educational or other activities".

Funding & Administration

A complete overhaul of the fire contract between the Village and Township went active early in 2008. The new agreement made many changes designed to best protect the interests of the Village, the Township, and Fire Department alike.

PFD's fire protection millage was renewed for 5 years in the August 2008 election. Voters approved the renewal by nearly 3 to 1 with 240 voting yes and 79 voting no.

Equipment and Apparatus

A new Ford Expedition EL was placed in service in August. The Expedition was purchased primarily for use on medical first responder (MFR) calls for service. This MFR dedicated vehicle is used to respond to medical emergencies rather than the more expensive compressed air foam system equipped pickup previously used. The new vehicle will allow for greater storage of MFR equipment and allow room to extricate patients from locations that an ambulance cannot access.

A second PFD vehicle is now licensed for MFR responses. Unit 371 was recently licensed by the State as a vehicle authorized to respond to MFR incidents. Having two licensed vehicles allows for coverage when the primary vehicle is in use or for when one vehicle needs to be taken out of service for maintenance, repairs, etc.

PFD's equipment "van" has been removed from service permanently. The rear of the chassis separated from the body and the cost to repair the vehicle is not worth the investments. All equipment except for an air cascade system has been placed on PFD's other vehicles. The cascade system, which is used to refill SCBA air tanks will either remain in the station, or be replaced by an in-station SCBA tank compressor.

PFD's boat was not placed in service for 2008 due to excessive repairs. Late in Fall of 2008, a used Bayliner was donated to the department. Plans to place it in service in 2009 are being worked through.

Walkerville Area Fire & Rescue (WAFR) placed a "smoke trailer" into service this year. The trailer was obtained with grant monies and made available for other departments to use. PFD used the trailer in October to teach Pentwater Preschool through 3rd graders the fundamentals of fire and life safety. This state of the art training tool is an excellent area resource that PFD plans to use every year.

PFD's station floor was painted in the summer of 2008. A company that specializes in floor coatings was contracted to shot blast and seal the concrete floor followed by two coats of epoxy and a coat of chemical protectant that will hold up to the water, foam, transmission fluid, oil, and excessive weight that fire apparatus dish out.

Four carbon fiber air tanks were purchased for use in airpaks. The tanks weigh considerably less than what old metal tanks weigh. This brought the total number of carbon tanks to 8 and there are plans to purchase four more in FY 2009.

Membership Numbers Down

A new MFR Coordinator position was created for 2008. Crystal Babbin was elected the department's first MFR Coordinator. Her duties include maintaining MFR vehicle inventories, preparing reports for and attending required Oceana Co Medical Control Board meetings, tracking and maintaining all personnel and apparatus licensing requirements, and coordinating CEU training for PFD personnel.

There are currently 22 PFD members. Because there were no students in the last countywide firefighter training class, no new members added in 2008. However, there are a number of prospective candidates for this fall's class.

Plans for 2009

Budget planning for fiscal year 2009 is nearly complete. There are a number of basic equipment and facility purchases planned and the department is exploring the possibility of replacing it's aging water tanker for 2009.