

## **MERRIMACK FIRE RESCUE**

### **Submitted by Fire Chief Matthew Duke**

It is truly a privilege and an honor to submit the 2020 annual report for Merrimack Fire Rescue. All would agree that 2020 has been a year that we will remember, and talk about, for many years to come. As it did for everyone, the year brought many changes and challenges to Merrimack Fire Rescue. To start off, there were some very significant personnel changes in 2020 including the retirement of Fire Chief Michael Currier, Executive Secretary Cathy Nadeau, Captain Brian Dubreuil and Master Firefighter/Paramedic William Pelrine. These four retirees represent a combined total of roughly one hundred years of service to the Department and the Town of Merrimack. I thank them all for their commitment and dedication. The year also brought us a number of new faces and several promotions. Please make sure you review the “Town Employees” section of this book to see a list of all our Department members.

Of course no review of 2020 would be complete without addressing the COVID-19 pandemic. As it was for everyone else, COVID -19 was a consideration in almost everything Merrimack Fire Rescue did this year. As a Department we had to modify how we conduct training, inspections, public education, fire prevention, emergency response, as well as many of our day to day operations within our Stations. Terms like social distancing and quarantine unfortunately became part of our everyday vocabulary. In response to the COVID threat, we instituted solid, effective operational plans very early in the year that allowed us to continue to provide services to the community while keeping our members properly protected. As I write this report, our members, along with public safety personnel across the State of NH, are beginning to receive doses of the COVID vaccine.

While 2020 certainly brought with it challenges and changes, one thing that didn’t change was our members’ commitment and dedication to our mission. Through all the uncertainty that seemed to dominate every aspect of the past year, our personnel rose to the occasion. Across all the Divisions; Operations, Support Services, Building, Health, and Fire Prevention, our personnel found ways to continue to deliver quality services to the community. Merrimack Fire Rescue members developed and implemented techniques and methods to continue to safely provide emergency response, inspections, plan reviews, public education and a variety of other public safety services to our community. I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the hard work, commitment and dedication of all our personnel. As 2020 comes to an end and I look forward to the coming year, I am confident that Merrimack Fire Rescue is ready to overcome whatever new challenges we may face. Please continue reading to learn about the activities of the various Divisions of Merrimack Fire Rescue over the past year.

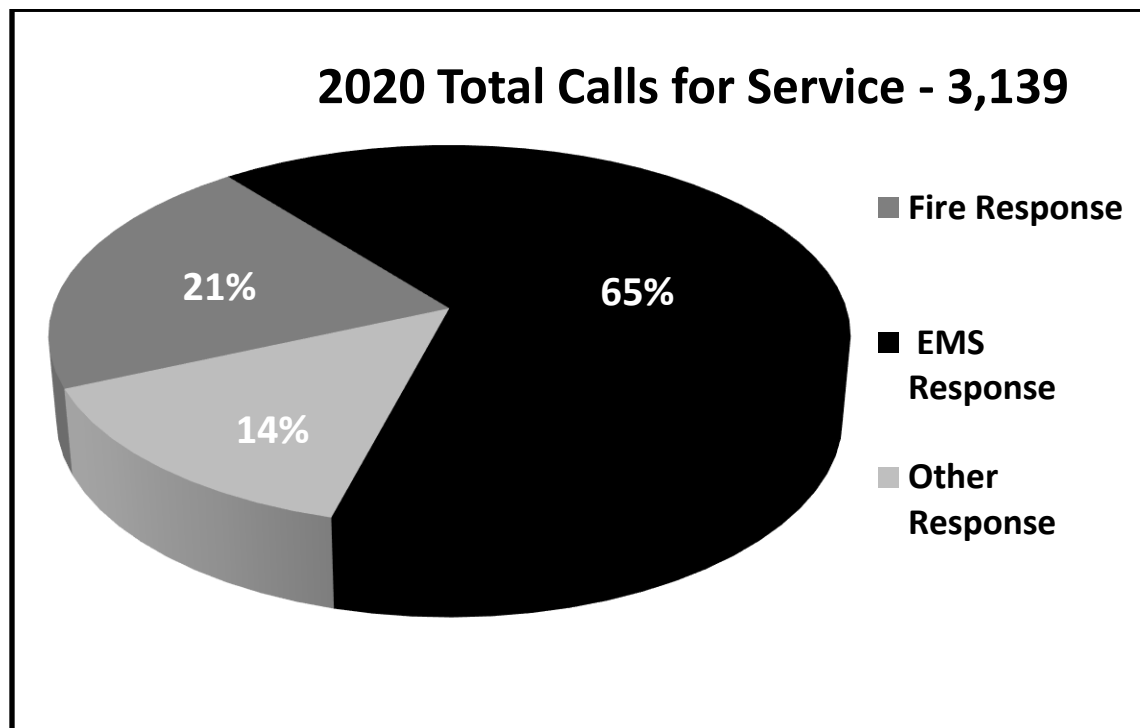
## **OPERATIONS DIVISION**

The Operations Division includes the men and women whom you see responding to emergency calls throughout our community 365 days of the year. The Operations Division includes the

Firefighters, Paramedics, EMTs, Captains and Lieutenants that staff our fleet of Engines, Ambulances, and other specialized apparatus that respond to hundreds of emergency calls every month. If you call 911 for a fire or medical emergency in our community, it will be these personnel who respond; ready, willing, able and equipped to help you in your time of need.

### **Emergency Response Activity**

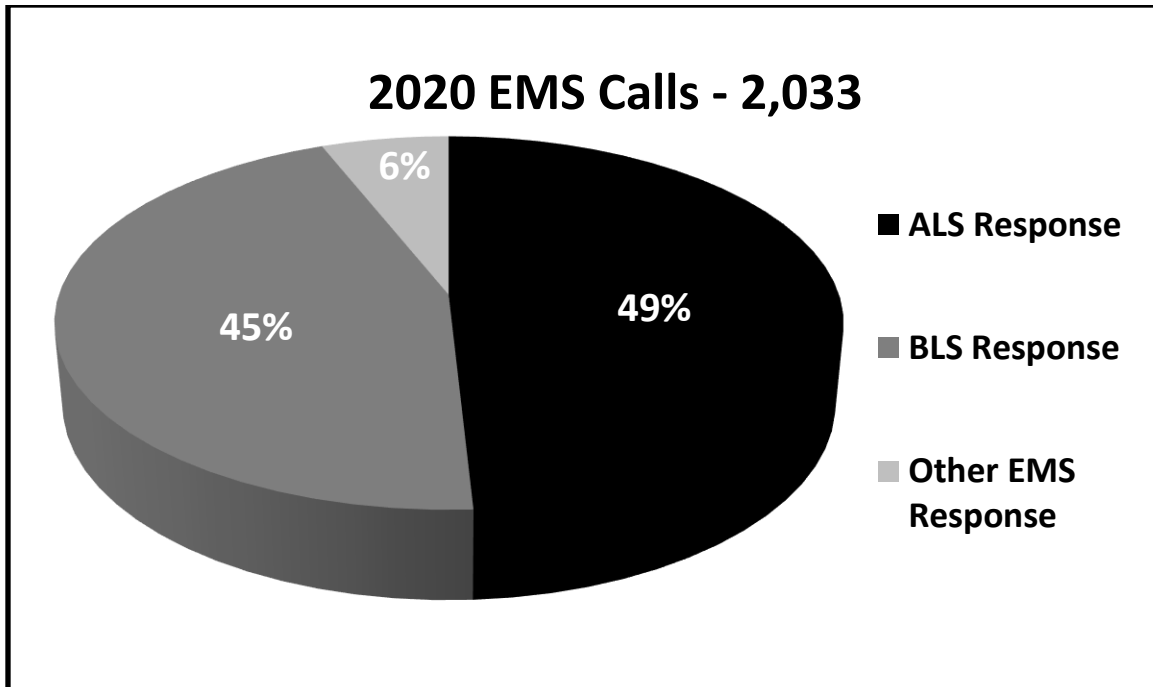
Merrimack Fire Rescue Operations personnel responded to 3,139 calls for service in 2020. Of these, 65% percent were Emergency Medical Services (EMS) responses, 21% were fire responses and the remaining 14% were a combination of motor vehicle crashes, hazardous materials responses, mutual aid incidents, rescue calls and others.



**Fire Response:** This includes all types of fire alarms and fires, such as: building fires, vehicle fires, wildland fires, dumpster fires, and fire alarm activations.

**EMS Response:** This includes all medical or ambulance calls.

**Other Response:** This includes all other responses, such as: motor vehicle crashes, hazardous materials spills, natural disasters, mutual aid to other communities, rescues and service calls.



**ALS (Advanced Life Support) Response:** Serious medical emergencies or injuries, such as a heart attack, stroke, or difficulty breathing. Typically requires a minimum of 5 responders.

**BLS (Basic Life Support) Response:** Less serious medical emergencies or injuries, such as nausea, back pain, sprains, minor falls. Typically requires a minimum of 2 responders, but may require more depending on circumstances.

**Other EMS Response:** Medical emergency or injury not covered above. Typically receives an ALS level response of 5 responders due to the unknown nature of the emergency.

As in years past; early and accurate recognition, diagnosis and treatment of life-threatening medical conditions helped lead to many successful patient outcomes. Our Paramedics and EMTs successfully identified and treated a number of cardiac blockages in patients and then transported those patients directly to cardiac catheterization labs at area hospitals, significantly improving patient outcomes. Our personnel were also able to identify early stroke symptoms in patients and advise area hospitals to have a Stroke Team ready to receive and treat the patient immediately.

Over the past year, Merrimack Fire Rescue personnel responded to numerous significant incidents including the following: 19 fires in buildings, 7 vehicle fires, 18 brush fires, 23 propane or natural gas leaks, 130 motor vehicle crashes including several requiring patients to be transported by medical helicopter to Level 1 Trauma Centers in Boston. Merrimack Fire Rescue also provided Mutual Aid assistance to neighboring towns or cities 43 times in 2020.

## **Training Overview**

The training requirements for each of the various Operations disciplines are significant. Our members are constantly striving for excellence in an array of low frequency, high-risk responses such as building fires, hazardous material emergencies, high angle rope rescue, ice rescue, swift water rescue, and vehicle extrication. The stakes in these types of responses are always extremely high, with very little margin for error. Merrimack Fire Rescue personnel also spend numerous hours training for proficiency in the more routine operations that we perform hundreds, if not thousands of times per year. Each of our personnel log hundreds of hours of training throughout the year to ensure that we are ready when the community calls upon us. During 2020, our personnel spent a combined total of approximately 4,200 hours training in all facets of emergency operations, including fire, rescue and emergency medicine.

## **Shift Rosters**

### **A Shift**

Captain Daniel Newman  
FF/Paramedic Zachary McComb  
FF/AEMT Emmett Plourde  
FF/Paramedic Brendan McAdams  
FF/Paramedic Brad Wilson

Lieutenant Mark Bickford  
MFF/EMT Mike Kiernan  
MFF/EMT Keith Hines  
FF/AEMT Josh Coulombe

### **B Shift**

Captain Shawn Brechtel  
MFF/AEMT Brennan McCarthy  
MFF/AEMT Ryan Thomas  
MFF/AEMT Richard Ducharme  
FF/EMT Daniel Roberts

Lieutenant Shawn Farrell  
FF/ Paramedic Matthew Loranger  
FF/Paramedic Melissa Winters  
MFF/AEMT William Dodge

### **C Shift**

Captain Jason Marsella  
MFF/AEMT Lenny Brown  
MFF/EMT Kip Caron  
FF/Paramedic Kenneth White  
FF/Paramedic Christopher Fyffe

Lieutenant Scott Bannister  
MFF/AEMT Joe Pelrine  
MFF/AEMT Richard Daughen  
FF/AEMT Jonathan Warner

### **D Shift**

Captain Richard Gagne  
MFF/Paramedic Gordon Othot  
MFF/EMT Shawn Kimball  
MFF/Paramedic Nathan Landry  
FF/AEMT Lorenzo DiPaola

Lieutenant Jeremy Penerian  
FF/EMT Adam Egounis  
FF/AEMT Jason Worster  
FF/AEMT Christopher D'Eon

## **Key to Abbreviations**

FF: Firefighter

MFF: Master Firefighter

EMT: Emergency Medical Technician

AEMT: Advanced Emergency Medical Technician

## **SUPPORT SERVICES DIVISION**

**Submitted by Assistant Fire Chief Richard Harris**

The Support Services Division is under the direction of Assistant Chief Richard Harris. Assistant Chief Harris started with the department in July of 2020 and reports directly to the Fire Chief. The Support Services position is second in command, and in the absence of the Fire Chief, is in charge of the entire Department. The Support Services Chief's primary duties are to oversee the Department's three divisions concerning Code Enforcement, Fire Prevention, Health and Building. This includes the direct supervision of all members assigned to the Division.

The Support Services Chief has responsibilities including but not limited too; internal and external investigations, purchasing, employee evaluations, strategic planning, budget management, major emergency response, and vehicle maintenance. The Support Services Chief works closely with the town Human Resource Director to ensure the Department adheres to applicable personnel laws and policies. The Support Services Chief coordinates the hiring process of new personnel within the Department. Lastly, the Support Services Chief coordinates and communicates with the Fire Chief to ensure that Department goals and objectives are accomplished.

### **Fire Prevention/Fire Marshal's Office**

**Submitted by Fire Marshal John Manuele**

This was yet another challenging year in the Fire Prevention office with 2020 having different issues than any previous year; many longtime Fire Prevention events had to be cancelled. Due to the schools responding to COVID 19 we had to cancel the annual Junior Fire Muster, Reeds Ferry Fun Day and all other school and daycare events as well as the annual Fire Department Open House. All outdoor events for the Town, such as the 4<sup>th</sup> of July fireworks and Midway, as well as numerous other public events had to be postponed. We had to increase our presence on various social media platforms to try and get our messages out as we could no longer have any public meetings or demonstrations.

As Merrimack continues to grow so do the challenges. The many new construction projects and major renovations in town all require numerous plan and code reviews prior to approval and construction, as well as inspections during the construction process. The major emphasis seems to have switched from retail and industrial construction to residential, especially apartments. The new Flatley mixed use development, Gilbert Crossing has 4 of the 5 approved 48 unit apartment buildings completed and fully occupied, as well as 1 more nearing completion. The developer has expressed interest in building between 1 and 3 more due to the demand. The Residences at Executive Park has completed 4 of their 5 48 and 64 unit buildings, with the last being almost complete. This same developer has started site work for their new development, Edgebrook Heights, located on the Nashua line off Daniel Webster Highway. This is going to be three more 48 unit apartment buildings as well as a 72 unit over 55 apartment and a self-storage complex.

The 45 unit workforce housing apartment development, Neighborworks, located on Angelo Drive has been fully completed and occupied, and the Overlook Estates 65 unit age-restricted townhouse development on East Chamberlain Drive is currently under construction with many units already complete and occupied. All of these developments have required many plan reviews, consultations and inspections. The building plan reviews have caught many potential fire code violations and prevented them from becoming an actual safety concern. Due to the speed of construction as well as the difficulty the developers are having in finding subcontractors a large amount of time has been spent on finding and

correcting mistakes with the sprinkler, fire alarm, fire stopping and gas system installations. In addition, all new roads require coordination between the Merrimack Fire Marshal's office, the US Postal Service, NH-911 and the Merrimack DPW to ensure proper naming and addressing is completed.

Single family residential construction continues, several new developments have also started including Whitetail Ridge on Wilson Hill Road with 13 homes expected, as well as the first firefighting water cistern in Merrimack. The 14<sup>th</sup> phase of Greenfield Farms is also underway, with 72 homes located on six new roads between Wire Road and Whispering Pines Lane. The large mixed use development located at 10 Premium Outlets Boulevard has started site work, and another single family development of 35 homes that was approved off Cathy and Constance Streets is also starting.

Fire Prevention continues to average over 3000 fire and life safety inspections within our community each year. This year we had to adapt our inspection process using personal protective equipment, social distancing and even "virtual inspections" when necessary. Many of these fire safety and code inspections were for life safety, place of assembly, new occupancy and licensing programs. A new issue this year was inspecting temporary outdoor seating areas for many local restaurants. This was done in an effort to help the restaurant industry cope with the ongoing pandemic. Each inspection is highly focused to ensure that the businesses, schools, places of worship and areas of recreation are safe for our citizens, businesses, their customers and visitors.

The Fire Prevention Division continues to get our fire safety message out to the public with new and innovative ideas. This year we created a Facebook Page for the Fire Prevention Division as our normal in person presentations are on hold until the pandemic ends. This year there were over 2200 consultations conducted by personnel from the Fire Prevention/Fire Marshal's Office. These consultations included providing fire/safety advice and education to local citizens and contractors on various subjects such as generator safety, smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, fire extinguishers, wood and pellet stoves, emergency exits, code requirements and compliance. Additionally, consultations with businesses included life safety and fire code requirements, fire alarms, fire sprinkler requirements, building and room capacity requirements, egress and exit requirements, removal of oil and propane tanks, school safety, and construction requirements.

The Fire Marshal's Office investigated 21 fires this year, including 2 vehicle fires, 7 structure fires, 6 brush fires, 2 shed fires and 2 electrical fires. Unfortunately for the 3<sup>rd</sup> year in a row Merrimack suffered a fatal house fire. An elderly resident died as a result of an overnight fire. The investigation determined that the fire was most likely caused by careless disposal of smoking materials, enhanced by excessive storage of combustible materials and not having any working smoke detectors in the house. Another building fire resulted in the loss of two family pets. Several hazardous materials spills were also investigated including a large incident on Joppa Road, as were citizen complaints such as blocked fire exits, fireworks complaints, dangerous conditions in buildings and code violations. There was a large increase in fireworks complaints due in part to many residents using their own fireworks as all area towns cancelled their shows due to COVID 19. The working relationship of the Fire Prevention/Fire Marshal's Office and Building & Health Divisions is continuing to result in improved customer service and efficiency when working with developers and contractors in all aspects of plan review and construction. This has been especially helpful for our many large-scale projects both commercial and residential.

Merrimack Fire Rescue's Fire Prevention Division appreciates the opportunity to serve the community and share our knowledge with the community through appearances and programs.

## **Health Division**

**Submitted by Health Officer Erin Olson**

**Prevent. Promote. Protect.** In the unprecedented times that unfolded in 2020, these values of public health work have shown truer than ever. In March of 2020, when the magnitude of the COVID-19 pandemic became clear, the Health Division quickly transitioned from its routine operations to pandemic response efforts. Pandemics require an "all hands on deck" response, highlighting the importance of state and local departments collaborating to share and utilize resources, knowledge, and experience.

In addition to the Health Division's focus on responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, we continued our focus this year on protecting and improving the health of all who live, learn, work and play in Merrimack.

The Health Division's responsibilities include licensing and inspection of all food establishments, retail stores, mobile vendors, daycares, foster cares, adoption households, septic systems, public bathing areas, and schools. The Health Division also responds to concerns regarding foodborne illness, sanitation, and other environmental health hazards. The Health Division conducts routine monitoring of public beaches and bodies of water. Water quality monitoring is critical in detecting harmful algae blooms, including cyanobacteria that can pose potential health risks to humans, pets, and wildlife. The Health Division works closely with the NH Department of Environmental Services to issue public health advisories when bacteria levels are detected that exceed the States standards.

### **Health Inspections and Licenses**

Food Establishment Inspections	167	COVID-19 Compliance Checks	33
Mobile/Temporary Food Inspections	18	COVID-19 Inquires / Assistance	46
Food Establishment Plan Reviews	7	School Inspections (Public and Private)	7
Food Establishment Licenses Issued	143	Outdoor Dining Permits Issued	17
Public Bathing Area Inspections	21	Outdoor Dining Inspections	17
Public Bathing Area Licenses Issued	21	Water Quality Monitoring Activities	16
Child Care Inspections	9	General Inspection Services	54
Foster Care Inspections	15	Complaint investigation Inspections	19

### **COVID-19 Response:**

- Assisted state agencies and local businesses in contact tracing efforts for COVID positive cases. Contact Tracing includes communicating quarantine guidelines, testing criteria, symptom monitoring, and identifying possible exposures to minimize transmission.
- Provided support to the NH Department of Health and Human Services and the NH Attorney General's Office during the re-opening phases. Assistance included conducting COVID-19 guidelines compliance checks, disseminating and implementing re-opening policies as they were updated, and educating businesses on the potential public health consequences of violating these guidelines.
- Participated in weekly statewide calls with the NH DHHS and other Local Public Health Officials to stay current on COVID-19 guidelines, best practices, and prevention methods.
- Collaborated and assisted restaurants within the community through the continued changes of NH's "Safer At Home 2.0" COVID-19 Guidelines. Efforts included permitting and inspecting outdoor dining areas at 17 restaurants. Outdoor dining was a pivotal step in re-opening, allowing our small

business owners to resume operations while protecting their employees' and patrons' health and safety.

### **Building Division**

#### **Submitted by Building Official Richard Jones**

This year the Building Division has endured some unexpected challenges. We had an unprecedented challenge in dealing with COVID-19 restrictions and requirements. We would like to thank our talented Division staff for their steadfast dedication, attitude and their never wavering commitment and accomplishments this year.

Our Building Division continues to work with town residents, contractors and local businesses that are carrying out construction projects, instilling code compliance during all phases of construction. Our goal continues the practice to help guide home owners, businesses and contractors that want to build within our community to comply with the building code requirements, to be firm, but fair while conducting inspections, all while achieving full code compliance. This approach can be seen daily throughout the Town of Merrimack as the number of construction projects continue to increase. Our focus has always been towards customer service with the emphasis on assisting all applicants from the initial project conception and plan review to final completion and occupancy for each project.

### **Permit Activity 2020**

<b><u>Building Permits Issued</u></b>		<b><u>Certificate of Occupancy</u></b>		<b><u>Office Activities</u></b>	
<b>Residential</b>		<b>Commercial CO's</b>			
New SFR	60	New	2	Counter Help	3,852
ADU's	13	Unit Completion	28	Phone Calls Taken	5,705
Multi-Unit/Apt's	1	Tenant Fit up	13	Fire Permits	186
Other	1,106	Cell Tower	1	Service Request	353
				Property Files	2,409
<b>Commercial</b>		<b>Residential CO's</b>		Health Licenses	203
Industrial	0	New - SFR	80	<b>Total Customers Actions</b>	<b>12,705</b>
Signs	17	ADU - Completion	2		
<b>Municipal/ School</b>	<b>0</b>				
<b>Totals</b>	<b><u>1,213</u></b>	<b>Totals</b>	<b><u>125</u></b>		

### **Revenue Building Permits & Health Licenses**

**2020**

Building Permit Fees	7304	<b>\$138,582.00</b>
Septic Fees	7305	<b>\$8,450.00</b>
Sewer Insp Fees	7306	<b>\$2,800.00</b>
Application Fees	7307	<b>\$9,675.00</b>
Test Pit Fees	7315	<b>\$3,950.00</b>
Copy Fees	7429	<b>\$409.00</b>
<b>Total Building Fees</b>		<b>\$163,866.00</b>
Food License Fees	7323	<b>\$22,675.00</b>
Public Pool/Spa Fees	7331	<b>\$1,925.00</b>
<b>Total Health Fees</b>		<b>\$24,600.00</b>
<b>Total Building &amp; Health Fees</b>		<b>\$188,466.50</b>



## **Building Division Activities and Inspections**

Totals **3,633**

Permits Issued	1,213	HVAC	96
Plan Reviews	241	Hot Water Heater	52
<b><u>Field Inspections</u></b>		Deck Framing/Final	61
Foundations/Footings/Drains	212	Generator – Standby	55
Framing	373	Boiler/Furnace.	131
Electrical	856	Gas Piping	250
Plumbing	360	Pool/Spa Final	55
Insulation	185	Septic/Sewer/Test Pits	208
Building Final	231	Virtual Inspections	47
CO's Unit Completion	125	General Inspection	7
Solar Array	15	Failed/ Re-Inspections	277

## **Building Division Construction Highlights**

### Completed Construction Projects:



1 & 2 Pan American



5 & 7 Angelo Drive



9 Gilbert Drive

### Completion of New Residential, Multi-Dwelling Apartments and Commercial Buildings

- Angelo Drive - 45 Unit Apartments
- 1 Pan American Drive - 64 Unit Apartments
- 2 Pan American Drive - 48 Unit Apartments
- 4 Executive Park Drive - 64 Unit Apartments
- 9 Gilbert Drive - 48 Unit Apartments
- 381 D W Highway – Two Family Conversion
- 16 Depot Road – Two Family Conversion
- 80 New Single Family Dwellings
- 2 Accessory Dwelling Units
- 1 Manufactured Homes

The Building and Health Division of Merrimack Fire Rescue endeavors to add a model of safety and oversight to the community by following all current adopted building regulations and interacting with the builders, homeowners, and business owners in a friendly and helpful manner. We are sincerely dedicated to providing the Merrimack community with professional services.