

2011 Annual Report

Merrimack Fire Department

Submitted by Michael Currier
Chief of the Department

**FIRE PROTECTION, EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE, TECHNICAL RESCUE,
HAZARDOUS MATERIALS, FIRE PREVENTION, OFFICE OF THE FIRE MARSHAL,
BUILDING & HEALTH DIVISION, EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

On behalf of the men and women of the Merrimack Fire Department, it is my pleasure to provide you the Merrimack Fire Department 2011 Annual Report. Contained in this document, you will gain knowledge about the different divisions within the department and programs that serve you our residents and customers.

OPERATIONS DIVISION

Assistant Chief Tony Stowers

2011 was another busy year for Merrimack Fire Department Operations personnel. Emergency Incident Breakdowns are as follows:

Emergency Activity

Fire and Fire Related calls	932 incidents
Emergency Medical (Ambulance)	1,684 incidents
Total emergency incidents:	2,616

This year we had a number of significant incidents including separate incidents involving underground propane tanks. Both tanks were damaged and leaking propane and tied fire department companies up for about 6 hours for each incident. Weather related incidents created a significant amount of work for fire crews this year as well. The tropical storm Irene caused 42 incidents in a 24 hour period and the snow storm in October accounted for 172 incidents in a 72 hour period. In March, firefighters responded to a five car accident on the FE Everett Turnpike. In December there were two serious car accidents also on the FE Everett Turnpike within 1 hour of each other, both requiring extensive vehicle extrication and activation of area trauma teams. In October fire crews responded to a potentially lethal situation where they found a mixture of cleaning chemicals had caused a vapor cloud of toxic gases within a residence.

Non-Emergency Activity

Testing and maintenance of departmental equipment	10,050 hours
Communications activities	136 hours
Orientation of new hires	268 hours
Community events/Fire prevention speeches	172 hours
Pre-fire planning	1,079 hours
In-house departmental training	3,374 hours

Training Overview

This year personnel spent significant time training in emergency medical response, search and rescue training, driving skills, ladder operations, pumping operations. Comprehensive in-house training programs for both Ice and Water Rescue took place this past year. We also had members participate in many training and college level classes outside of department programs in areas such as nursing, Para medicine, executive fire officer development, swift-water rescue and others.

Retirements/New Hires

This year we saw the retirements of Master Firefighters Norman Carr Jr. and Marc Bechard after 24 years of service each. We also saw the retirement of Firefighter Paramedic Robert Panit after 10 years of service with Merrimack and multiple years for other organizations. Firefighter Paramedic John Demyanovich left the organization after 11 years to become a member of the Maryland State Police. This past year Rob Leite was hired as a full-time firefighter and is currently assigned to D-shift.

Firefighter/Soldiers

January of 2011 saw the safe return of three of Merrimack's Bravest from a New Hampshire National Guard Deployment in Afghanistan. Lieutenant Jason Marsella and Firefighter Dan Newman returned to work immediately upon returning. Firefighter Mike Kiernan a few months later after recovering from injuries sustained in combat.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Assistant Chief Richard Pierson

Fire Prevention

Fire Prevention performed over 800 fire and life safety inspections within our community to ensure that the businesses and schools are safe for their customers and our children. This past year we placed Fire Alarm and Sprinkler applications and forms on the fire department website to assist businesses and contractors. Inspection and plan review fees brought in over \$12,000 in revenue to the town.

Over 300 consultations were conducted by the Fire Marshal. These consultations included providing fire and safety advice to local citizens on such subjects as generators, smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, wood and pellet stoves, emergency exits, and code requirements. Consultations with businesses included life safety code requirements, fire alarm and sprinkler requirements, capacity and egress requirements, removal of oil and propane tanks, school safety and construction requirements.

The Fire Marshal investigated 23 fires this year, including 6 vehicle fires, 5 structure fires, 4 appliance fires, 5 electrical fires, 2 suspicious outside fires, and 1 attempted arson. Numerous oil and gasoline spills were also investigated as were citizen complaints, such as blocked fire access, dangerous conditions/buildings, and code violations.

A strong working relationship has been formed with the Building and Health Division resulting in improved customer service and efficiency when dealing with developers and contractors in all aspects of plan review and construction. This has been especially helpful for large projects such as the Merrimack Premium Outlets Mall.

The Fire Department educates the community thru appearances and programs which include fire prevention programs at the schools, High School DUI assembly, Reeds Ferry Fun Day water slide, Police and Fire Department Open Houses, Rib Fest at Anheuser Busch, Merrimack Business Expo and Safety Days at numerous local businesses delivering important life safety information.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Michael Currier, Fire Chief/Emergency Management Director

Richard Pierson, Assistant Emergency Management Director

The Local Emergency Operations Plan for the town underwent a significant revision during this past year. The plan was brought up to date with state and national standards, has been reviewed by the State of New Hampshire Emergency Management, and will be presented to the Town Council for approval in 2012. This plan outlines the town's response to, and recovery from, both natural and man-made hazards. In August, the Merrimack Middle School was registered with the Red Cross as a Regional Evacuation Shelter. Emergency Management played a key role in the town's response to the October snowstorm. Working in conjunction with various town departments, Emergency Management coordinated the clearing of roads, and the restoration of electricity. At the height of the power outage, nearly 98 % of the town was without power. We are also developing a plan to train town volunteers to staff a local emergency shelter in the event of a disaster. This local shelter could be opened in addition to any Regional Shelter activated in the area by the Red Cross. To prepare for this sheltering, we have secured twenty cots, five medical cots, forty blankets, comfort kits (toiletries) and bottled water from the Red Cross. We have also upgraded our communications capabilities in the event of widespread system failures during disasters, with the addition of a HAM Radio in our Emergency Operations Center. This radio has been tested and will be operated by members of the Amateur Radio Emergency Service.

BUILDING DIVISION

Fred Kelley Building Official

Permits issued: 828

Total revenue collected for permits was \$257,805.00

Plan review and consultations: 51

Code violation consults: 3

Fire/Building combined consults: 42

Other inspections to include industrial, commercial and residential: 1211

Certificate of Occupancy: 26

Identification of existing structures throughout the community that require extra caution for first responders and building/health, and diligent work with owners and contractors toward rehabilitation of others has resulted in:

Clean up and scheduled demolition of 15 and 17 McElwain Street

Clean up and potential renovation of 21 Turkey Hill Road

Renovation of the old Nashua Corp. to Nanocomp at 57 D.W. Highway

Renovation of the old MacDonald's to Raisanen Landscaping at 256 D.W. Highway

Demolition and removal of structure at 4 Stevens Avenue

Demolition of structure at 747 D.W. Highway making room for office buildings

Total renovation of Merrimack Village Mall at 416 D.W. Highway

Renovation and re-occupation of office space at 11 Continental Blvd.

Two PSNH substation sites at Star Drive and D.W. Highway
Addition and renovation to GT Solar 243 D.W. Highway
Multiple renovations at Fidelity on 1 Spartan Way
Major portion of construction of Premium Outlet Mall, 80 Premium Outlets Boulevard

HEALTH DIVISION

Al Turner Deputy Health Officer

Complaint Investigations: 42
Food Service Inspections: 436
Pool and Beach Inspections: 37
Day Care Inspections: 10
New Food Establishment Plan Reviews: 15
Food Establishment Licenses Issued: 131
Emergency Response Inspections: 56
Food Establishment Assistance: 120
School Inspections (Public and Private): 23
Mobile Vendor Food Inspections: 21

Responsibilities of Health Division include licensing and inspection of all food service facilities, day cares, foster cares, adoption households, septic systems, and public swimming areas, along with the investigation of health/safety related complaints. We disseminate information on various diseases and influenza.

FIRE DEPARTMENT CONCLUSION

The members of the Merrimack Fire Department are dedicated to serving our residents and are proud of our profession. We had another challenging year and with the economic times and increasing emergency response activities with multiple incidents occurring simultaneously the next few years are going to be very demanding for the department. Our staff participated in meetings at the federal, state, and local levels to apply for grant funding for current and future programs.

We also understand that the economic environment is not as good as it has been in the past. We understand that there are wants and needs in this environment and we will continue to be budget aware and have reduced spending over the past five years as much as possible while providing the needed emergency response and care to the citizens of this community.

The incorporation of the Building and Health organizations into the Fire Department has provided an excellent value to the community and exceedingly excellent cooperation with all the divisions in providing a more focused customer service and support program to the citizens of Merrimack and builders within the community.