

WINDSOR FIRE DEPARTMENT

Founded 1881

Chief Frederick A Fox

FIRE CHIEF'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR YEAR ENDING MARCH 31st, 2008

It is with pleasure that I submit this annual report for the twelve-month period ending
March 31st 2008

The Windsor Fire Department answered 365 alarms between April 1st 2007 and
March 31st 2008

Within The Town of Windsor 93 alarms (representing 25% of total) were answered as
follows:

74 Paged Alarms

29 Internal Alarms
10 Motor Vehicle Collisions
8 Medical Assistance
4 Investigations
4 Grass/Bush Fires
3 Structure Fires
2 Vehicle Fires
2 Assist Citizen
2 Electrical Fires
2 Recall – Flare-Up/Hot Spots
2 Smoke Condition
1 Fuel/Oil Spill
1 Garbage/Debris Fire
1 Propane Leak/Fire/Other Related
1 Second Alarm
1 Unfounded Alarm
1 Water Rescue

19 Silent Alarms

9 Investigations
4 Internal Alarms
2 Grass/Brush/Hay Bale Fires
1 Assistance Citizen
1 Assist Other Agency
1 Recall – Flare-Up/Hot Spots
1 Motor Vehicle Collision

- 1448 person hours (representing 18% of total) were recorded responding to alarms within The Town of Windsor, with a fire loss recorded of \$ 1,034,020.00

Within The Municipality of West Hants 191 alarms (representing 53% of total) were

answered as follows:

165 Paged Alarms

60 Motor Vehicle Accidents
 20 Internal Alarms
 15 Chimney Fires
 12 Vehicle Fires
 11 Medical Assistance
 10 Grass/Brush Fires
 7 Unfounded Alarms
 5 Investigations
 5 Power Lines Arcing/Down
 3 Garbage/Debris Fires
 2 Structure Fires
 2 Woods/Forest Fires
 2 CO 2 Alarms
 2 Lightening Strikes
 1 Assist Citizen
 1 Assist Other Agency
 1 Contents Fire
 1 Furnace Fire
 1 Rapid Intervention Team
 1 Second Alarm
 1 Smoke Condition
 1 Sprinkler Alarm
 1 Stove Fire

26 Silent Alarms

9 Investigations
 4 Internal Alarms
 4 Assist Other Agency
 3 Garbage/Debris
 1 Motor Vehicle Collision
 1 Chimney Fire
 1 Vehicle Fire
 1 Grass/Brush Fire
 1 Medical Assistance
 1 Power Lines Arcing/Down

- 3058 person hours (representing 38% of total) were recorded responding to alarms within The Municipality of West Hants, with a fire loss recorded of \$147,700
- 3588 (representing 44% of total) person hours were recorded responding to the following 81 Mutual Aid alarms (representing 22% of total).

34 Responses to Brooklyn Fire Department as follows:

- 19 Pumper
- 5 Tanker
- 3 Pumper and Tanker
- 1 Pumper-Tanker
- 1 Pumper and Rescue
- 1 Pumper, Rescue, Van and #8Jaws
- 1 Aerial
- 1 Pumper, Rescue, and Tanker
- 1 Assist Other Agency
- 1 Manpower

17 Responses to Hantsport Fire Department as follows:

- 9 Pumper
- 2 Rescue and Tanker
- 2 Zodiac
- 1 Pumper and Tanker
- 1 Pumper and Rescue
- 1 Pumper and Van
- 1 Rapid Intervention Team

10 Responses to Kentville Fire Department as follows:

- 4 Rapid Intervention Team
- 2 Tanker
- 1 Pumper
- 1 Rescue
- 1 Pumper-Tanker and Rescue
- 1 Pumper and Van

7 Responses to Wolfville Fire Department as follows:

- 2 Tanker
- 1 Pumper
- 1 Rapid Intervention Team
- 1 Zodiac and Rescue
- 1 Pumper-Tanker, 2 pumpers, and tanker
- 1 Snorkel

3 Responses to Mount Uniacke Department as follows:

- 3 Tanker

2 Responses to Summerville Fire Department as follows:

- 2 Zodiac and Rescue

- 2 Responses to Greenwich Department as follows:
 - 1 Tanker
 - 1 Manpower

 - 2 Responses to Waterville Fire Department as follows:
 - 1 Pumper-Tanker
 - 1 Manpower

 - 1 Response to Rawdon Fire Department as follows:
 - 1 Pumper

 - 1 Response to New Ross Fire Department as follows:
 - 1 Pumper and Van

 - 1 Response to Noel Fire Department as follows:
 - 1 Pumper and Van

 - 1 Response to Joint Rescue Coordination Centre as follows:
 - 1 Zodiac
- 17 Fire Marshal reports were filed in the twelve-month period ending March 31, 2008.

This past year saw The Windsor Fire Department answer the highest number of calls for assistance in our 127-year history. Although 2007-08 was a fire fatality free one for residents living and working in our fire district, we continue to respond to numerous fatal motor vehicle collisions each year. Many of these seem to be senseless crashes, often appearing to be caused by situations and or conditions that could be avoided if people were to pay more attention to their driving and slow down to suit road and traffic conditions.

Besides the obvious pain and suffering these crashes cause victims and their families, our firefighters often become victims as well, as we suffer from problems related to critical incident stress from having to respond to what are sometimes very horrific scenes. We are very fortunate to be able to call upon our provincial Critical Incident Stress Team to assist us in understanding and managing the symptoms of what are considered to be our normal reactions, to abnormal situations we respond to. These teams made up of firefighters, as well as mental health professionals are of a great benefit to our responders and we are most grateful for their efforts.

A major fire in September saw the destruction of the Windsor Curling Rink, as well as two other smaller near-by buildings. The deliberately set fire presented several very significant challenges to responding firefighters. A huge volume of fire involving two combustible buildings in close proximity to one another being fueled by flammable liquids on arrival, combined with severe exposure problems including other combustible buildings and several large propane tanks against the rear wall of the curling club

building made for intense firefighting operations lasting several hours. Thankfully no injuries were reported fighting the blaze and with the assistance of our mutual aid partners, we were able to prevent the fire from spreading to any other structures before it could be extinguished.

We continue to find ourselves being called upon more frequently to assist our neighboring fire departments. These departments are often struggling to muster enough people to enable them to mount a safe fire attack, while at the same time maintaining adequate coverage should another alarm be received. I see this as a trend that will continue to stress all fire departments, as our citizens and other agencies expect more from local fire departments in a time when members find it very difficult and in many cases, impossible to answer the calls.

Each year our firefighters respond to numerous and varied requests for assistance that require specialized equipment and expertise that we are fortunate to be able to offer. This past summer saw several very unique calls for assistance to the Windsor and Hantsport Fire Departments' water rescue teams. Our personnel rescued several people from the waters of Minas Basin and Avon River. These citizens owe their lives to our firefighters and to our funding partners as they have provided us the equipment and training to enable us to carry out such challenging rescues in a safe and organized manner.

2007-08 saw WFD receive various new equipment and two new apparatus, as well as the decommissioning of another unit. With the financial assistance of an EMO JEPP grant and help from our two municipal units, we have been able to take delivery of a new Special Services Vehicle. Known as SSV9, the 2008 Dodge pick-up truck has the ability to carry four personnel, comes equipped with extrication equipment, fuel spill clean-up kits, traffic control equipment and multi-agency communication capabilities. A similar funding partnership two years ago allowed us to purchase our Zodiac Rescue Boat and a donation from the Insurance Bureau of Canada this year has provided us with a new Ice Rescue device, replacing the Holmatro Board, which was damaged a year ago during a rescue mission.

A 2008 Chev personnel and equipment carrying van was purchased and is located at Station 1. The unit is known as Van 7, replacing Van 9, which has been moved to Station 2 and re-numbered as Van 12. The 1986 Chev van formally stationed at Station 2 and known as Van 7 was decommissioned and given to the West Hants Ground Search and Rescue organization.

In addition to the Federal and Provincial JEPP assistance we received, we are also very fortunate to be benefactors of a \$250,000 grant from the Provincial Emergency Providers Fund. These funds represent 60% of the total cost of an equipment upgrade

program, which The Municipality of The District of West Hants and Town of Windsor will also partner in. With the provision of these funds, we will be able to replace various equipment that are either no longer NFPA compliant, are worn out, or otherwise have become very expensive to maintain in reliable working condition.

Our department's very high level of call volume, the time required in acquiring and maintaining adequate levels of training, as well as commitments to administrative aspects of WFD, all combine to create a tremendous burden on our members as well as their families and in many cases, their employers as well. Finding and maintaining the right balance of the demands of one's time is a very real problem that often results in our members having to make difficult choices, that unfortunately sometimes results in them stepping down as volunteer firefighters. In recognition of this situation, we have little choice but to attempt to maintain a higher number of firefighters on our roll and not expect our firefighters to be able to maintain as high of a percentage of attendance as they would have been able to achieve in years past.

While many fire departments continue to struggle to find enough people from their communities willing to join their fire departments to offer protection to their fellow citizens, we are most fortunate in that we continue to see sufficient numbers of our residents coming forward to join our fire department. This is largely made possible because of our ability to respond out of one central station and one sub-station, utilizing volunteer firefighters who live and work in both of the two Municipal units we serve.

As we continue to operate out of our fire station, we are working with our two municipal councils towards moving our operations into a new facility. Issues related to our operating out of this station that were very serious several years ago when we began to seek solutions, have now become such that we have major Occupational Health and Safety related concerns. Peoples' health and safety are being compromised and regular occurrences of apparatus being damaged entering and exiting the station are the norm. If we do not soon see some major movement forward in our efforts to resolve this protracted issue, I am very much afraid that we will have no choice but to make some very difficult decisions to protect our personnel. Any changes in this regard will also unfortunately affect our ability to adequately serve our communities, as well as those of which we provide mutual aid protection to.

June 16, 2007 saw the official grand opening of Station 2. We continue to have a small, but very dedicated group of firefighters operating out of this facility. Unfortunately, there seems to be a continued lack of interest amongst many area residents who could very well also become volunteer firefighters. We cannot seem to recruit the numbers of people we, as well as the South West Hants Fire Society had hoped for. This station has the very best of equipment housed in it, but with so few people from the community willing to come forward to volunteer to be a firefighter, it's full potential may never be achieved.

We continue to see very dedicated and competent people offering for officer's positions each year and welcome Ryan Richard to the position of Lieutenant for the 2008-

09 year. We also thank Doug Matheson for the contributions he has made over the years as a Lieutenant, as Doug has decided not to re-offer for a position after his 2007-08 tenure expired.

There are many WFD members who go the extra mile on a regular basis for the good of what we do. Each year we are given an opportunity to have one of these special people recognized by our municipal councils and this year our volunteer of the year was Firefighter Frances Oliver. Frances is always very willing to assist with special projects and with fire prevention activities. She also spends countless hours maintaining our department's statistics and web site.

As I conclude this, my nineteenth annual report as Chief of The Windsor Fire Department, I want to take this opportunity to thank our many valued volunteer firefighters, who give so freely of themselves to protect the residents of our communities through WFD. We must also recognize our firefighters' families and employers who, without their assistance and understanding, our members could not make the contributions they do. Our members collectively contribute thousands of hours annually to the many demands of being a volunteer firefighter. Not only do they do the obvious, by risking life and limb responding both day and night to all sorts of emergency situations, but also their time away from families, work and leisure are immeasurable. Our volunteer firefighters are the backbone of our communities and of our organization and I thank them for the untiring support they give.

Respectfully submitted,

Frederick A Fox
Chief - Windsor Fire Department