



City of Rochelle
Fire Department
2013
Annual Report

Submitted by
Brian Johnson,
Fire Chief
January 2014



JANUARY 2013

93rd Annual Firemen's Ball

The Rochelle Fire Department Social Organization (RFDSO) continued a long tradition by holding its 93rd Annual Fireman's Ball on January 24th. It was held in the Stillman Room of the Hickory Grove Civic Center. An estimated 400 guests came to dance and enjoy a break from the cold weather. Though not truly "annual", as it was not held for two years during wartime, it can be traced back to the 1800's. It may be the longest running event in the community.

Funds raised by the ball support the service efforts of the Rochelle firefighters, including an annual Kishwaukee College scholarship, Rochelle Little League, Rochelle Junior Tackle, the Needy Family Food & Toy Drive, C.A.N. Children's Christmas Walk, and the Firefighter's Social Hall among others.

Fire at Coated Sand Solutions

On January 15th at 8:59 am, the fire department was dispatched to Coated Sand Solutions at 1951 Steward Road for smoke in ductwork in the processing area. Smoke and flame reported in the dustwork between a mixer and a thermal oxidizer. Upon arrival, firefighters found heavy smoke conditions and fire in ductwork located on the 6th or 7th floor of the facility. Ducts were opened and the fire extinguished with extinguishers and a hosline, a thermal imaging camera was used to check for extension. Responding to the box alarm, Ogle-Lee departments Creston, Steward, Hillcrest, and Flagg Center assisted at the fire.

Chief Brian Johnson Suffers a Stroke

On January 31st, Rochelle Fire Chief Brian Johnson suffered a stroke that initially caused profound weakness and speech problems. Chief Johnson was transported by Rochelle Fire Department Ambulance to Rochelle Hospital, then to Central Dupage Hospital's specialized stroke center. In February, Lieutenant Dave Sawlsville was named the Interim Fire Chief while Chief Johnson recovered. Throughout 2013, Chief Johnson worked hard in physical and speech therapy and returned to work on a ½ time basis in August, then full-time in November.



FEBRUARY 2013

RFD Conducts Ice Rescue Training

The Rochelle Fire Department conducts an Ice Rescue training each winter to practice response strategies and tactics if a victim were to fall through surface ice. In February the training was held at Spring Lake. Responders practiced several shore-based rescue techniques as well as direct rescue. The department has 4 ice-rescue suits which offer exposure protection and buoyancy control. During the training, "victims" would wear one of the suits and be tethered to the shore before purposefully entering the water and awaiting rescue.

MARCH 2013

Hazardous Materials Drill with Local Cold Storage

On March 7th, 2013, Rochelle Fire Department coordinated a full scale Hazardous Materials drill with emergency responders from Ryder and Americold cold storage facilities. The drill focused on an Ammonia leak in a compressor seal, a relatively high probability event at cold storage facilities. Over 20 hazardous materials responders and technicians from Rochelle and Ogle-Lee Fire Departments, along with 15 personnel from Ryder and Americold participated in the drill.



Hazardous Levels of Natural Gas Found in Home

On March 18th, 2013, fire crews responded to 229 S 11th Street for an odor of natural gas. Upon arrival, firefighters met with the resident and children out then inspected the home finding 130 parts per million of natural gas in the basement. The homeowner reported that they had been doing work in the basement after recently experiencing a water problem. Firefighters found the source of the natural gas at the furnace shut off the gas to the furnace and appliances and ventilated the home, bringing the level of natural gas to 0 parts per million. The homeowner was advised to contact a furnace repair service.

APRIL 2013

Ryan Baylor joins fulltime staff at the Fire Department

On April 2nd, Firefighter/Paramedic Ryan Baylor began his fulltime career with the Rochelle Fire Department. Baylor had previously served as a paid-on-call firefighter for Rochelle and the Ashton. In addition to his firefighting and paramedic training, he is a certified Hazardous Materials Tech A, ACLS, ITLS, and PALS.

MAY 2013

Rochelle Fire Department Team Runs Great Western Half-Marathon



On May 5th, Lieutenant Jason Underwood and Firefighters Jeremy Good and Jody Willis ran the Great Western Half-Marathon in St. Charles. A portion of the proceeds benefits the Special Olympics.

Rochelle Fire Department Hosts Firefighter Basic Course

Beginning on May 8th, 10 firefighters from Rochelle, Ogle-Lee, and surrounding communities completed a 180 hour Office of the State Fire Marshall course called Firefighter Basic. The course covers most of what a beginning firefighters needs to function within a fire department including basic firefighting tactics, equipment, personal protective equipment, fire science, and defensive hazardous materials response. The primary instructors for the Firefighter Basic course were Rochelle Firefighters Tyler Carls and Josh Lewis.



Rochelle Fire Department Participates in Large-Scale Disaster Drill

On May 8th, the University of Illinois' "Illinois Fire Service Institute" conducted a large scale disaster drill throughout Ogle County. Most of the drill was focused on simulated tornado touch downs in Rochelle and Ashton. Rochelle and Ashton Fire, Ogle County Sherriff's office, Rochelle Police, and other Mutual Aid partners were among the agencies participating. The after action report from IFSI provided valuable feedback on readiness as well as identifying training, communication, management, and equipment needs. Several of the recommendations, including needing more certified hazardous materials technicians, have already been acted upon.

Firefighters Participate in the HUB Project

The HUB Project director, Jodee Craven, invited the Fire Department to participate in the after-school and summer program. The fire department presented fire and general safety messages to the different groups in May and October. The program participants also had an opportunity to "work" as a firefighter by spraying water using a hoseline, conducting a search pattern blindfolded to simulate smoky conditions, as well as several other activities.

Rope Rescue Practice at Coated Sand Solutions LLC

On May 2nd the Fire Department conducted a Rope Rescue training at Coated Sand Solutions' facility on Steward Rd. The department has 9 responders certified at the Rope Rescue Operations level. These responders along with other members of the department operating as support-staff are trained to respond to emergencies and employ rope systems to raise or lower rescuers and victims. The Coated Sands Solutions' facility offers a realistic setting for an emergency while also providing a controlled environment for safe training.

JUNE 2013

Large Fire at Behr Recycling Center

On June 6th at 2:46pm, the Rochelle Fire Department responded to a structure fire at the Behr Recycling Center located at 111 N. 2nd St. On arrival, crews discovered multiple cars on fire inside the facility producing 25 foot flame lengths and heavy smoke visible for miles. Firefighters and apparatus from the four Ogle-Lee stations, Ashton, Lynn-Scott-Rock FPD, Malta, and DeKalb were called for mutual aid assistance. No injuries were reported with the incident, and damage to the building was minimal. The fire garnered media coverage from around the region.



JULY 2013

Annual Fireworks Display

With Chief Brian Johnson out recovering, Rochelle Fire was left with no licensed pyrotechnic personnel to supervise a Fourth of July Rochelle Fire Department fireworks display. An outside firm was hired to conduct the displayed to mixed reviews. Along with Chief Johnson's return, three more Rochelle Firefighters attended pyrotechnic training and were certified this year, allowing Rochelle Fire to once again conduct the annual fireworks display in 2014.



Total loss Barn fire

On July 6th at 5783 Woodlawn Rd a call was received for a barn fire. Apparatus from Rochelle and Creston arrived on scene and found a fully involved barn on fire that had apparently started when the wind shifted from a burning brush pile and started the barn on fire. A box alarm was requested and within 10 minutes of arrival the barn was on the ground. Other structures in the area did suffer some minor damage. The estimated loss was \$5,000.

Rochelle Dive Team Conducts Training in Quarry

Members of the Rochelle Fire Department Dive Team conducted two trainings in the month of July, diving in the Quarry at the corner of Route 251 and Flagg Road. Divers used sonar to determine the depth and identify potential underwater hazards. Several dives were conducted in multiple locations with the objective of practicing basic equipment techniques, underwater search and retrieval, as well as capturing underwater video.



Crop Duster Crashes into Radio Tower

At 0807 on July 19th, Rochelle and Steward Firefighters were dispatched to the scene of an aircraft crash in 8 foot high corn fields in rural Steward. Upon arrival crews found a collapsed radio tower that the plane had struck, searched the cornfield and located the crash site a few minutes later by climbing a corn crib, directing rescuers to the scene, approximately ½ mile into the corn. Paramedics and firefighters found the pilot with the wreckage of his 1982 Air Tractor crop duster aircraft. The plane was a complete loss; the pilot suffered moderate injuries, and was packaged and removed. Local farmers assisted with equipment to create a path in the corn and transport the patient out of the field to the ambulance.



AUGUST 2013

Rochelle Paramedics Get Certified in Prehospital Trauma Life Support (PHTLS)

Ten Rochelle full time and paid-on-call Paramedics attended PHTLS hosted at the Rochelle Fire Station. This 12 hour course focuses on the effective management and treatment of trauma patients including those with life threatening physical and neurological injuries. The training was delivered by our EMS System Provider, OSF Northern Illinois Emergency Management System.



Lincoln Highway Heritage Festival

The fire department personnel were busy during the LHHF in August, selling their pork chop sandwiches, participating in the parade, and providing first aid and safety services.



SEPTEMBER 2013

RTHS Texting and Driving Student Assembly and Mock Accident

The fire department participated in the RTHS Texting and Driving Mock Accident, providing simulated fire and rescue response to “victims” of a deadly accident caused by texting and driving. The assembly was coordinated by the Rochelle Hospital in partnership with over a dozen local and state agencies including Rochelle Police, Rochelle Fire, Ogle County Sheriff, Ogle County Coroner, OSF Aviation, Illinois State Police, WRHL Radio, and Rochelle Township High School and was attended by over 1000 students, staff, families, and media.



Firefighters Complete Hazardous Materials Tech A

As it is an identified hazard in the Hub City, Rochelle Firefighters hosted a Hazardous Materials Tech A class that many throughout the region attended. Fire department members learned about offensive and defensive measures to mitigate a haz-mat incident. The department now has a total of 13 Tech A team members that work in conjunction with MABAS Division 6 (DeKalb County) Haz-Mat Tech team to provide a well-trained response to any incident.

OCTOBER 2013



Fire Prevention Week begins

The fire station became a busy place during the month of October, playing host to over 450 children, from ages 3 to 10 years, learning fire safety from the Rochelle firefighters. Each year, the week in which October 9th falls is designated Fire Prevention Week. Mayor Olson proclaimed the week of October

7th-11th as “Fire Prevention Week in Rochelle” and the schools began scheduling tours at the station and firefighter visits to the classrooms.

NOVEMBER 2013

City Management Participates in Command and General Staff Course

Fire Chief Brian Johnson and Lt. Dave Sawlsville joined the Mayor, City Manager, and various other management personnel in the City in an Illinois Fire Service Institute course called Command and General Staff. The course is designed for responders and government officials to gain knowledge and experience using the Incident Command System, managing large scale, complex emergencies and operate as a team. The course included several simulated emergencies and generated much discussion about effective use of personnel, reliable communication, and the importance of emergency planning.



New Communication Tool: I Am Responding

In conjunction with the Rochelle Police Department Dispatch the Fire Department is now receiving dispatch information to a computer screen in the station and member's cell phones to help locate an incident and provide other critical dispatch information about an emergency. This technology also helps to identify who is responding to an emergency along with their estimated time of arrival. This new technology helps get critical resources to the scene faster.

Structure Fire Causes \$50,000 in Damage

At 2:19pm on November 1st, Rochelle Firefighters responded to a structure fire at 322 N. 11th St. On arrival, heavy fire was found emanating from the north side of the apartment house's second floor. Occupying residents were able to escape the home safely after a neighbor was able to alert them to the fire. Firefighters from the Ogle-Lee FPD were called for mutual aid, and despite various challenges, the fire was safely brought under control with no injuries reported. One cat was rescued and taken to the Rochelle Veterinary Hospital. Damage to the building was estimated at \$50,000.



Violent Wind Storm Sweeps Through Area

On November 17th at 1pm a violent wind storm swept through the area blowing multiple semi-tractor trailers on I39 off the road causing multiple accidents that required responses from multiple apparatus. A farm building on North Rte. 251 was blown over, partially blocking the roadway. Crews assisted in removing the building components from the roadway and washed the road.

DECEMBER 2013

Rochelle Firefighters Compete in Bed Races

Rochelle Firefighters competed in the 2013 Old Fashioned Christmas Parade and Bed Races. RFD firefighters were one of five teams competing in the races this year. After a controversial random drawing for a first round bye, the RFD team took two straight races to win the tournament. Having lost in the first round, the Rochelle Street Department did not get a much anticipated shot at the RFD team this year, the RFD runners are looking forward to flexing their engineering and leg muscles again next year and hoping for that head-to-head matchup with Streets.



Gertie still "parading around"

RFD's pride and joy, Engine 1, or "Ol' Gertie" as she is better known, again graced every parade held in Rochelle this year. Beginning with Memorial Day, she participated in parades during Independence Day, the Lincoln Highway Heritage Festival and the RTHS Homecoming. Above, she is shown "decked out" in white lights during the Lighted Christmas Parade in downtown Rochelle.

Fire Damages N. 3rd Street Home

On December 13th at approximately 8:00 pm a house fire was reported at 722 N. 3rd. Heavy fire located in the rear of the building. The fire was quickly brought under control although the house experience heavy damage. No one was injured. The estimated loss of the property was \$37,000.

Cold conditions for a Car Fire

On December 13th, a vehicle fire was reported in the Walmart parking lot. The fire was contained to the engine compartment of one vehicle. The hood was popped and fire extinguished. Approximately \$1,500 damage was done. The wind chill was below zero and the water quickly turned to ice.



Needy Families Food & Toy Drive

The fire department again hosted this drive, accepting and storing donations for this group. On December 21st, Ogle-Lee firefighters delivered Christmas boxes to families in the rural areas. Students from RTHS gathered at the fire station on the morning of Christmas Eve and delivered boxes to the families in Rochelle. Before delivering, Rochelle firefighters, family and friends prepared and hosted a breakfast at the Fireman's Social Hall for the students. This has been a long standing tradition that puts an exclamation point on the Christmas season.

Emergency Responses

Ambulance Responses	
January	138*
February	122
March	141
April	126*
May	144*
June	145*
July	149*
August	152*
September	161
October	149*
November	157*
December	157*
Total	1741

Fire/Rescue Responses	
January	24
February	17
March	14
April	9
May	11
June	19
July	13
August	8
September	10
October	17
November	10
December	16
Total	168

Total Responses: 1929

Total loss to structure fires this year was \$282,835. Due to the work of the fire department, over 4.5 million dollars in structures and contents were saved. Three large losses accounted for much of the total, two house fires and the Behr Recycling fire. During the course of the year, Rochelle fire personnel have compiled over 3000 hours of continuing education hours. These hours consist of required hours for EMT certification, refresher hours for fire & rescue training, firefighter safety and water and dive rescue training.

Rochelle Fire Department Roster
Career Firefighters



Chief Brian Johnson



Lieutenant Dave Sawlsville



Lieutenant Jason Underwood



Lieutenant Dan Miller



**Firefighter/Paramedic
Brian Edwards**



**Firefighter/Paramedic
Robert Workman**



**Firefighter/Paramedic
Zach Prewett**



**Firefighter/Paramedic
Jeremy Good**



**Firefighter/Paramedic
Josh Lewis**



**Firefighter/Paramedic
Jody Willis**



**Firefighter/Paramedic
Benjamin Johnson**



**Firefighter/Paramedic
Tyler Carls**



**Firefighter/Paramedic
Ryan Baylor**

Paid-on-Call Firefighters



FF Tim Leahey



FF Ryan Daugherty



FF/EMT Curt Ward



FF/EMT Dave Simmons



FF Chris Sawlsville



FF Josh Valdivieso



FF/EMT Ryan Brown



FF Brian Bakker



FF/EMT Lanet Erickson



FF/EMT Ken Dougherty



FF/EMT Justin Neale



FF/EMT Jason Shull



EMT Jordan Miller



Maria Perusquia



Melanie Bonilla

***Paid-On-Call personnel
not pictured:***

FF/EMT Curt Helgren

FF/EMT Matt Bolhous

FF/Paramedic Angela

Bosnak

FF Chris Clark

FF/EMT Wes Mellor

FF/EMT Lance Noggle

FF Chris Pierce