

City of Rochelle  
Fire Department  
2014  
Annual Report



Submitted by  
Brian Johnson,  
Fire Chief  
January 2015



**JANUARY 2014**

## ***94<sup>th</sup> Annual Firemen's Ball***

The Rochelle Fire Department Social Organization (RFDSO) continued a long tradition by holding its Annual Fireman's Ball on January 25th. For the first time in recent history Ogle-Lee held there Christmas party in conjunction with the Rochelle Fireman's dinner prior to the ball. Then at 7pm two different bands took the stage. There was a silent auction and a 50/50 raffle. For the first time the event was held at The Flight Deck, the new venue was well embraced. Even Gertie made an appearance for pictures.

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 Fighter Basic Class Graduates***



Through the course of 2013 a Certified Fire Fighter Basic Operations was hosted at the station. The class finished in January. Eight students graduated representing Ashton, Rochelle and Ogle-Lee Departments. Instructors for the class were Josh Lewis, Tyler Carls, Jeremy Good, Tim Leahey, and Tom Richter. The students completed 240 hours of training and approved to test for their official certification. This is the minimum essential training that all fire fighters must have to operate on a fire ground.

## **FEBRUARY 2014**

### ***Smoke at Fuel Station***

On February, 10<sup>th</sup> at 5:47 pm, the fire department was called for a fire on the roof of the Road Ranger Gas Station. Upon arrival, a small fire at the roof line was caused by a burning neon light fixture. Estimated loss of property was \$1,200.00.

### ***Semi-tractor Fire on I-39***

On the 12<sup>th</sup> of February at 10:12 am Engine 8 responded to a semi-tractor fire on 1-39 at mile marker 102 northbound. Upon arrival the semi-tractor-tractor was fully involved and there was no trailer attached. Rochelle and Ogle-Lee Fire crew's applied foam and extinguished the fire. An estimated \$96,000 in damage was done to the semi-tractor-tractor.



### ***Chief Johnson returns as fire chief***

After suffering a stroke in January of 2013, Chief Johnson returns as the full-time fire chief. Johnson completed a part-time administration role before going back to full-time fire chief. Lieutenant Sawlsville was acting fire chief during Johnson's recovery.

## **MARCH 2014**

### ***Water rescue team activated***



On March 10<sup>th</sup> at 7:21 p.m. the water rescue team was activated for what turned out to be a body recovery from the Kyte River, near the intersection of Scott and River Road in Hillcrest. Water approximately 4 feet deep in that location. The boat was used along with firefighters in dry dive suits. Firefighters lowered the dive boat into water approximately 10 feet downstream of the victim.



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**APRIL 2014**

## ***Back to Back Rescue Calls Involving Semi-tractor's***

### ***Semi-tractor Rolls onto side driver extricated***



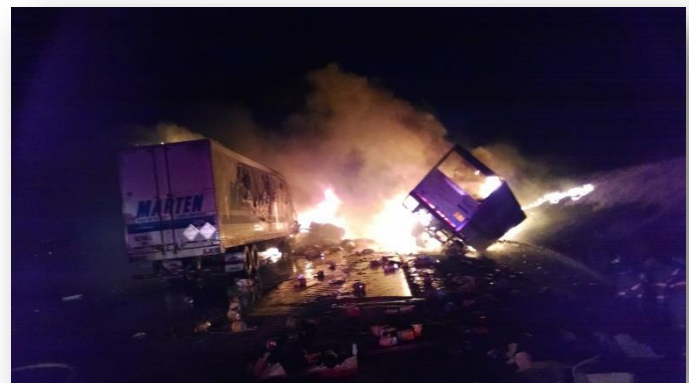
On April 19<sup>th</sup> at 5:17 p.m. a rescue call was received for a semi-tractor rollover with entrapment on I-88 ramp from Illinois R 251. The semi-tractor with a tanker trailer with diesel rolled over 270 degrees with the cab roof crushed. The occupant was trapped in the cab. Extrication lasted about 50 minutes. Life Flight Helicopter was called when crews arrived. The helicopter transported to OSF. Rescue 8 crew stay on scene during the tow crew (Maggio) upended the tanker trailer.



### ***Three Semi-tractor's collide on I-39***

As crews were finishing up from the Semi-tractor roll over an additional call was received at 8:10 p.m. for a multiple semi-tractor accident a few miles away on I-39. Crews immediately responded as a report that there was fire involved & unknown injuries & possible entrapment. Additional engines and tankers requested from Creston, Steward, Flagg Center and Hillcrest, along with a tanker from Lynn-Scott-Rock. This was an accident between 3 semi-tractors, all 3 caught fire. Fire was

extinguished by crews both on the north and south sides of the accident. Later on the victim was found deceased. Three other individuals escaped unhurt. I-39 northbound was shut down the majority of the night. Crews worked with Maggio during cleanup to extinguish spot fires.



## MAY 2014



### ***Rochelle Fire Department Team Runs Great Western Half-Marathon***

On May 10<sup>th</sup>, Lieutenant Jason Underwood and Firefighters Zach Prewett, Jeremy Good and Ryan Baylor ran the Great Western Half-Marathon in St. Charles. A portion of the proceeds benefits the Special Olympics.

## JUNE 2014



### ***Fire Contained to detached garage***

On June 23<sup>rd</sup> at 6:07pm were called 224 S. Main Street for a possible garage fire. Upon arrival found small one car detached garage with heavy smoke inside. Crews found flames in the wall space. Applied water from inside garage, conditions began to improve in garage. It was determined that the homeowner was using a propane torch to control weeds around his property, including the garage, and likely started the fire by accident. No injuries were reported.

### ***Lieutenant David Sawlsville weds Laura Broome***

On June 14<sup>th</sup> Lt. Dave Sawlsville married Laura Broome at Faith Lutheran Church. An outside reception was held at the home of Thad Hayes, a retired fireman.



## ***Firefighter Josh Lewis weds Stephanie Catalani***

A few days later, FF. Josh Lewis married Stephanie Catalani on June 20<sup>th</sup> At St. Patrick's Church with an outside reception held at Storybook Gardens on Bethel Road.



Fire department members played an important part on their respective wedding days and in wishing both couples many years of happiness together. And of course, Gertie was invited.

## ***Memorial Held for Kenneth Wendt***



Family and friends, along with many community members and fellow firefighters gathered to honor fallen firefighter Kenneth Wendt on Friday June 27<sup>th</sup>. At the Fire Dept. Museum, Chaplain Judy Williams spoke of the memorial service and offered a prayer; Rochelle Fire Chief Brian Johnson and firefighter/paramedic Rob Workman spoke of Wendt, with Workman sharing the events of that tragic fire back on Dec. 27, 1950. Wendt's grandson, Ken Wendt, thanked all who attended the day's

tribute. Wendt and his son Kaden presented Rodney Wendt, Kenneth's only son, an original firefighter's helmet with Kenneth's number on it. Firefighters and chief from Stillman Valley Fire, Mt. Morris Fire, Byron Fire, Ogle-Lee Fire attended the ceremony as well as Rochelle Police and Ogle County's deputies.



## **JULY 2014**

### ***Annual Fireworks Display***

With Chief Brian Johnson in charge, Rochelle Fire members continued the tradition of a Fourth of July fireworks display. Muddy conditions plagued the set up but it wouldn't stop them from putting on another great show. That was about 25 minutes in length for a large crowd on a beautiful night temps in the low 70's and clear sky.



### ***Fire Station Gets Landscape Update***

The Station for the first time in 40 years got its landscaping updated. The members of the department spent countless hours tearing out the old shrubs. Then preparing for new plants; laying brick landscape blocks followed by mulch.



**Before**



**During landscaping**

### ***VMO Class Hosted***

A Illinois Certified Vehicle Machinery Operations class was hosted on July 12,13,19,20. The students learned about a wide range of vehicle extrication techniques. Rochelle, Ogle-Lee and Oregon firefighters attended the class that was taught with Illinois Fire Service Institute instructors. Part of the class was conducted at Behr Iron & Metals of Rochelle & they generously donated fifteen cars for the training.





### ***Rochelle Dive Team Conducts Training in Quarry & Hickory Grove Pool***

Members of the Rochelle Fire Department Dive Team conducted two trainings in the month of July. First team practiced fundamentals of diving in the Hickory Grove pool. Then they went to 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.



### **AUGUST 2014**



### ***Lincoln Highway Heritage Festival***

The fire department personnel were busy during the LHHF in August, selling over 2000 pork chop sandwiches, participating in the parade, the flag was flown from the top of Ladder 1 over the antique car show on Lincoln Highway and also provided first aid and safety services. And of course, Gertie was in the car show and many enthusiasts were awed.

## ***Electrical Fire at Cardinal Forge***

On August 29<sup>th</sup> at 8:30 a calls was received for a fire at Cardinal Forge. The building was evacuated and after search, found electrical box on fire. They arrived and shut power down to bldg. Electrical panel opened up and dry chemical used to suppress fire. No injuries were reported.

## **SEPTEMBER 2014**

### ***Fire Fighters battle Rural House Fire***



On September 25<sup>th</sup> at 11:00am the call came in for a house fire in rural Creston. Upon the fire crew's arrival a 2 story frame house was fully involved with fire on both floors. Luckily everybody was out of the home.

The cause was an electrical fire started in a roofed kennel adjacent to the house. Fire fighters conducted a defensive

attack. A detached garage on east side of home was protected unfortunately the house was a total loss. Rochelle, Steward, Creston, Hillcrest, Flagg Center and Lynn-Scott-Rock firefighters responded.



### ***Car Fire on I-39***

On I-39 at mile marker 98, a car fire was reported on September 26<sup>th</sup> at 7:25 am. The Vehicle was previously involved in a rollover accident. As vehicle is being loaded onto tow truck the driver discovered that the vehicle was on fire. When the crews arrived the vehicle was fully engulfed. Crews extinguished the fire nobody was injured.



## **OCTOBER 2014**

### ***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 9<sup>th</sup> falls is designated Fire Prevention Week. FF Ben Johnson instructs preschoolers about smoke detectors.

## ***Explosion in Barn injures Man then Burns down the Barn***

Firefighters were called to the 1800 block of S. White Rock Road at 3:50 p.m. on Oct. 16 for the report of a barn fire. Firefighters were also informed that the property owner had been burned when the fire started. The barn unfortunately burnt down and collapsed about 5 minutes after the firefighter's arrival. The cause was a LP gas heater malfunction causing the explosion. A helicopter was requested to respond to the scene to transport him to a Rockford hospital for treatment of his injuries. Later, the resident returned home in good health. Rochelle, Ogle-Lee, Lynn-Scott-Rock, Ashton and Oregon firefighters fought the fire.



## ***Preparing for Ebola***

On the heels of the Ebola, scare the Rochelle Fire Department in cooperation with Rochelle Community Hospital and OSF At. Anthony's medical resource hospital devised a plan and several protocols to prepare for the possibility of an Ebola patient. The members received training in full personal protective equipment and how to treat, and transport these patients to the RCH ER and then also on how to decontaminate the ambulance. Appropriate PPE supplies were purchased and stocked on the ambulances.



## **NOVEMBER 2014**

### ***Semi-tractor Fire on Rt. 38***

On November 5<sup>th</sup> a semi-tractor fire was reported and crews responded. They found a semi-tractor-tractor was fully involved. The trailer started on fire from the semi-tractor-tractor. Driver was driving on highway and noticed smoke start coming from the engine compartment. An ambulance was dispatched for minor injuries. Rochelle, Creston and Steward firefighters responded.

## **DECEMBER 2014**

### ***Rochelle Firefighters Compete in Bed Races***

Rochelle Firefighters competed in the 2014 Old Fashioned Christmas Parade and Bed Races. RFD firefighters were one of five teams competing in the races this year. The RFD runner's accidentally run over the lighted tree that tells the team to start and suffered a first round loss. Luckily the tree only suffered minor injuries in the accident and the bed was undamaged. They are looking forward to flexing their engineering and leg muscles again next year and hoping for that head-to-head match to redeem itself in 2015. The firefighters also sold pork chops at the fire station and participated in the Christmas Lighted Parade, entering Ladder 1 and Ol' Gertie.



### ***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**

<u>Ambulance Responses</u>	
January	200
February	108
March	146
April	137
May	175
June	139
July	124
August	169
September	141
October	130
November	142
December	138
<b>Total</b>	<b>1749</b>

<u>Fire/Rescue Responses</u>	
January	19
February	20
March	14
April	24
May	23
June	25
July	11
August	8
September	21
October	17
November	17
December	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>208</b>

**Total Responses: 1957**

Fires losses consisted of contents loss of \$108,500.00 and property loss are \$201,000.00. Two large losses accounted for much of the total; two commercial structures had equipment fires that were isolated to a particular piece of equipment. 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***



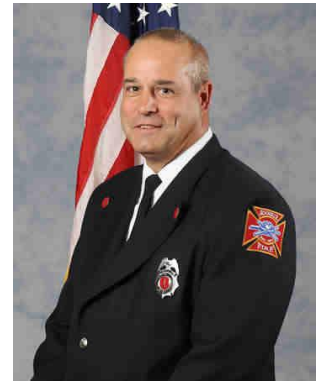
***Chief Brian Johnson***



***Lieutenant Dave Sawlsville***



***Lieutenant Jason Underwood***



***Lieutenant Dan Miller***



***Firefighter/Paramedic  
Brian Edwards***



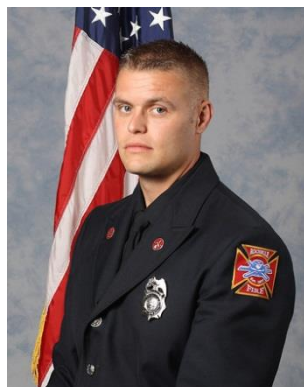
***Firefighter/Paramedic  
Robert Workman***



***Firefighter/Paramedic  
Zach Prewett***



***Firefighter/Paramedic  
Jeremy Good***



***Firefighter/Paramedic  
Josh Lewis***



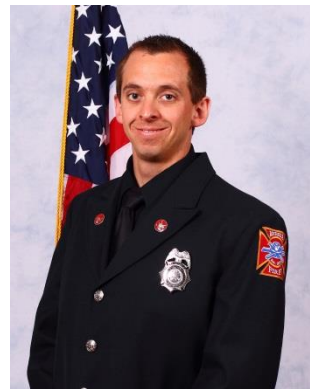
***Firefighter/Paramedic  
Jody Willis***



***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/PM Angela Bosnak***

***FF Chris Clark***

***FF/EMT Wes Mellor***

***FF/EMT Lewis Noggle***

***FF K. Nay***

***FF/EMT L. Harmon***

***FF/EMT Brandan***

***Sanders***

***FF Chris Pierce***

***FF/EMT Tim South***

***FF/PM Matt Plote***

***FF Amanda Ungar***