



2015 saw the numbers of building fires return to average after a dropping 56% in previous years. Although there is a spike in the statistics the number are lower than the amount of building fires in 2013 and 2012. Even with a surge in the numbers the overall trend over the last several years is that the amount of major fires and multiple alarm fires in the Perth Amboy continues to decrease.

The department though continues to remain busy as it keeps itself poised and at the ready for emergencies. The first of its kind drill in the State of New Jersey was conducted in Perth Amboy in order to better prepare first responders with the dangers of Bakken Crude. The large scale drill, which was conducted at the Buckeye Partners Terminal on State Street, had participants from Federal, State, County and Local levels. The drill allowed the Perth Amboy Fire department to operate with mutual aid from all over the State and simulate a large scale fire and explosion within the terminal.

In 2015, the department was awarded \$144,500 in FEMA Homeland Security Funds with a Port Security Grant. This grant will be specifically used to offset the maintenance costs of Marine 5, assist with the training of new boat operators & crew members and upgrade the thermal imaging system to better aid in the search and rescue efforts of victims in the water. This marks the second consecutive year that the department was awarded FEMA funding. In 2014 the department was awarded \$477,520.00 in FEMA Funds with a SAFER (Staffing for Adequate Emergency Response) Grant. That grant allowed the City to hire an additional 4 career firefighters to continue with the goal of having an NFPA compliant department that is adequately staffed. In January 2016, the department has already applied, with the City's approval, for a FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant. This highly competitive grant is requesting \$900,000 in FEMA Funds to assist in the replacement of Ladder 1, a 16 year old ladder truck. The department also plans on applying for a 2016 SAFER Grant to assist in hiring additional career firefighters to obtain compliance with NFPA 1710 as well as a 2016 Port Security Grant to assist the department in purchasing industrial foam firefighting equipment so that the department is prepared to handle emergencies at its three large bulk storage industrial terminals.

Career Division:

2015 saw the retirement of Battalion Chief Kenneth Kozak, Firefighters Robert Anderson and Anthony Balewitz all who retired after serving in the Career Division for 25 years. All three men started as volunteer firefighters and continued their love of firefighting by making it a career. The Department wishes them all the best in their future endeavors.

The with the vacancies created with the retirement of Battalion Chief Kozak two promotions needed to be made Captain Sammy Arroyo was promoted to Battalion Chief and Firefighter Carlos Gonzalez stepped in to the leadership role as he was promoted to Captain. BC Arroyo is currently serving as the shift commander with Battalion #1 and Captain Gonzalez is serving as the truck officer on Battalion #2.



Captain Lopazanski, Battalion Mullen, Chief Pitre, Mayor Diaz with the newly promoted Battalion Arroyo and Captain Gonzalez

With these retirements the department will be looking to upcoming entry level firefighter list to fills its ranks. This past year for the first time the department made a concerted effort to get as many residents to take the entry level exam. The Fire Department held employment open house/hiring information sessions. The purpose of the sessions was to reach out to as many residents as possible in order to educate them of the test and hiring processes. This also served as insight to a career in firefighting; these sessions were received very well and hopefully will have a positive impact the number of residents that taken the test.

Numerous members of the department at the end of 2015 were recognized by various organizations in the State as well as internally for heroic efforts as well as going above and beyond during incidents some of these incidents were; Firefighter Ramos while off-duty grabbed on to a woman who was attempting commit suicide by jumping off the Victory Bridge. Chief Pitre, Firefighters DeNardo, Cruz and Macri for rescuing a woman who was unconscious in an apartment fire. Captain Lopazanski and his crew were recognized for coordinating a confined space rescue in Fords. Several members were also recognized for several difficult “High-Angle” rescues that were performed over the course of the year both in Perth Amboy as well as Carteret and Fords.

Training/ Special Operations

In July 2015, the department reorganized its Special Operations Rescue Division. This division, is made up of 24 members from each of the four shifts, will receive monthly specialized training as technicians and specialists in the following areas such as: high angle rope rescue, confined space rescue, water & ice rescue, trench & building collapse rescue, motor vehicle extrication, and man-in-machine rescue. In 2014 & 2015, the department has upgraded much of its rescue equipment including new hydraulic extrication equipment, new heavy duty struts for vehicle and building stabilization, new air bags for heavy lifting, new ropes and hardware for rope and confined space, new ice rescue equipment and new water rescue equipment. Through the capital improvement plan, a new Rescue 1 heavy rescue truck is projected to be ordered in 2019 and placed into service in 2020. This new rescue unit will consolidate 4 vehicles into 1 truck. A 1975 utility van, a 1988 utility truck, a 1998 medium rescue truck and 2003 light rescue truck will become one unit. This will better service the mission of the department and allow the department to respond to all rescue incidents with one truck. Throughout the County the department has been called upon for assistance with technical rescues. In 2015, the department responded to Fords for a confined space rescue an also to Carteret for a high angle rescue.

In December 2015, the department reorganized its Marine Division. Due to retirements, the department has lost a significant amount of members that had been trained as boat operators and crew members. This division, made is made up of 24 members from each of the four shifts. This division trains constantly and responds to an average of 30 marine rescue calls each year. All existing and new members of the division attended a 16 hour basic training class in December. This class was taught by the United States Coast Guard Auxillary Floatilla # 22. They covered Rules of the Road, Aids to Navigation, Charting & Plotting, Electronics and Basic Search and Rescue Operations. In May of 2015, two boat operators attended a four day school at USCG Station Staten Island in US Coast Guard Search and Rescue Operations, and in May of 2016, three boat operators are scheduled to attend this same four day school. Furthermore there

will be ongoing operator and crew member training with the goal of having 4 qualified boat operators on each shift, ensuring there is always a boat operator on duty so the boat can respond immediately to any emergency 24/7.

The department also held an Emergency Medical Responder class where every member of the department that currently is not an Emergency Medical Technician was instructed to a First Responder level so that whichever apparatus response to a medical emergency all members of the department that are on scene have medical training above and beyond basic first aid.

Along with the increase in training in specialized rescue operations the department continued to complete training and reinforced basic firefighter skills. With an excess of over 2,000 classes attended by the members of this department hours pile up. The commitment and dedication

- * Building Construction
- * Aerial ladder operations
- * Ventilation
- * Water Rescue
- * Thermal Imaging Camera Operations
- * Lockout/Tagout
- * Ice Rescue
- * Flammable Liquid Fires
- * Firefighter Safety
- * Firefighter Rescue and Safety
- * Forcible Entry
- * Mayday Training
- * Engine Company Operations
- * Hoseline Advancement
- * Scene Size-up



Volunteer Division:

Over the past year the department has recruited nine new volunteers including two females, both of which are interested in becoming career firefighters. Although the trend nationally is the ranks of the volunteers are dwindling due socioeconomic reasons that are plague volunteer departments throughout the country. The department is developing a program to encourage community members to join the volunteer ranks; although there is a significant cost outlay to outfit and train a volunteer firefighter the benefits for both the volunteer and the community cannot be measure in currency.

In 2015 the Volunteer Division has participated with more than over 4000 hours of participation. They are an integral part of the department as they participate in the In-Station duty program. This program allows members to spend 4 hours blocks of “on duty” time in the firehouse to respond with the initial response apparatus to alarms, providing for additional manpower on initial arriving apparatus at an emergency incident. In addition, the In-Station duty program was modified so that every Saturday morning volunteers were scheduled to standby in so that the department could deploy the fire boat for training on a regular basis. The In-Station Duty Program also serves to foster a cohesive working relationship between members of the Career and Volunteer Divisions.

Industry:

The department also continues to maintain a good working relationship with various local industries throughout the city. Members once again spent a week of training at the Buckeye facility, conducting hands on training on with the new processes that Buckeye has put in place.



This year the department contracted with another industrial facility in Sayreville to provide confined space rescue services. In addition, industrial site training was conducted at Morton Salt, Ashland Corporation, Next Era Energy and Gerdau Ameristeel. This annual training allows members to not only interact with staff of the facility, but also provides valuable information to department members in case of an actual emergency incident within the facility.

Members stand by during a confined space rescue while rescuers package a patient

National Fire Incident Reporting Data: The fire department responded to a total of 2,134 incidents in 2015, an average of 6 responses per day. This is consistent with the previous five years.



Utilizing data and definitions compiled by the National Fire Incident Reporting System, a department response to a “Fire” incident includes any response generated by the fire department to an open flame in need of extinguishment.

In 2015, the department responded to 201 fires, compared to 184 in 2014. In addition, a “Building Fire” is classified as any fire within a building with the exception of confined fires involving cooking with no extension from the cooking container, a fire confined to a chimney or flue, incinerator or trash compactor or fuel/oil burner with no flame extension outside of the heating unit.

The total number of building fires has decreased to 37 compared to 46 in 2013. Of the 37 building fires, 16 were classified as a working fire or greater alarm response level; of those only 3 of those fires were second alarm or greater. In 2013 16 building fires were classified as a multiple alarm fires. Having only three multiple alarm fires in a city with buildings that are older and are densely packed compared to suburban areas is great news indeed! The decrease has continued the trend that started in 2014 with amount of large fires decreasing.

The department also continues to see an increase in the amount of service orientated type calls for assistance to the public, ranging from lock outs and residents trapped in elevators to flooded basements and animal rescues. The department responded to 1,924 calls for non-fire or EMS assistance by members of the public during 2015. Along with handling emergencies in the City of Perth Amboy the department also responded to multi-alarm fires in surround municipalities including: Avenel, Carteret, Keasbey, Woodbridge, Iselin, South Amboy, and North Brunswick.

Below is a sample of incidents compared over the last three years:

<u>FIRES</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2013</u>
Fire, Other	1	1	4
Building fire	37	20	46
Fires in structure other than in a building	1	3	2
Cooking fire, confined to container	40	63	63
Fuel burner/boiler malfunction, fire confined	5	7	8

Trash or rubbish fire, contained	4	2	8
Dryer Fire contained	3	3	0
Passenger vehicle fire	21	12	14
Brush or brush-and-grass mixture fire	19	14	8
Mulch Fire	34	14	4
Grass fire	4	3	2
Outside rubbish fire, Other	1	3	2
Outside rubbish, trash or waste fire	23	30	45
Dumpster or other outside trash receptacle fire	3	8	9

OVERPRESSURE/RUPTURE/EXPLOSION

Overpressure rupture, explosion, overheat other	1	0	0
Overpressure rupture of steam pipe or pipeline	1	1	0
Overpressure rupture of steam boiler	1	1	2
Excessive heat, scorch burns with no ignition	1	0	1

RESCUE AND EMS INCIDENTS

Medical assist, assist EMS crew	73	32	66
EMS call, excluding vehicle accident with injury	270	287	797
Motor vehicle accident with injuries	159	175	173
Motor vehicle/pedestrian accident (MV Ped)	60	56	49
Motor Vehicle Accident with no injuries	29	25	21
Lock-in	13	16	13
Search for person in water	10	6	5
Extrication, rescue, Other	1	4	1
Extrication of victim(s) from building/structure	1	0	0
Extrication of victim(s) from vehicle	6	3	2
Removal of victim(s) from stalled elevator	25	14	18
Trench/below-grade rescue	1	0	0
Confined space rescue	1	0	0
High-angle rescue	3	0	1
Water & ice-related rescue I other	2	1	1
Swimming/recreational water areas rescue	2	2	3
Watercraft rescue	15	12	4

HAZARDOUS CONDITION

Hazardous condition, Other	6	6	3
Combustible/flammable gas/liquid condition,	12	1	11
Gasoline or other flammable liquid spill	14	18	16
Gas leak (natural gas or LPG)	88	79	74
Oil or other combustible liquid spill	10	11	15
Chemical hazard (no spill or leak)	11	11	11
Carbon monoxide incident	51	43	38

Electrical wiring/equipment problem, Other	15	17	11
Heat from short circuit (wiring) I defective/worn	13	10	11
Power line down	132	130	138
Arcing, shorted electrical equipment	24	21	18

Service Calls

Lock-out	36	31	43
Water problem, Other	6	5	8
Secure Open Hydrant	1	5	4
Water or steam leak	64	59	40
Smoke or odor removal	11	15	9
Animal rescue	7	6	5
Public service assistance, Other	3	2	2
Assist police or other governmental agency	61	63	40
Police matter	1	5	4
Public service	10	12	16
Assist invalid	1	2	2
Defective elevator, no occupants	21	28	26
Unauthorized burning	3	4	5

Good intent

Cover assignment, standby, move up	14	15	14
Good intent call, Other	10	8	8
Dispatched & cancelled enroute	36	40	69
No Incident found on arrival at dispatch address	12	19	14
Smoke scare I odor of smoke	50	45	42
Steam, vapor, fog or dust thought to be smoke	8	7	9
Smoke from barbecue, tar kettle	4	6	5
HazMat release investigation w/o HazMat	8	19	3

False Alarm

False alarm or false call, Other	12	16	5
Central station, malicious false alarm	23	26	14
Local alarm system, malicious false alarm	1	4	5
System malfunction, Other	15	11	6
Sprinkler activation due to malfunction	8	18	4
Smoke detector activation due to malfunction	74	95	122
Heat detector activation due to malfunction	5	8	6
Alarm system sounded due to malfunction	76	130	108
CO detector activation due to malfunction	16	21	19
Unintentional transmission of alarm, Other	13	12	6
Sprinkler activation, no fire - unintentional	10	6	8

Smoke detector activation, no fire	117	125	82
Detector activation, no fire - unintentional	35	17	21
Alarm system activation, no fire - unintentional	41	96	124
Carbon monoxide detector activation, no CO	12	19	16

Public Outreach and Fire Education:

The majority of the time the fire department is seen as only an emergency response agency the department feels it is important to help the community not only during an emergency but when there is no emergency at all. With involvement from both the chief’s office as well as the unions the department has helped out many residents throughout the year. Over 500 walking canes for the blind were purchased with the money that was raised with the “Beep Ball” charity softball games. The canes were delivered to the Dominican Republic so that the poor on the island can have true assisted mobility devices. Along with the firehouse tours that are done year round with school children. The fire department conducts a tour for blind children who live throughout the state. The tours which are specifically tailored for who are blind and visually impaired incorporate all the sense to provide a holistic experience for the children. Some of the other events and organizations that the members participated to wither with their time or raising money was: , the Mayor’s dinner for the needy, Susan G. Komen foundation with the sale of breast cancer shirts, “Mowvember” for men’s health, the polar plunge for the widows and children’s fund, Habitat for Humanity, Bicycle donations as well as going as far as purchasing an antique firetruck that was slated to be sold by a fire museum in Nebraska in order to bring the departments history back home.

The fire department continues its fire house tours and school visits. The members of the department educate over 8,000 kids in the Perth Amboy School system as well as children that are enrolled in private educational programs in the City. This interaction with the kids provides a positive experience that the children remember for years to come as is evident as they approach firefighters throughout the year advising them that *“I saw you at my school”*. Programs were conducted at Peterson, Wilentz, Ceres and Flynn Schools as well as the High School during the course of the year.



Members of Battalion 1 conduct a fire prevention education program to children of one the City's parochial schools.

The Perth Amboy Fire Department held its 5th Annual Open House at Fire Headquarters during Fire Prevention Week in October. Over 500 members of the community attended the event. Every year the event gets bigger and better with more activities and larger participation from residents. This past year the local Dunkin Donuts participated with a “mini” Dunkin Donuts store giving away free coffee and donuts for everyone that came out.

The Open House allows the public to view what the Fire department does by showcasing rescue demonstrations as well as the equipment. With the assistance of the fire unions and local businesses we are able to donate numerous smoke/carbon monoxide detectors and fire extinguishers to the public. The event is becoming a yearly get together for families where they can learn about fire safety as a family. Fire rescue demonstrations are conducted by members of the department and an endurance course is set up where members of the public can complete so they can simulate some of the tasks that fire fighters have to complete. In addition, raffles, prizes and refreshments were also provided.

Although the open house is to bring the community in to the fire house and highlight what the fire department provide we also invite other agencies within Middlesex County to highlight services available throughout the county. The Middlesex County Fire Marshal's Office provided the usage of the Fire Safety House from the Middlesex County Fire Academy as well as the Urban Search and Rescue team comes out with their truck and provides a demonstration of their equipment. The interest from the public insures that the open house will be an annual event for years to come.

This family approach to fire prevention is very well received by the public and we hope to continue this “newer” tradition for years to come. The Perth Amboy Fire Department has been attempting to not just teach children fire prevention safety and strategies but teach the entire family as well, which is one of the main objectives of the annual Open House.



A large crowd gathers to see an extrication demonstration during the 2015 open house.

In another project the Fire Department collaborated with HEALTH for Youths, which is a nonprofit organization formed for the charitable and educational purposes of assisting youth. We strive to combat community deterioration and juvenile delinquency, improve the quality of education, health care and life-skills training offered to adolescence and young adults. We have teamed up HEALTH for youth to adopt a park on Seaman Avenue as well as institute a reading program for families in Perth Amboy which are held at both at Fire Headquarters and the Perth Amboy Public Library. With the help from HEALTH for Youths we initiated an adopt a park program where the Seaman Avenue park was adopted and hopefully in the near future will be a “Fire and Police” themed park with help from the Police Department and the recreation Department.

In 2015 the Fire Department once again participated collaborated and partnered with the Personalized Learning Academy (PLA) and the Accelerated High School (AcHS) Learning through Interest/Internship (LTI) program. With this mentoring program at the Fire Department students who have an interest in learning more about the functions, operations and responsibilities of the Fire Department and which could potentially lead to a future career interest in a rewarding profession for these student interns. What has been learned is that students who

enter the program that may not have had an initial interest in firefighting get an appreciation for the firefighting career and some even have expressed changing career paths after being exposed to this program

The department has been fortunate that the City administration has been an advocate of public safety and very supportive of the department. The mayor has been made it a point that she public safety is an important aspect of her vision for the City. That being said the department continues to modernize its aging fleet. At the time of this report the department is finalizing pre build specifications and details of a new 2015/2016 Pierce ladder truck. This truck will be state of the art in features and safety. Featuring a 100 foot reach with a bucket so that firefighters can operate safely as well it being safer to rescue victims if need arise. The department is also looking for ways to maximize the value of a dollar but purchasing vehicles that will have multipurpose uses. The department will be receiving in the next few months a multi-use pickup truck, being capable to be used for training purposes, the marine division and with added towing and plowing capabilities. This alleviates the need for public works to continually plow the public safety lots of snow which allows them to concentrate on City streets.

Now and in the future the department will strive to make it an accessible community based department. The department relies on the City administration and the resident for support without it we would fail to flourish; it is for those reasons we do our due diligence when purchasing and making decisions that will take the department to the future. That being said while looking into the future the department and City administration is in the planning phase and talks to building an additional firehouse. The new firehouse will better serve residents by covering more areas as well as reducing response times in the outlying areas of the city. This hopefully will improve Perth Amboy's ISO rating which will have a direct impact on fire insurance premiums.



PERTH AMBOY FIRE DEPARTMENT



"Always vigilant · planning for the future."

