



2017

Annual Report

The Homer Township Fire Protection District is Committed to:

Protecting the Community with Dedication and Pride

Upholding the highest level of care and service

Advocating for every citizen in their time of need with Professionalism,

Respect, and Honor

Proudly upholding our values and tradition of making house calls since 1958

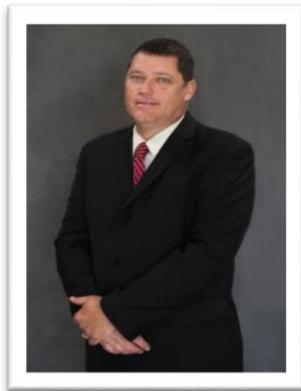


Homer Township Professional Firefighters
Local 4223

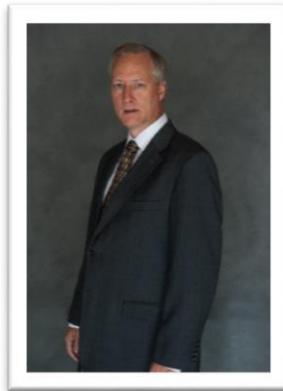
ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK:

The Homer Township Fire Protection District began operations on August 14, 1958 as a volunteer fire department and has grown through the years to a department staffed with 39 full time firefighter paramedics. The District is overseen by a three (3) member Board of Trustees who hire the Fire Chief to administer and manage the day to day operations. The Board of Trustees also appoint a three (3) member Board of Fire Commissioners whose duty it is to conduct the hiring of new firefighter/paramedics as well as administer the promotional process of the full time firefighter/paramedic staff. Our 2017 staff consisted of 1 Fire Chief, 3 Battalion Chiefs (supervise each shift), 1 Human Resources/Finance Director, 1 Administrative Services Assistant and 1 Division Chief of Fire Prevention. The District's current ISO (Insurance Service Office) rating is Class 3 and Class 8b in non-hydrant areas.

TRUSTEES



Troike

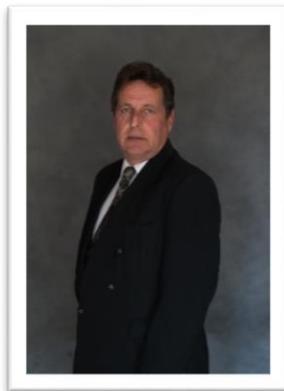


Anderson



Doyle

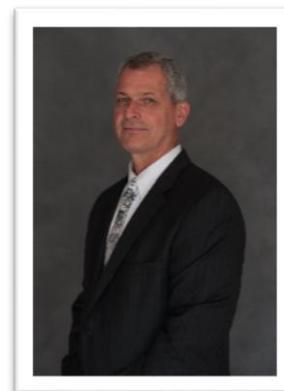
COMMISSIONERS



Colabelli



Challans



Senne

MESSAGE FROM THE FIRE CHIEF:

Another year has passed and 2017 was a year of change for the Homer Township Fire Protection District, On January 1st, I became the Fire Chief and immediately started to work on improving the Districts financial position by working with the Village of Homer Glen and the City of Lockport to assist with growth and obtaining new income for the Fire District.

Our staff continues to seek alternative funding sources to improve equipment/facilities. We have exciting news that we received a federal grant for \$318,812 to purchase a replacement tanker as our old unit was taken out of service at the beginning of 2017. The new unit will arrive around July 2018. We also received a grant from Illinois American Water for \$1000 and Enbridge for \$1000. We continue to look at all aspects of the District as we are still rebounding from the economic slump of past years. Along with the Fire Fighters Local agreeing to a contract variance for the daily staffing, the District has also restructured the administration staff from two full time to one part time position. The District has outsourced the financial functions to a governmental accounting firm that will save the District a significant amount of money and we are looking at all areas to decrease costs.

Our call volume remains steady as we end the year and once again, we were very fortunate that there were no fire related fatalities this year. We attribute this success to our fire fighter training, public education programs and the careful attention our residents give to fire safety both at home and in their businesses.

The District teamed up with the Will County Sheriff, Homer Glen EMA, Will Cook Ace Hardware and Michelle Kokaly State Farm to host a Youth Summer Safety Camp and an open house at Will Cook Ace Hardware. In cooperation with the Northwest Homer Fire District, two free CPR classes were held at each Fire District during the year. There are approximately 80 citizens that are now trained in CPR.

If you have any questions about the Fire District, please feel free to contact us anytime.

On behalf of the Trustees, Commissioners, and members of the Homer Township Fire Protection District, we thank you for your support and wish you a safe, productive and positive 2018.

Fire Chief

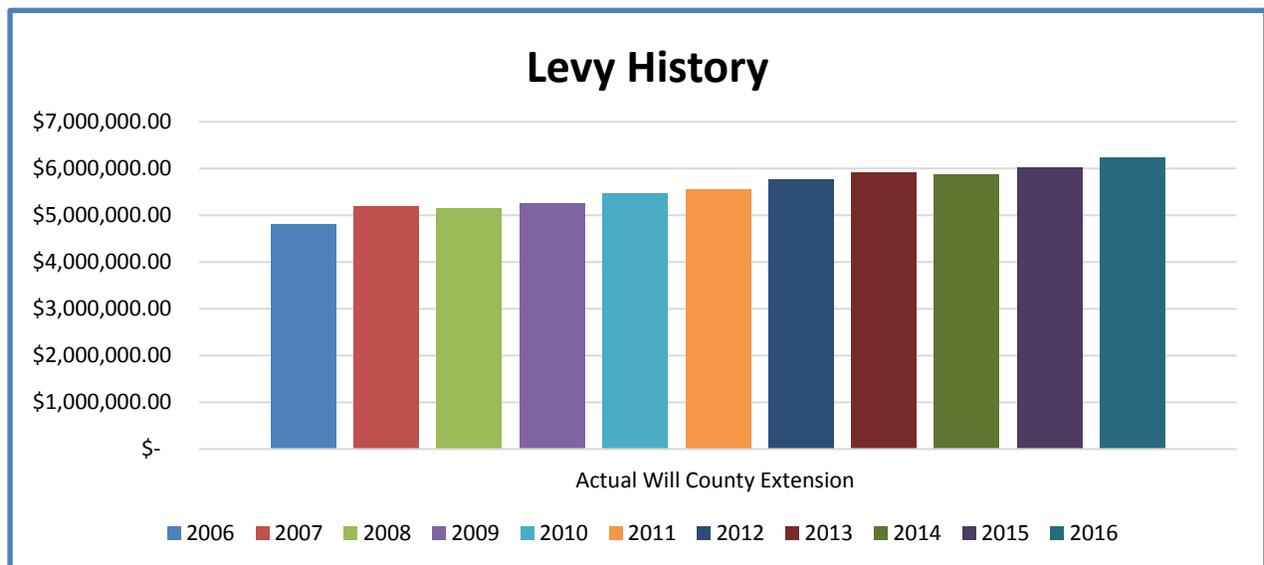
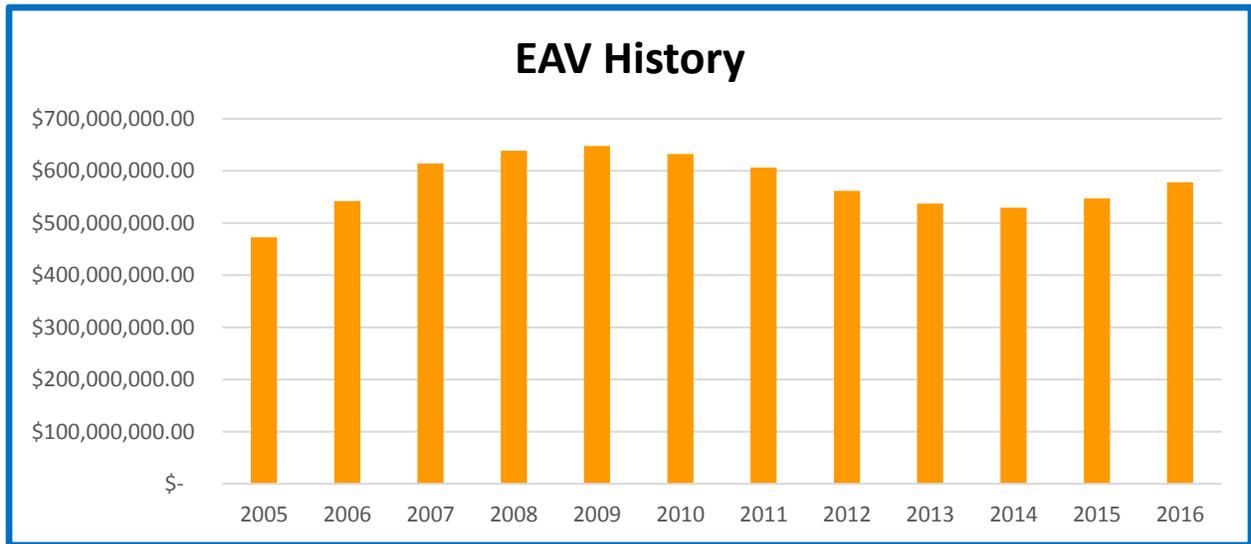


Chris Locasius

FINANCE:

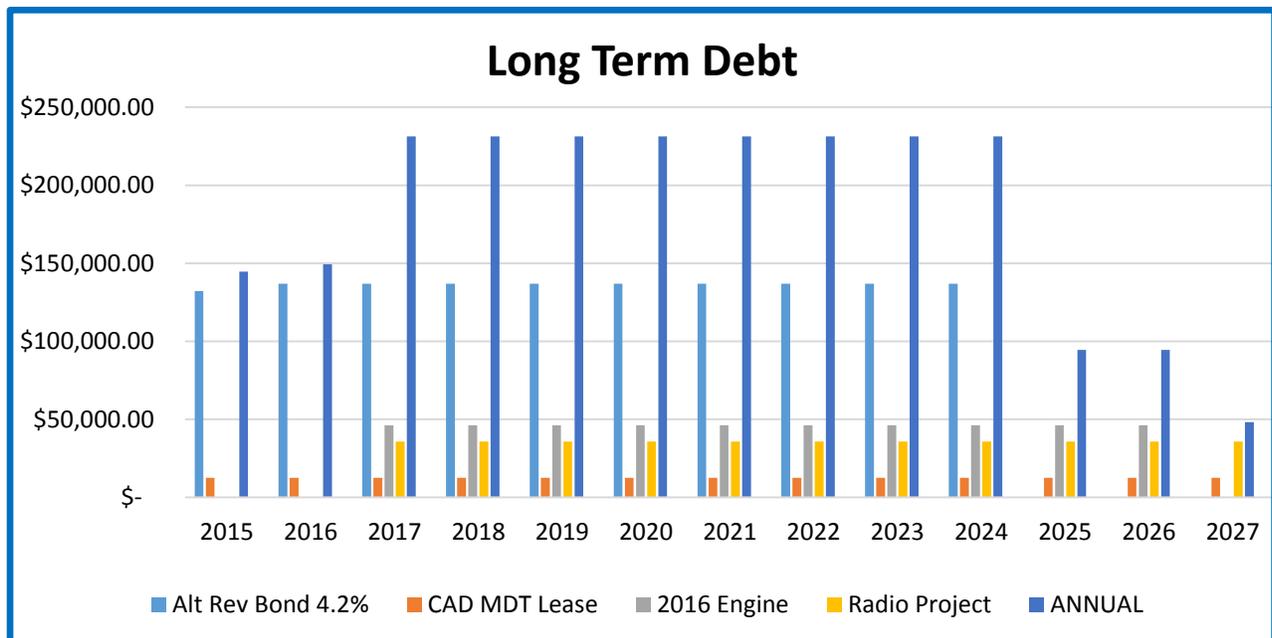
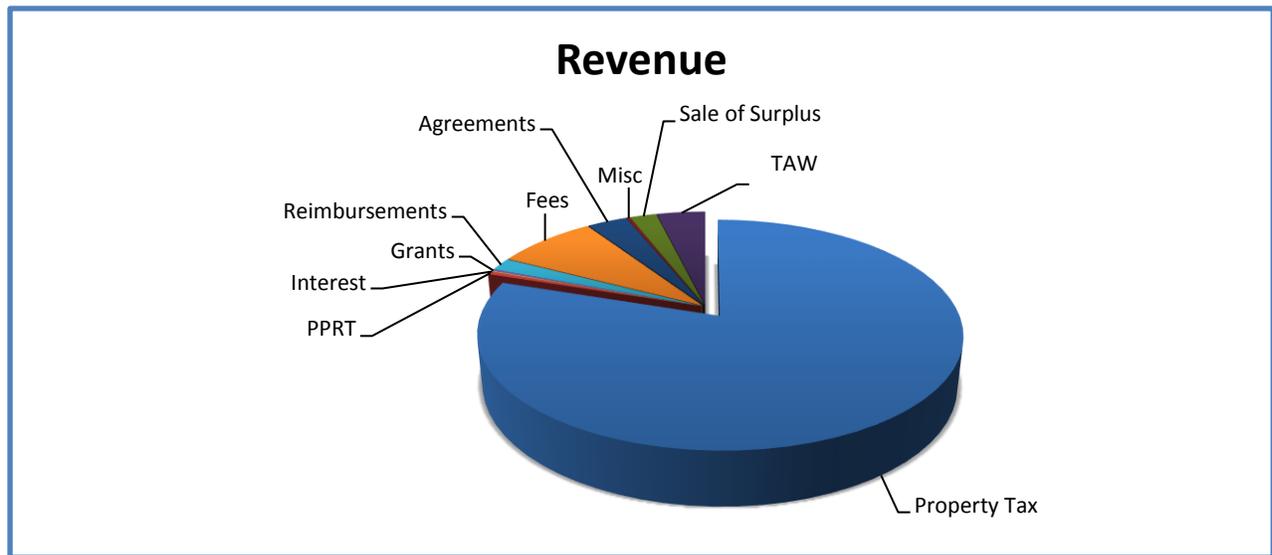
The District operates on a calendar fiscal year. Our annual audit is performed in accordance with Government Auditing Standards Board and the District’s Annual Financial Report is on file with the State of Illinois Comptroller’s Office and the Will County Clerk.

In 2017, the Fire Protection District implemented a fund balance policy to maintain sufficient fund balances to fund district operations and protect against the need to reduce service levels or programs. Although property taxes have increased each year, they are capped at the lesser of 5% or the CPI. 2017 CPI is 0.70% which is the lowest CPI in the last 7 years.



Each year the District calculates its annual levy request estimating both the Equalized Assessed Value (EAV) and the limiting rate, projecting new growth, and pension contribution using the actuarial determined contribution (ADC). In 2017, the District's pension fund has a ratio of 71% (net position to total pension liability) and any additional ADC needs to be phased-in due to the large increase in contribution. The state is mandating to be 90% funded by 2040.

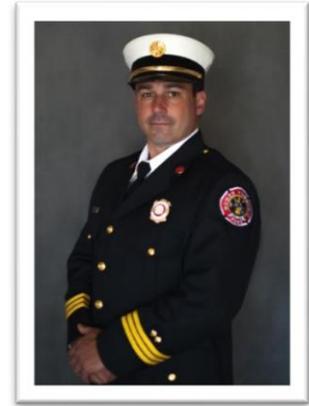
Our levy includes the following funds: Corporate, Ambulance, Pension, Tort, Medicare/Social Security, and Audit. The District's main sources of revenue are property taxes. Salaries and benefits (pension and insurances included) make up 88% of the total operating expenses for the District.



Battalion Chief

OPERATIONS:

The Operations Division oversees Fire Suppression and Specialty Team responses of the District.

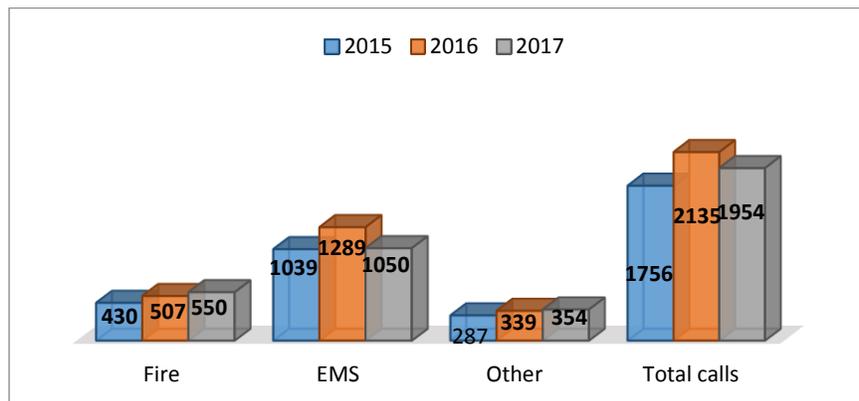


Sean McCormack

- We had 1,954 calls for service this year. Calls were down from 2,135 calls last year, however we were auto aid to the Bonnie Brie District in Lockport for a good portion of 2016 due to the Lockport Fire Station being built. We also did not have the Tower Ladder or Tender to run mutual aid to other departments last year. This resulted in our Mutual Aid calls being down almost the exact total number of calls we were down for the 2017 year.

- Out of the 550 fire calls we responded to, 98 of those were “working fires”, 55 being structure fires, 23 in our District.
 - We had multiple Full Still fires this year with the busiest months being in January and November.

- The district responded to 1,945 calls for service, however we had equipment move on calls over 4,150 times. This was due to requiring additional equipment or manpower to the scene. Below is the breakdown:
 - Ambulance 31 820
 - Tower 31 823
 - Chiefs 701
 - Engine 32 645
 - Ambulance 32 522
 - Engine 33 449
 - Ambulance 33 221



TRAINING DIVISION:

The Training Division is dedicated to providing quality training programs that reflect the needs and changing responsibilities of the Homer Township Fire Protection District. All training is focused on providing and maintaining the highest quality service to the residents and visitors of our Fire District.

The Training Division consists of three (3) members, who are responsible for providing essential support, such as filing required paperwork and delivering daily training to our shift personnel.

We also completed a training plan that provides our members a map for their career planning within our organization. With this plan we have been thinking of ways to get our members trained with the fiscal responsibility we owe our citizens. 2018 is going to be a great year and we have already utilized grant fund to start our officers on the career path that was completed in 2017.

Captain



Kevin Utthe



Illinois State Fire Marshal Certifications Obtained in 2017

Fire Officer I

Patrick Burke

Fire Officer I Provisional

Keith Miller

Fire Officer II Provisional

Patrick Burke

Brian Jamrok

Fire Service Vehicle Operator

Joe Jaskowiak

Mark Jenkins

Hazardous Material Tech B

Jacob Adeszko

Basic Fire Prevention Officer

Dave Bricker

Hazardous Material Tech B

Jacob Adeszko

Instructor II

Brian Jamrok

Tom Krasneck

Hazardous Material Operations

Mark Jenkins

Incident Safety Officer

Brian Jamrok

Water Operations

Nick Breese

Keith Miller

Health & Safety Officer

Kevin Uthe

Fire Department Safety Officer

Kevin Uthe

Rope Technician

Kevin Uthe



EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES:

The Homer Township Fire Protection District operates 3 Advanced Life Support Ambulances, 3 Advanced Life Support Fire Apparatus (Three Engines) and an EMS First Response Gator. All 7 of these apparatus are currently licensed through the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and the Silver Cross Emergency Medical Services System (SCEMSS).

We have 40 Illinois State Licensed Paramedics. Paramedics are required to complete annual continuing education through Silver Cross EMS System and must successfully re-certify as Paramedics through IDPH every 4 years. We are also conducting weekly EMS training above and beyond the System and State requirements. Since roughly 80% of our calls are EMS, we feel that having the best trained Paramedics is essential to servicing our community.

In April of this year, Lt. Pat Burke took over as our EMS Coordinator. Lt. Burke's functions include managing the licenses of the aforementioned Paramedics, coordinating inspections, revising EMS Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs) and coordinating EMS training.

Like other government agencies, we were met with budget purchasing challenges. Realizing this, our staff has done a great job in maintaining our current EMS equipment and therefore extending its useful life. In the future, we are looking into a Grant to help us purchase new stretcher systems that are currently 10 years old.

We continue to train on the High Quality CPR Program that was implemented two years ago. What we are doing with High Quality CPR is providing multiple Paramedics on the scene and having those Paramedics concentrate on one or two tasks (compressions, defibrillation, ventilations, medication administration, etc) to deliver the best treatment possible. A "pit crew concept" if you will. HQCPR has greatly improved our efficiency and patient outcomes. Based on viable patient rhythms, we continue to see an approximate 20% increase in delivering patients to the ER with a pulse. The EMS System approved treatments that we are performing on our patients are gold standard in cardiac arrest and respiratory patient management.

We continued performing Quality Assurance (QA) internal reviews of all EMS calls to ensure that our patients are getting quality care, improving Paramedic skills and reducing liability to the District.

This year we hosted our first Advanced Cardiac Life Support class in conjunction with Silver Cross Hospital. All of our Paramedics along with hospital staff from Silver Cross attended the classes and received certifications.

Battalion Chief



Doug Mayer

FIRE PREVENTION / PUBLIC EDUCATION:

There are many safety messages that need to be communicated to the public each year. The National Fire Protection Association picks a theme and the 2017 theme was “Every Second Counts, Plan 2 Ways Out”. This annual message was to remind everyone of the importance of having two exits planned for every room. During a fire, smoke and heat can spread rapidly blocking your primary escape; planning and practicing prior to a fire will help you respond if a fire occurs. The annual trips to talk to all of the students in the pre-schools, kindergarten and grammar schools is always a highlight and we appreciate the support we get from the schools in the District. We also witnessed safety drills with the staff and students at all of the schools. We continue to meet every year with the administration and other local authorities to discuss school safety.

Division Chief



DAVE BRICKER



During 2017, the Fire District personnel continued to keep in touch with the community in many other ways:

- The crews had several visits to block parties
- There were multiple station tours
- Handed out candy on Halloween
- Safety classes for businesses
- Gave students a ride to school for winning contests
- Attended school reading nights
- Attended Homer Fest
- Met with senior groups
- Participated in Homer parade
- Attended John Lane Days
- Shady Oaks events
- MADD event
- Crews attended the first day of school to welcome the students
- Crews attended the last day of school to wish the kids a safe summer

- Attended a safety show hosted by Will Cook Ace Hardware and Michelle Kokaly State Farm
- Assisted the Northwest Homer FPD and the Sheriff at Meijer for Heroes Helping Heroes
- The Homer and Northwest Homer Fire Districts teamed up to provide free CPR training four times during the year

In July, we hosted our first kid's safety camp that we had a great response too. We had representatives from FEMA, Will County Sheriff, Will County 911 and the Fire District provide information on weather, use of the Sheriff K-9, internet safety, how to communicate with 911, CPR and fire extinguisher training. The kids also witnessed demonstrations of vehicle extrication, K9 searches and toured the fire station. The students were able to eat lunch with the firefighting crew and ask questions about the job. We were very fortunate to have sponsorships from Will Cook Ace Hardware, Michelle Kokaly State Farm and Stars and Stripes embroidery to make this possible.

The shift crews assisted in a BIG way in completing annual inspections in the business community. Our goal is to inspect every business at least once during the year, this year would not have been possible without the help of the duty crews.

The fire prevention division assisted the training division by taking the shift members on tours of new buildings in the district to familiarize them with the layout and systems that are in place. These tours along with the plan review and inspections of the new buildings in the district help to keep the employees of the businesses along with our firefighters safe. We continued to see growth in the industrial areas with a couple new buildings along with tenants moving into the previously built properties. We continue to work with the Building Departments of the communities that are within our District and the other local Fire Districts to maintain a common approach to building reviews and inspections.

The Fire Prevention Division continues to follow up with residents that have carbon monoxide alarm activations along with all of the business that have fire alarms to be sure that the alarms and systems are maintained in proper working order.

In 2018, we look forward to restarting the Child Safety Seat checks, attend the Senior Club Meetings to check blood pressures, expand the Kids Safety Camp and continue free CPR.



FIRE & ARSON INVESTIGATION TEAM:

The Homer Township Fire Protection district Origin and Cause Team has the responsibility to investigate all fires that occur in the Homer Township Fire Protection District. These fires include structure (whether occupied or vacant), vehicle fires and all other types of fires (i.e. grass). The team then determines whether these fires are accidental or intentional in nature. The Homer Township Investigation Team works with our local police departments when a fire is determined to be suspicious or incendiary in nature. Intentionally set fires are criminal in nature and are set for a variety of reasons, such as personal or financial gain as well as crimes against a person.

Firefighter



Steven Rybka

In 2017, the Homer Township Fire Protection District Origin & Cause Team investigated 8 fires within the Homer Township Fire District which added up to over 122 hours of investigation work. In 2017, there were 7 accidental fires, including structures, vehicles, and other fires, as well as 1 fire that is incendiary in nature and still under investigation pending further information by the Office of the State Fire Marshal and by private insurance investigations. Unlike many other crimes, there is no statute of limitations on arson cases and they are not closed out until a conclusion to the case is achieved. These cases are usually closed with the help of information received from citizens about a fire and its nature.

The Homer Township Fire Protection District works closely with many local police jurisdictions within the fire district. Depending on where the suspicious fire occurs within the Homer Township Fire Protection District, the team can work with the Will County Sheriffs Police or the Lockport Police Department. The Homer Township Fire Protection District also partners with the Illinois State Fire Marshal's Office, MABAS Division 19 Origin & Cause Team and The Will-Cook-Grundy County Fire Investigation Task Force. We responded to 3 mutual aid fire investigations as well.

The Homer Township Fire District has 3 certified shift investigators and 1 certified day time investigator on the team. In 2017 our investigators continued to train monthly with MABAS 19 and the Will-Cook-Grundy County Task Force. Out of 4 fire investigators 1 of them is currently certified as an Arson Investigator. The Homer Township Fire Protection District Origin & Cause Team train to stay current on the latest techniques as well as staying on top of recalls and safety alerts that we can then pass on to our residents. In 2017, the team logged over 300 hours training to satisfy the state and local team requirements and to satisfy the Office of the State Fire Marshalls recertification process. This included classroom, seminar, and monthly training as well as online monthly training.

In 2017, Investigator Steven Rybka obtained his Certified Fire Investigator from the International Association of Arson Investigators. There are only 2500 Investigators who hold this certification worldwide.

We continue to help our residents “After the Fire.” This program helps the resident from the time we respond to their fire, through the days and weeks following the fire. If needed, we assist with the insurance notification, board-up and securing the property, as well as immediate assistance in getting them shelter. This program allows us to give back to the community and prevent the fire victim from being taken advantage of at the most trying of times.

The Homer Township Fire Protection District Investigation Team is planning to continue to train and stay ahead of the current happenings in the Fire investigation world. Team members are planning on attending the Will-Cook-Grundy County Task Force annual 32 hour conference, and The Arson Investigator possibly joining the Will County Major Crimes Task Force.



FLEET MAINTENANCE DIVISION:

The Fleet Maintenance Division is responsible for the repair and maintenance of the Fire District's fleet of fire apparatus, ambulances, and support vehicles. Nationally accepted standards set forth by the National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA 1901), require all fire service apparatus and emergency response vehicles to be maintained by a certified Emergency Vehicle Technician (EVT). The Homer Township Fire Protection District currently utilizes the services of Legacy Fire Apparatus, which is owned and operated by certified Master EVT Ben Brown. As a back-up service for fleet maintenance and repair, the Homer Township Fire Protection District has entered into an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Frankfort Fire Protection District to share services of their full-time Emergency Vehicle Technician. These two partnerships have resulted in a cost savings to the Fire District due to negotiated hourly rates set lower than other competing vendors in the surrounding area. We have also carefully selected other area vendors to help provide maintenance with specialty vehicles and provide needed parts and supplies throughout the year. We have joined the Will County Maintenance group; made up of surrounding fire districts and their mechanics in hopes to share services, parts, and education.

Fire vehicles and Ambulances have a life expectancy that varies and is based on a combination of age, usage, maintenance, and environmental factors. Fire Departments typically use guidelines established by the National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA 1901 and 1911) who provide "industry standards" to assist in the decision making in regards to apparatus repair, maintenance, and replacement. Firefighter safety is the driving factor when it comes to rendering a decision to retire fire apparatus and Ambulances. In general, fire engines should be operated front-line for 15 years, go into reserve for 5 more years, and be ultimately retired in 20 years. Ambulances are typically retired after 7 years of service due to the fact they are the most utilized piece of equipment. Staff vehicles and Utility vehicles are usually traded in after 10 years of service.

We currently have no units in reserve and must rely on neighboring departments to lend us an extra Engine or Ambulance when one of our units are down. We are diligently working to establish and grow a fund for the future replacement of units, however, we are working with a fiscally constrained budget.

2017 Goals Achieved:

- Place the new 2017 Ford Expedition XLT Battalion Chief SUV in service.
- Had body worked performed on the 2006 SUV and placed it back in service with the Fire Prevention Bureau.
- Tower 31 is up for sale with two different vendors.
- Received 2016 AFG Grant for the purchase of a new Tanker.

Battalion Chief



Troy Essenburg

- Using a build committee we designed a new tanker and purchased the unit from Sutphen Corporation. Awaiting delivery mid-2018.
- Launched an electronic daily and weekly check form.
- STARCOM radios installed in all vehicles.
- We established a fleet maintenance program with a local vendor in the community to address our staff vehicles.

Reduced Fleet:

- Tower 31 is currently for sale. It was determined that the unit still holds value, however, the cost of annual repairs required to keep the unit outweigh the value and stretch our limited budget. We feel it will be a great reserve unit for another Fire Department and will help us rebuild our Fire District Capital Reserves.
- The 1995 Tanker suffered a catastrophic failure of the stainless steel tank in late January after returning from a mutual aid structure fire. The tank ruptured at the under belly seams and was deemed unrepairable. The unit was removed from service. The cab and frame were sold to a vendor and the tank was taken to the scrap yard for recycling.

2018 Goals and Projects:

- Place the new 2018 Sutphen Tanker in service.
- We will also be looking to deal with the aging motor and water pump on the 2001 Pierce Fire Engine Pumper. All the cab doors need to have the hardware replaced and reworked. These items were unable to be addressed during the exterior re-fabrication project.
- We will be working with the Homer Township Highway Department on preventative maintenance capabilities for our front-line units.
- We will continue to improve on educating our driver's on basic maintenance issues as well as identifying any new or major issues with the units.
- We will be working on streamlining our records keeping, in an electronic format.

The overall the age of our fleet has improved, which will hopefully lend hand in reducing our maintenance costs over this next year. We will continue to work closely between administration and vendors to find the most cost effective way to maintain the fleet our tax payers have entrusted into our care.



BUILDING & GROUNDS:

The Fire District operates three (3) District owned Fire Stations that require continuous maintenance and repairs. Each year due to limited funds, we are restricted to completing only those projects that are in immediate need of repair unless we are successful in receiving grant funding. Administrative staff meets on a regular basis to review facility projects and prioritize those which improve critical infrastructure at all three stations.

Station 1- 16050 S Cedar Rd (built in 1958)



As the oldest facility owned by the fire district and originally built as a volunteer station, this facility is in constant need of repair and maintenance simply because of the age. The Administrative offices are actually housed in the original fire apparatus garage.

Station 2- 16315 South Bell Rd (built in 1995)



This is the second oldest facility which had not seen any major renovation work since it opened 22 years ago.

Station 3- 16415 W. 151 Street (built in 2001)



This Station was built with grant funding and is now 17 years old. This Station had not seen significant upgrades since opening in 2001.

Captain



Brent Marquardt

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DIVISION:

The Information Technology division provides the infrastructure to deliver services to both administrative personnel and emergency first responders in a timely and reliable fashion. The division keeps a continuous emphasis on reduction of costs and increase in reliability and flexibility of services to allow for maximum productivity and efficient flow of information.

In 2017, the emphasis was completion of the major projects that were planned from 2016. This includes:

- The transition to Zoll Fire RMS software for NFIRS and Inspection records.
- Replacement of existing time keeping software and scheduling software with an all in one product that meets the demands of the district in this modern age.
- Replacement of Station CAD computers with more suitable hardware which has dramatically reduced service requests and down-time.
- Implementation of new StarCom21 Radio system which has improved radio coverage throughout our response area.
- Re-structuring the district's maintenance agreements on copiers and printers to upgrade equipment to suit our needs while reducing our annual costs.
- Planning for changes in telephone and internet vendors to increase reliability and up-time while reducing costs.
- Starting the training of a new member in the IT division to assist in supporting our mission.

Captain



Brian Jamrok



The division can be identified into two separate major areas of operation.

Communications (emergency field operations):

- Two-way radio support and maintenance (communication with the 911 dispatch center)

- Mobile Data Computers (computers installed in our fire trucks and ambulances which send real time information between the 911 dispatch center and the field personnel)
- Computer Aided Dispatch support (data link to the 911 dispatch center)
- Station alerting support. (Activation of audible and visual alarms in the fire stations to alert personnel of emergency incidents)

Information Technology (non-emergent systems):

- Customized email services
- Traditional telephone services in the fire stations
- Pre-plan software support
- Fire training software support
- Maintenance of District's network
- Maintenance of Server hardware
- Desktop and software support
- Trouble ticketing system
- Application support and system update schedule

**HOMER TOWNSHIP FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
STAFF ORGANIZATION CHART**

