

Pullman Fire Department Annual Report for Year 2008

Prepared By: Patrick E Wilkins, Fire Chief

Overview

2008 was a year of “CHALLENGE” for the Pullman Fire Department. Through the retirement of one employee and four employees leaving for employment with other jurisdictions, five new personnel were transitioned into the Pullman Fire Department. One of the new employees with limited fire experience was sent to the North Bend Fire Academy and successfully completed a ten week academy. During the time it took the new employees to complete the required competencies and be assigned to shifts, the department was exposed to shift strength reduction and had to utilize overtime to fill these vacancies as well as all other unanticipated absences.

Total calls for service declined slightly from the previous year, however; it is becoming more common to have multiple alarms occurring simultaneously which has presented challenges with minimal staffing resources and our capability to provide essential services. This type of activity was significantly illustrated during the series of “Arson Fires” occurring on November 15, 2007 where assistance had to be requested from outside agencies. Of the two major emergency services provided by the Pullman Fire Department, Emergency Medical response continues to demand the most resources at 61% of the total calls for service.

As the City of Pullman and Washington State University expand and additional health care facilities are constructed, the public demand for the Pullman Fire Departments two major emergency services will continue to increase. Response to Washington State University accounted for 21% of the total call volume.

Emergency Medical Services

The department responded to 2076 medical calls for service. During 2007, a new ambulance was delivered and placed into service. Response to Washington State University accounted for 16% of the total medical call volume. A new set of extrication tools were placed into service. Department members continued to provide first aid and other support for the July Fourth celebration, the Lentil festival, Pullman High School football games, Parks and Recreation functions, and WSU athletic events, concerts, and other large student activities.

Fire Suppression

The department responded to 810 fire calls for service. Of the 810 calls, 103 involved smoke and/or fire for an estimated fire loss of \$1,105,730, 66 calls were to hazardous conditions and 583 calls resulted in non-emergent fire situations (i.e., false fire alarms, system malfunctions, accidental/unintentional activations, or good intent and service calls). Response to Washington State University accounted for 34% of the total fire call volume.

Fire Prevention

2007 continued to be a very busy year for the Fire Prevention Office with \$45 million dollars in construction evaluation. Prevention activities in 2007 involved 58 site plans, 52 building plans, and 4 miscellaneous plan reviews. There were 24 sprinkler system installation inspections, 15 fire alarm system installation inspections, 3 kitchen hood suppression installation inspections and one additional Fraternity has retrofitted their house with a fire sprinkler system. Total fire permit fees generated through the Fire Prevention Office for 2007 amounted to \$2,460.

Public Education

The department conducted 23 First Aid/CPR classes and 13 CPR classes, which were attended by 339 citizens. The department also provided numerous tours at both fire stations. The department conducted over 60 fire alarm drills, safety talks and fire extinguisher training at the WSU campus and the City of Pullman. Firefighters continued to visit the first grade classes in the elementary schools and provide tours of the ambulance during National Emergency Medical Services Week in May. Fire Prevention Week was also celebrated in October with the annual open house held at the Wheatland Mall. The department also participated in the local parades, the City's Holiday tree lighting, the Egg Hunt at Kruegel Park, Career Days at Sunnyside School. The fire department website was enhanced to provide up to date activities, information, press releases and specific contacts for the department.

Training

Departmental personnel participated in 10,133 hours of training in 2008 which averaged out to over 259 hours per firefighter. The major activities for the year involved Wildland firefighter certification for the entire department, supervisory classes for all officers, implementation of our new Engineer and Aerial Operator certification which produced 6 new engineers and 3 new aerial operators. We acquired a local house that was donated to the Fire department for training in which we have used for four months of hands on fire training. We have incorporated new strategies in fire tactics which will heighten firefighter safety and provide a more advanced scientific approach to firefighting. We certified all of our Paramedics in ACLS (Advanced Cardiac Life Support).