

SUGAR HILL FIRE DEPARTMENT

During 2008 your Fire Department continued to be very active in training and with emergency calls. Our calls increased by 23% for a total of 85 emergency calls in 2008. This was after a 19% increase in 2007. Fifteen of the 2008 calls were automatic aid to Franconia while their Engine was out of service being refurbished and we normally would not have been called.

Together with the Sugar Hill Museum we celebrated our 60th birthday of being a Fire Department. The Museum had a season long exhibit on the history of the Department. In July, we held an open house with a cook out at the station which was very well attended. In October we had a fire prevention/award night at the Meetinghouse. The attendance at this event far exceeded our expectations. Past Fire Chiefs were honored for their service to the community and Roger Aldrich was recognized as the last surviving charter member of the Fire Department. We sincerely thank the Museum for their exhibit and their assistance with the two celebration events.

In 2008 we had no serious structure fires, however the Towns all around had several serious fires. As I write this, due to a combination of the economy and extended cold spells there is not a day that goes by without several house fires in the State and often with fire fatalities.

Your best defense to protect from a structure fire is to be certain your heating equipment receives an annual check-up and wood stove installations are inspected by the Department. To protect life you should have both smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors in your home.

The Department has 21 dedicated firefighters up from 18 last year, this has thankfully brought the average age of the firefighters down. It is pleasing to see our younger residents become involved in community service. The firefighters are your neighbors who give freely of their time and make significant sacrifices for a small stipend that often does not cover the expenses associated with serving the Town. Although all of your firefighters are part-time, they are committed to providing the Town with coverage and the services usually found only in full time Departments.

The Department continues to improve its water supplies and although no dry hydrants were added in 2008, materials were purchased and the permitting process for three hydrants was started. It is hoped to add a dry hydrant at Toad Hill Road, Streeter Pond and an additional hydrant in a location not yet finalized. Using dry hydrants significantly shortens the time it takes to be able to obtain a reliable water source during a fire.

Through the program of improving our equipment, increasing our training and developing good water supplies we are working to lower the insurance protection class for the Town. The process requires not only the Department to functionally perform at a high level, but also extensive paperwork to obtain the reduction in the protection class. We are confident that we will lower the insurance protection class in 2009. With more work, we anticipate a further reduction in the insurance protection class in the years to come.

The Department continued its fire prevention program in 2008. All new and replacement oil burners require a permit and inspection from the Department, all new homes and commercial occupancies are inspected by the Department prior to the issuance of an occupancy certificate and all places of assembly that serve alcohol require an annual permit. This is a time consuming process, but is a very important part of the service the Department provides.

We received another FEMA, Assistance to Firefighters Grant, our third. Since we began applying in 2004 we have received 3 awards totaling nearly \$270,000 which included a new tanker, breathing apparatus and new personal protective gear. To put this in perspective during this period those Towns in our mutual aid system received 10 awards of which three were to Sugar Hill. We have utilized the awards frugally to purchase needed equipment and not frills which has saved the Town the eventual expenditures.

Our latest award is for \$46,025 of which the Town must match 5%. These funds will replace our personal protective equipment (bunker gear) that no longer conforms to standards and is getting quite worn. We are not certain how much longer these Federal Funds will be available, however as long as the program is in place we will continue to try to bring some of those federal dollars back. In addition to this source of funds, the Department has been very successful in obtaining other grants.

We continue our extensive training this year with training a minimum of two times per month. We continued to concentrate on the basics and the skill level of your firefighters is very high for a community our size. Our Department is recognized as one of the best equipped, trained, hard working and professional Fire Departments in the region.

The Fire Department responded to the following:

<u>TYPE</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2005</u>
Brush/Grass Fires	0	1	0	0
Chimney Fires	2	1	1	2
Dumpsters	0	1	0	0
Fire Alarm Activations	17	10	9	9
Furnace Problems	2	3	0	0
Hazardous Conditions	15	10	13	15
Hazardous Materials	0	5	0	0
Motor Vehicle Accidents	5	9	7	8
Mutual Aid – Cover	4	8	7	3
Mutual Aid – Scene	30	6	14	11
Rescues	0	1	1	1
Service Calls	5	1	3	2
Smoke Investigations	4	5	2	0
Structure Fires	0	8	1	4
Vehicle Fires	1	0	0	1
TOTAL	85	69	58	56

As of December 31, 2008 the Fire Department's active roster consisted of twenty-one of your neighbors who are as follows:

	Chief Allan R. Clark	
Asst. Chief Doug Glover	Asst. Chief Doug Amsbary	Captain Gordie Johnk
Lieutenant Jim Snyder	Lieutenant Cliff Aldrich	Engineer Harold Aldrich
Engineer Jim Cyrs, II	Engineer Barry Bernstein	Engineer Peter Szawlowski
Eric Chase	Bruce Cole	Russell Gaitskill
Matthew Glerum	Jody Hodgdon	Andrew Howe
Brensen Ireland	Jason Kern	Luther Kinney
Curt McCarson		Karl Wockenfuss

It is truly an honor to serve such a wonderful community as Sugar Hill as the Fire Chief. Thank you for your support and thank you to the firefighters for their support and dedication. I especially thank the firefighter wives for tolerating the many disruptions to their family life and sharing their husbands for the good of the community.

Respectfully submitted,
Allan R. Clark
Fire Chief