



## Effingham Fire Department Annual Report – 2020

### Message from Fire Chief Bob Tutko:



On behalf of Mayor Mike Schutzbach, City Administrator Steve Miller, Deputy Administrator Kelsey Lock and Commissioners Merv Gillenwater, Hank Stephens, Libby Moeller, and Larry Micenheimer, I would like to present the Effingham Fire Department Annual Report for 2020.

The Effingham Fire Department consists of 15 Full-Time Firefighters, 15 Paid-On-Call Firefighters, a Fire Chief and Assistant Chief. The Department has one (1) Executive Secretary, and the Part-Time Emergency Management Coordinator is assigned to the Fire Department.

The Effingham Fire Department provides Fire Suppression, Rescue, and Hazardous Materials response to the City and is also part of the Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS) Division 54, which provides those services to area departments as part of an approved Inter-Government Agreement. The Department operates 2 Fire Stations – Station 1, located at 505 West Fayette Avenue and Station 2, and located at 500 West Jaycee Avenue. The Fire Department is recognized as an Insurance Services Organization (ISO) Class 2.

The Effingham Fire Department also provides Fire and Life Safety Inspections to all commercial, industrial and assembly properties within the City. While the Fire Department is not authorized to provide Fire and Life Safety Inspections to residential properties, the Fire Department does inspect the “common areas” of apartment buildings. Fire and Life Safety Inspections as well as Plan Reviews are under the Direction of Assistant Fire Chief Matt Kulesza. The City Utilizes the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 2015 Edition of the Fire and Life Safety Code as well as the 2015 International Fire Code (IFC) for Reference of its Fire Protection and Building Codes.

In addition, the Fire Department also delivers Public Safety Education as part of an overall Community Risk Reduction Strategy (CRR) that features School Safety visits, Smoke Alarm Installation program, Stop the Bleed Training, and participation in various community wide safety events. Firefighter Kenneth Hayes, who also possesses an Illinois Secondary Education Certificate, serves as the Fire Department Public Education Coordinator.

The following report is designed to provide an overview of Fire Department activities in 2020 and is not intended to be all-inclusive of our activity. Please feel free to contact me if you require any additional information concerning your Fire Department.

Thank you for allowing me to serve the community as your Fire Chief; it is an honor to be part of a truly wonderful community.

Sincerely,

*Bob Tutko*

Bob Tutko- Fire Chief

**Fire Department Highlights:**

2020 was a busy year for the Effingham Fire Department in terms of both call volume and overall Operations. Like many Americans, we were not immune from the effects of the COVID-19 Virus. The Fire Department and The City Emergency Management Agency were the lead departments that helped the City prepare for and respond to the COVID-19 Pandemic. In the early stages of the pandemic, we were often shifting strategies as the information concerning the virus was ever changing. We initiated our response plans in accordance with CDC and IDPH Guidelines while working together with partner agencies through the National Incident Management System (NIMS). We were also the central agency for collection and disbursement of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), information, and other mission critical supplies and support functions.

As the Pandemic forced many schools to teach “remotely”, the Fire Department had to switch gears and adopted a remote learning strategy for our Firefighters, especially the Paid-On-Call Firefighters, in an effort to keep the staff separated and lessen the virus transmission. We were fortunate that back in 2019 we opted to purchase a nationally recognized e-learning platform that allowed us to offer quality education classes to our firefighters remotely when the pandemic crisis forced us in to remote learning.

We also changed our Fire Incident Reporting Software with a program that is both more efficient and user friendly as well as less expensive overall to operate.

Calls for Service in 2020 totaled 659, which was an increase over the previous year. The call response summary for 2020 is as follows:

<u>Building Fires</u>	<u>Mobile Home Fires</u>	<u>Vehicle Fires</u>	<u>Brush Fires</u>
10	2	1	12

**Total Dollar Loss Estimate: \$826,225.00 – 10 Building Fires, 2 Mobile Home Fires, 1 Vehicle Fires, 12 Brush Fires, 100 Vehicle Crashes.**

In our continued effort to maintain and improve the Fire Department Insurance Services Organization (ISO) Rating, the department purchased two (2) ground monitor appliances that will allow us to deploy a large volume of water immediately upon arrival at a fire which also assists in more efficient deployment of personnel at a working fire.

The department is working closely with the Charleston Fire Department and Illinois MABAS (Mutual Aid Box Alarm System) to activate a combined Hazardous Materials Team. We expect to finalize the agreement in early 2021.

The Fire Department is working together with the Effingham Police Department to develop a Rescue Task Force (RTF) program to respond appropriately to active shooter and active aggressor incidents. Chief Bob Tutko and Police Sergeant Aaron Lange have completed Rescue Task Force Instructor Training. This program has been endorsed by state agencies across Illinois. After proper training of police officers and firefighters, the program will be tested with an exercise prior to full implementation which is expected by May 2021.



## Fire Prevention Summary - Assistant Chief Matt Kulesza:



2020 was both challenging and busy for the Fire Prevention Bureau. Despite COVID-19, construction projects in Effingham have been strong. The Fire Prevention Bureau was involved in many projects that involved new construction and remodeling of existing structures. We relaxed business inspections due to the COVID -19 pandemic, but we continued to work with the business community to address any fire/life-safety code issues.

The Fire Prevention Bureau worked at a fast pace in order to accommodate the contractors and architects and ensure projects remained on schedule and the proper permits were obtained in a timely fashion.

The Fire Prevention Bureau also made a number of changes in operations by adopting new technology enabling us to work smarter and improve overall operations.

Some of these improvements were:

- Using I-Pads to complete fire/life safety inspections.
- Migrated to a new more efficient and user-friendly electronic reporting format receiving many positive comments from the business owners on the new format.
- Obtained Fire Investigator Certification.
- Served as department program manager for the Fire Station 2 Project.

There were over 21 different projects reviewed/facilitated in 2020.

Some of the major projects were:

- Fire Station 2
- Culver's remodel
- Milano & Grunloh
- Aldi's remodel
- Trucker's Pub remodel
- ADI Manufacturing remodel
- Burton Devour Apartments remodel
- Douglas Township remodel
- Golden Corral construction
- Northside Ford remodel
- Braunecker GMC remodel



The Prevention Bureau also completed the following:

- Fire Life /Safety Inspections – 770
- Fire Life /Safety Re-Inspections – 151
- Plan Reviews – 157
- Mobile Food Vendor Inspections – 39
- Occupancy Permits – 23
- Consulting – 62
- Legal Actions – 27
- Property Use Inspections – 1,120

**Public Education Summary - Firefighter Ken Hayes-Public Education Coordinator:**



The Fire Department has adopted the Community Risk Reduction (CRR) model to provide fire safety education to the residents of the City. The Community Risk Reduction planning is a process that identifies and prioritizes local risks that affect the community combined with an integrated and strategic utilization of resources to reduce negative risks and their occurrences and impact on the community. The Fire Department incorporates nationally recognized “best practices” such as Vision 20/20 National Strategies for Fire Loss Prevention.

Due to the COVID pandemic, our Public Education programs were largely placed on hold to protect both our firefighters and the community. We are hopeful that we will begin to once again actively promote public safety education to the community as part of our Community Risk Reduction Strategy.



**Department Training Summary – Training Officer Firefighter Matt Carpenter:**



Providing quality training opportunities to our firefighters in 2020 was a challenge due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We were forced to suspend training in the spring and saw a return to in person learning briefly in the late summer and early fall. That was short-lived as we went back to remote learning by Thanksgiving. We purchased a computer-based learning system in 2019 which proved to be a great investment as we were already performing remote learning for various topics throughout 2019. Despite COVID-19, we were able to partner with the Illinois Fire Service Institute and other state supported training partners and complete a number of certification classes for our firefighters.

Most notable were:

- a. Fire Investigator
- b. Basic operations Firefighter
- c. Smoke Divers
- d. Nozzle Forward
- e. Advanced Fire Officer

The Canadian National Railroad Dangerous Goods Team provided Hazardous Materials and Rail-Safety Training to our department during the early fall when we were able to conduct in person training.

In addition to the above courses, department members completed 1,902.08 hours of training and education. In addition, we had a number of department members complete the National Incident Management System Courses series 300 and 400.



Canadian National Dangerous Goods Team provided Haz-Mat Training and Rail Safety Training.



Heartland Towing hosted vehicle stabilization training attended by Effingham and Shumway Fire Department personnel.

**Administrative Review- Executive Secretary Jenn Alwardt:**



In 2020 the Fire Department initiated a number of new programs that improved efficiency, effectiveness and reduced costs to the department. This included a new Fire Reporting software, which also allowed the department to eliminate a secondary software program –thereby decreasing overall costs. We also initiated an “e-learning” software program that allowed the department to increase learning opportunities for fire department members. This was a timely purchase, since this software allowed the department to provide “distance learning” to our staff during the COVID pandemic. The software allows us to access and share fire service training materials with fire departments all across the country.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Fire Department was one of the lead agencies that developed City-wide protocols for infection control and developed operating guidelines designed to keep City government functioning while keeping City employees safe. In addition, we were the lead agency responsible for coordinating the Federal Public Assistance Grant which enabled the City to recover over \$27,000.00 in costs related to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The Fire Department also conducted Firefighter testing to establish a new Firefighter eligibility list – which is required by local ordinance and state law.

The Administrative Team continues to review “best practices” and “nationally recognized” programs in an effort to ensure the Fire Department is operating at peak performance. The Administrative Team also continues to focus on retainment and recruitment of our Paid-On-Call staff.



**Emergency Management Overview - Coordinator David Budde:**



In May of 2020 Dave Budde was selected as the City Emergency Management Coordinator following the retirement of the previous Emergency Management Coordinator. David brings to the position over 20 years of Emergency Services experience and also served as Coordinator of Fire Science programs for Lakeland College.

The City Emergency Management Agency plays a pivotal role in preparing the City for Emergencies and coordinating the responses of State and Federal resources. During the COVID Pandemic, the City Emergency Management Agency worked closely with the Illinois Emergency Management Agency to secure needed Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for City Police, Fire, and Public Works Departments as well as our community partners, schools and extended care facilities.



FD facilities professionally disinfected.



COVID PPE supplies arrive at the start of the pandemic.



## **Strategic Planning – 2020:**

The Office of The Fire Chief conducts a yearly strategic planning session. Members of the Department attend the yearly strategic planning session in order to identify critical goals and objectives for the year. The “Big 5” from each category below have been identified as follows:

### **Training:**

- Hands on Training
- Outside Training Classes
- Frequent Use of the Training Center
- Building Familiarization Classes
- Acquired Structure Training

### **Equipment:**

- Acquire Back-Up Gear for Firefighters
- Acquire E- Power Tools
- Acquire Blitz Fire Nozzles
- Acquire Personnel TIC devices
- Leather Boots for Firefighters

### **Apparatus:**

- Replace 2001 Engine
- Replace 2001 Tower Ladder
- Install Truck Cap on Utility 591
- Replace Haz Mat Trailer
- Storage Building at Training Center for trailer

### **Stations:**

- Replace Fire Gear Racks
- Lockers for POC members
- Soap Dispensers for showers
- Heart Saver Speaker System
- HVAC Re-Balance, Station 1.

### **Personnel:**

- Active Paid-On-Call Recruitment
- Paid-On-Call Driver /Operators
- Increased Participation
- Health-Safety Program
- Additional Full time Staff

### **Services:**

- More use of Extinguisher Simulator for Public Education
- Increase the Smoke Detector Program
- Develop an Apartment Safety Program
- More use of the FD Website to promote safety
- Enhanced Community Risk Reduction Program

### **Goals Identified during Strategic Planning:**

- Improved Training opportunities
- Health-Safety Program Development
- Use of Community Risk Reduction in place of traditional public education.
- Facilities Improvements.



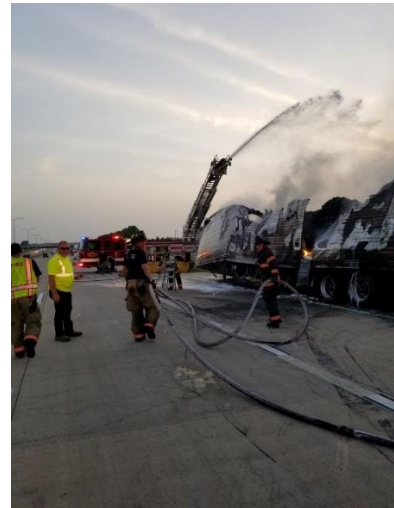
**A fire at 605 West Fayette Ave in February caused extensive damage. Firefighters rescued family pets. No injuries were reported.**



**The Fire Department moved into the new Fire Station 2 located at 500 W Jaycee Ave. The existing building was repurposed – saving the City and taxpayers about 1.7 million dollars versus constructing the building new from the ground up. The new station provides safer and faster response times.**



**Fire Department personnel placed over 500 hydrant markers across the City providing firefighters with an improved method for spotting fire hydrants, especially under low-light and bad weather conditions.**



**Firefighters and Heartland Towing personnel responded to a fire in a semi-trailer that contained frozen food products.**