



The HHFD Response Times

The official newsletter of the Howlett Hill Fire Department

Issue 2, Volume 5

Special Edition
Summer/Fall 2003



From the Chief's Office

Chief James Harris

The Howlett Hill Fire Department is pleased to present you with this complimentary calendar. The delivery of this calendar coincides with the start of Fire Prevention Week throughout the United States. As you'll notice, the calendar has a Fire Prevention theme each day of the year. We want you to think about living safely, yet be aware that, like the calendar, the volunteers of the HHFD are always available for your fire and emergency medical needs 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

We plan to make this an annual event, and next year we will be seeking sponsors whose advertisement will appear on the calendar and help supplement our costs of providing the calendar. Anyone wanting to advertise in next year's calendar should contact the Fire Station at 673-1817 and leave a message. Someone will follow-up with you.

We've been very busy this year answering alarms and calls for help. Just to compare, for all of 2002, we responded to 201 alarms, while through **September 30, 2003, we have already responded to 264 alarms. This is ALREADY 31% higher than last year!** We also responded to an additional 20 calls not logged by Fire Control (911) during the April 4th-6th Ice Storm. The calls were coming in too fast for 911 to log them. In fact, your Howlett Hill Fire Department volunteers logged numerous hours working to put out minor fires, clear roads, handle medical emergencies and pump basements during the storm. We had 24 hour coverage at the Fire Station during the length of the storm. Crews would work a shift, rest up and be back for a later shift. We had people available at the station and on the streets of the district.

This was the best method of handling the sheer volume of calls coming in.

When the power was lost for the Fire District, we had our biggest challenge of trying to help those residents cope with rising water in their basements. We pumped a lot of basements. We did suffer some casualties at HHFD: a burned out submersible pump, had tremendous damage to a gas generator and had a chain saw seize up.

With that storm behind us, we've had a reasonable summer, now we're gearing up for Fall and Winter.

We have a presence on the Internet at <http://www.hhfd.org> Our goal is to provide helpful information to you, our District Residents as well as pertinent Departmental information to our members. Feel free to view this new site.

Our AED (Automated External Defibrillator) Fund Drive initiated in October 2002 was quite successful. We raised \$9,604 to date! Thank You for your support. We still need another \$3,800 to reach our goal of having all our vehicles AED equipped. If you have already donated to this initiative we Thank You once again. If you want to donate at this time, please send a check to:

**Howlett Hill Fire Dept.
3384 Howlett Hill Rd.
Syracuse, NY 13215**

Check out our website to learn more about our AED Fund Drive and AED's.

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The HHFD Response Times

An informal newsletter for the Howlett Hill Fire Department members and their families and for the residents of the community we serve. The Times is published six times a year. Copies are available at the Howlett Hill Fire Station, or via email by request to: fvalls@hhfd.org

Frank Valls, Editor

HHFD on the web at:

<http://www.hhfd.org>

From the Chief's Office

(continued from page 1)

We hope you enjoy the initial landscaping planted in front of the apparatus bay doors. They give a bright new look to the station. We are re-seeding the lawns and have the grounds looking much better.

Construction work on the Fire Station is coming along nicely. We were granted a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy by the town's Codes Officer which allowed us to operate out of the upper apparatus bays and office areas, thus allowing us to operate effectively. The finishing touches are being made to the lower meeting room and kitchen areas at this time. We hope to have this work completed by late October.

Once we get clearance from the Codes Office, we will hold a Gala Event to welcome you all to "your new Fire Station"!!

Recently, Rev. Michael Delaney joined the HHFD as our Chaplain. We are very fortunate to have Rev. Delaney as a member as he provides not only spiritual and emotional comfort, but he is an accomplished fire-fighter with over 25 years in the fire service. Additionally, our Chaplain also serves as department photographer. The Chaplain is available not only to fire fighters, but also to victims, their families and residents.

The department has hired a New York State certified training group, "Emergency Training Consultants", to provide critical training classes for the HHFD. The trainers are all active City of Syracuse Fire Fighters and Officers. To satisfy legal requirements within New York, all training must be performed by state certified instructors. There are no state certified instructors enrolled as members of HHFD who could teach the classes required to maintain the departments skill set. Hiring the external trainers is proving to be quite successful. We received certified training, and benefit from the experiences of fellow fire fighters who utilize the same skills in their jobs on a daily basis. The department will evaluate the benefits and costs to determine if funding should be sought for this program in 2004.

Speaking of training! We have had several inquiries on whether HHFD would provide training to district residents for CPR. The answer is YES, we will assuming there is a desire. If you are interested in taking the classes to become certified in CPR, please contact the fire station by calling 673-1817 and leave a message. When we have enough students for a class, we'll contact you.

Taking training to new heights

Pictures from a recent exercise on fire fighter survival techniques. HHFD members demonstrate the fastest and safest techniques for bailing out of a second story window.



Helpful Hints !!!

Are your SMOKE DETECTORS “hard wired” directly to your electrical system? Many new homes have this type of configuration. If yours are hard wired, you might consider installing a battery powered smoke alarm as a back-up system. Why? Whenever you loose power to your home (during a thunder storm, or wind knocks tree limbs on power lines) you will loose power that runs your hard wired smoke detectors. Installing battery powered back-up alarms is a low cost method of assuring you have 24 hour coverage whether you have power or not.

REMEMBER, change your smoke alarm batteries at least once a year. Get in the habit of changing batteries during Fire Prevention Week. We'll help you remember!

Another hint pertains to your house numbers. If we can't see your house address number, we'll loose valuable time in responding to an emergency at your home. **Ideally, having 4 inch, reflective numbers located on BOTH sides of your mailbox** (assuming it is at the street curb) or numbers large enough to be seen AT NIGHT from the road will help us find you faster.

HHFD on the web

As noted on page 1, HHFD has our own website at www.hhfd.org We work very hard at keeping the site current and filled with interesting information, pertinent to both our fire service members, but also to our Fire District residents. Residents will find important information relating to a wide variety of topics from Fire Extinguishers, to Baby Sitting tips. All topics are aimed at helping you keep safe in your home throughout the year. As winter approaches we will post information on managing with loss of power and being shut-in during a storm. Residents will find information on upcoming fund raising events with which they may want to participate. Our Photo Gallery gives everyone an indication of what type of work we do in the fire department. We have a marquee running across our homepage highlighting key information to be viewed, or providing awareness of timely information. Check us out and feel free to send comments to our webmaster.

Where's the HHFD Station Siren?

Many people have asked what happened to the siren at the Fire Station? The answer is simple, it had to be taken down as part of the new station renovations and relocated to a more conducive site. When the siren was removed, we found a few problems and currently it is being repaired. Once it is repaired, we'll replace it and the traditional siren will sound again.

Will you Answer the Call?

The Howlett Hill Fire District continues to grow and with that comes an influx of new residents. We are always looking for a few extra volunteers to help us in many ways. We'll handle the training, we'll provide you with protective outfit, all you need to provide is the time and the commitment. Having volunteers from the Howlett Hill neighborhood is more cost effective for us than putting on paid staff as other departments have resorted to. The arithmetic is simple, putting on paid staff will increase our operating budget costs. Help your community, be a volunteer. Administrative tasks are available for individuals who are not interested in fire suppression or EMS duties. If you are interested, or have questions, feel free to stop by the fire station. The best time to stop by is any Monday evening from 6:30—9:30PM.

Howlett Hill Fire Department is 100% Volunteer !

FEMA Grant Application

On April 11, 2003 Deputy Chief John Harris Jr. and Treasurer Lauren Legnetto spent several hours together applying for a FEMA grant on behalf of HHFD. We hope FEMA will accept our request which will allow us to replace our current breathing apparatus(SCBA) plus replace some member's protective gear (coats and trousers). These tools (along with good training) are the cornerstones of our safety on the job. Our grant requested \$178,000 to replace 25 SCBA and replace 10 firefighter's protective gear. FEMA releases application results a few at a time over the next few months. We're keeping our fingers crossed! Hopefully, FEMA will come through with this financial assistance which is allocated to Fire Departments for this purpose. This money will certainly help us avoid adding to our operating costs and keep us safer.

DEC Grant received

In June, our Chief applied to the DEC (NY State Department of Environmental Conservation) for a grant to cover our need for upgraded radios. To conserve money, our recent practice has been to receive second-hand radios from downstate Fire Departments who have been upgrading their radios. Over time several of these radios have begun to fail, not something we can afford in the fire service. The DEC granted us \$1,000 for radios to which HHFD must match in kind. We will be putting new radios in service shortly.

Additional Grant applications

HHFD is exploring every avenue to continue delivering the best, cost effective service to our Fire District residents. As noted above we have applied for grants to government agencies for large and small funding amounts. We also have applied for grants available from private industries. In July we applied for funding for the additional AED's we need to equip our Chief's vehicles with An AED (Automated External Defibrillator). Smith Kline Glaxo, the makers of TUMS, offers funding for AED's and we are still hopeful that our application will be granted.

In August, we applied for a grant from the US Smokeless Tobacco Co. and John Deere for a John Deere Trail Gator, a 6 wheel ATV (All Terrain Vehicle). HHFD would use this for emergencies at the old County Landfill, the abandoned Stone Quarry, along the various hiking, skiing and snowmobiling trails in the district. The 6 wheeler would also be used as a shuttle bringing fire fighters, equipment or supplies anywhere in the district or in one of our neighboring fire districts as needed. We received word in September that all 2003 funds had been exhausted, but our application has been included as an early application for review when applications and funding are available in 2004.

In June we applied to United Technologies—Carrier Corporation for a mini-grant of \$250. to apply to an AED Training device. The AED Trainer allows us to practice with a replica of the AED's we already have on our apparatus, yet not deliver shock during training. We received the grant funds in September 2003. THANK YOU Carrier and United Technologies!

HHFD is doing our best to find creative means of keeping fire district costs as low as possible.

New Fire Station Status !

As noted earlier, the kitchen and meeting areas in the lower part of the station are coming along nicely. Once completed, and after the Town Codes Officer grants a certificate of occupancy we will be making these facilities available to our residents for events and public gatherings. We look forward to the day when we are finally able to integrate the station back into a resource available to the community. We'll keep you posted on the building progress.