



# Cuyahoga Falls Fire Department

2014

Annual Report

## **Cuyahoga Falls Fire Department**

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In 2014, the Cuyahoga Falls Fire Department continued to provide the highest quality of professional emergency service to our community. This was done within a framework of empathy, compassion and dedication to the citizens we serve. The Fire Department promises to continue to review and renew every aspect of its service, maintaining a model of continuous improvement, to deliver only the best to our community.

The Cuyahoga Falls Fire Department was quick to respond to all calls for assistance in 2014 and will continue to keep the city safe in 2015. The Fire Department has provided continuous service to the citizens of Cuyahoga Falls since 1837, and the Village of Silver Lake since 2008.

Early in the year, the Department and City in general saw the tremendously destructive damage a flood can bring. On May 12, the Department received 681 requests for service from 9pm to 1am. This meant one call every 50 seconds for four hours. Our dispatchers did an incredible job! All available City employees were recalled to assist. The City's Emergency Operation Center was staffed where Mayor Walters, Chief Officers of Police and Fire, Department Directors, other City Departments, and others helped coordinate efforts of helping our Citizens. This all occurred as City Hall itself was flooding and had a fire.

At this flooding event, a family on Dwight Street was very fortunate to live through the night. After evacuating to their basement, for the severe weather concerns,

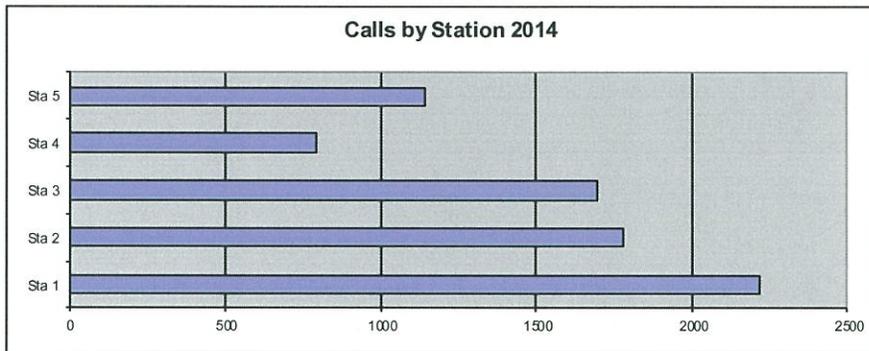
the basement wall gave way with flood waters. The children ran to the top of the stairs, as Mom and Dad were washed away into the then filled basement. With only a few inches of air space, neighbors responded to the yells of the children and began rescue efforts. Ladder 2 arrived, and after swimming to the front door, recently promoted Lt. Rubin, his team, and neighbors cut through the flooring and pulled Mom and Dad to safety.

In this busy year, the Fire Department responded to **7778 calls. With an average response time of 4 minutes and 39 seconds to all calls and 4 minutes and 24 seconds to all emergency calls. Average time to calls within the City limits average 3 minutes and 45 seconds to all calls and 3 minutes and 32 seconds to emergency calls. The Cuyahoga Falls Fire Department is 60% better than the national average of 10 minutes.** Response time and volume remained consistent over the past several years.

Responding quickly is only part of the service; taking care of the citizen is the greater responsibility. Our customer service philosophy is simple; treat each person as you wish to be treated. The well being of a patient is as vital to their recovery as being treated medically or rescued from a threatening situation. This Department receives letters regularly thanking the crews for the extra step they took in a patient's care such as locking up the house, calling a relative, or just speaking softly and calmly to soothe the patient's anxiety. Our quick response, combined with well-trained medical and fire skills and great customer service, has made the difference between life and death for many members of this community.

This Thanksgiving we are happy to share that after a paramedic crew assisted the patient with her medical needs, they then helped her finish preparing dinner for her and her family. That was her greatest need.

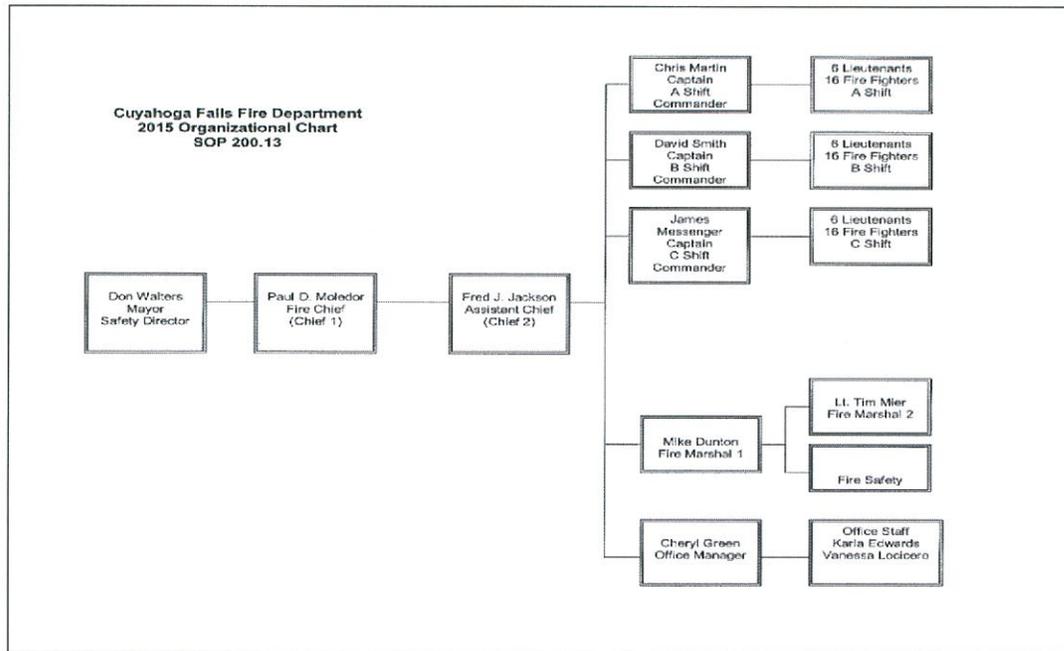
**Station 1 remains the busiest in the City of Cuyahoga Falls.** The 2014 district response numbers are reflected below.



The Cuyahoga Falls Fire Department maintains mutual aid agreements with surrounding communities and an automatic aid agreement with Akron. In 2014, The Cuyahoga Falls Fire Department delivered mutual/automatic aid 93 times, while receiving mutual/automatic aid 23 times. This continues our efforts to improve service through regional cooperation and sharing of resources. This valuable asset is priceless in providing resources, not needed daily, for the unusually busy moments or large events.

Another fine presence that Cuyahoga Falls Fire Department has in the community is the Honor Guard, which stands ready to honor retirees and the fallen. In 2014, the Honor Guard stood for Mayor Walters, Swearing-In Ceremony, marched in the Memorial Day Parade, and stood for the Police Memorial Event in respect of all in uniform.

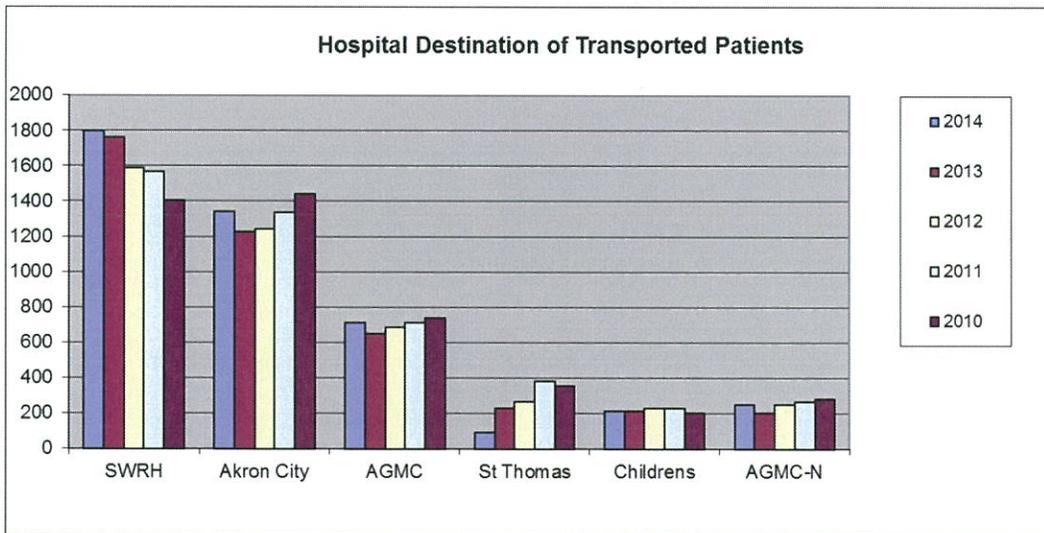
The Fire Department is organized as below.



## Emergency Medical Service

One of the major functions of the Cuyahoga Falls Fire Department is to provide Emergency Medical Service. In 2014, **5,665 EMS incidents accounted for 78% of the total incidents**. The aspects of EMS are multi-faceted; in-the-field triage, the administration of medication and/or medical treatments, and emergency transportation to a local hospital when the symptoms indicate. As a result of EMS incidents, **4,411 patients were transported to various facilities in 2014. More than \$1.6 million of revenue was generated by ambulance billing for the city.**

Patients were transported to their hospital of choice as listed below.



Under the medical direction of Dr. Michael Beeson, the Cuyahoga Falls Fire Department operates from an aggressive, standing order-driven protocol, based heavily on the discretion and judgment of paramedics on the scene. To prepare our medics, Dr. Beeson and his staff provide monthly continuing medical education, including a review of EMS calls and a lecture series.

In addition, Fire Department members are provided specialty training including Advanced Cardiac Life Support, Basic Life Support, Pediatric Life Support and Basic Trauma Life Support. All paramedics also participate in an innovative, on-line CME training known as 24/7. Topics provide medics with curriculum tied to the monthly CME lectures and include a written test for each topic. The Fire Department, along with Dr. Beeson assists the police department in meeting medical direction for the City Jail.

The past two years, Western Reserve Hospital conducted regular monthly training to assist our paramedics in providing the best possible pre-hospital care. In addition to in-house training, WRH provided topic experts in various areas of medicine.

The Fire Department utilizes digital 12-lead EKG transmission, which rapidly sends field heart rhythms to our local cardiac centers. Within moments of a patient being connected to a heart monitor, the EKG is transmitted to the receiving hospital and the physicians who will deliver care. The transmission equipment was made possible by a generous grant from the Western Reserve Hospital. This newer procedure ensures that catheter labs and reperfusion teams are mobilized and at the ready prior to the patient's arrival. Cuyahoga Falls Fire medics received several commendations for the large number of heart patients that were rapidly identified, treated, and transported to our local heart centers. This program continues to save lives with expedient Next-Generation technologies.

This year, the Department paramedics began training on the skills necessary to address the tragic situations created by an active shooter in a public place. This training was conducted in conjunction with our Police Department.

Late 2014 brought Ebola Virus to Northeastern Ohio for the first time. Treatment needs for patients and protective measures for our personnel were needed with no preparation time. Members stood strong and met the challenge.



## Fire Service

Another major function of the Department is to provide fire/rescue-related services. Engines and/or ladder trucks reside at all five stations, prepared with equipment to provide the best level of service to our citizens. Every incident presents a different challenge for a fire fighter. The Cuyahoga Falls Fire Department continues to train in various venues to ensure members maintain necessary skills. For example, community geography is studied, Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus methods reviewed, and ladder evolutions are conducted. Fire fighter safety and fire command topics are trained regularly. Every month, training is posted with a specific reading assignment and drills to be conducted. Specific incidents are reviewed to learn from the experiences, and specialized training is conducted in rope rescue, confined space, trench, collapse, Hazardous Materials, and water rescue tactics. In all, the training conducted by Fire Department exceeds the State requirements and all members maintain fire fighting and paramedic certifications.

In 2014, total fire losses continue a downward trend. Total structure fire losses accounted for \$617,225, however a total of **\$4,176,295 in property value was saved.**



## **Fire Prevention and Education**

Fire losses continue to remain low across all occupancies. The community involvement of firefighters and fire prevention members has served as a mechanism for keeping fire losses low in our community. There were no fire fatalities 2014 and we believe this is a direct result of our smoke alarm program and the education and inspection we provide to homes and businesses.

Fire Prevention still remains the most effective method for reducing fires across the United States and also remains the most effective way of reducing firefighter injuries and deaths. This is supported by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST).

The opening of Portage Crossings was not without a lot of effort from fire prevention members. They were involved in plan review, the installation, testing and final inspections for fire protection equipment, and they established relationships with the many new business owners now operating in our city. As development around the City continues, so does our involvement with creating a proactive participation with that development.

Blossom Music Center remains a considerable focus of the Fire Prevention Bureau. Every year the Fire Marshal meets with the senior staff of Blossom to review and discuss the coming year's events. The Fire Marshal and staff deal with live performances involving fireworks and pyrotechnical effects. To ensure public safety, many hours of preparation are required for a successful event. The preparation includes review of the types of devices to be used in a performance. If during review and testing it

is determined that the pyrotechnic effect may pose a risk to the public, it is removed from the show.

The roles of fire prevention are varied and unique to our City, and members continue to expand their knowledge to stay current on the issue facing public safety. We will continue to work at using prevention as an effective tool for a safe community.

Fire companies were responsible for **1310 commercial inspections during 2014**. The fire companies perform these inspections for several reasons. Most importantly, company inspections allow the fire fighters to be familiar with the building layout, increasing their survivability in a fire and their ability to rescue those in need. Additionally, inspections reduce the potential for fire, and limit the fire growth and development by removing unsafe practices and hazards. The company inspection program also allows us to place emphasis on targeting areas in need of additional support to help the business owners maintain a safe, valuable business.

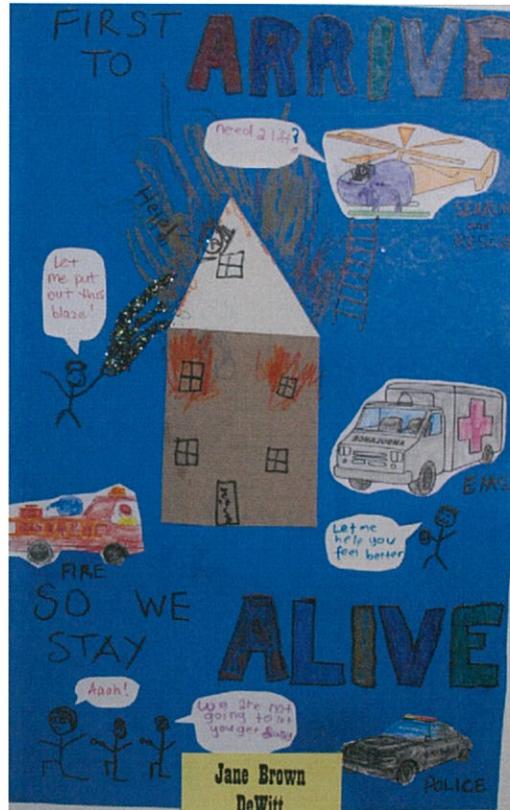
These companies also installed over 224 smoke detectors in 54 homes across the City and Silver Lake.



## Community Events

The Fire Department continues to support life safety initiatives by providing the Safety Town Program, with the assistance and support of other City Departments, businesses, and citizens. This program teaches 200 in-bound kindergarten students many safety lessons they will carry through life.

In 2014, the Fire Department, with tremendous partnering from other City Departments, private business, citizens, and Western Reserve Hospital, conducted the second annual First Responders Appreciation Day. This event was created to recognize the many men and women in uniform for the service they provide both domestic and foreign. The event drew over 5,000 persons to a family-friendly, fun event on the mall.



## Special Operations Teams

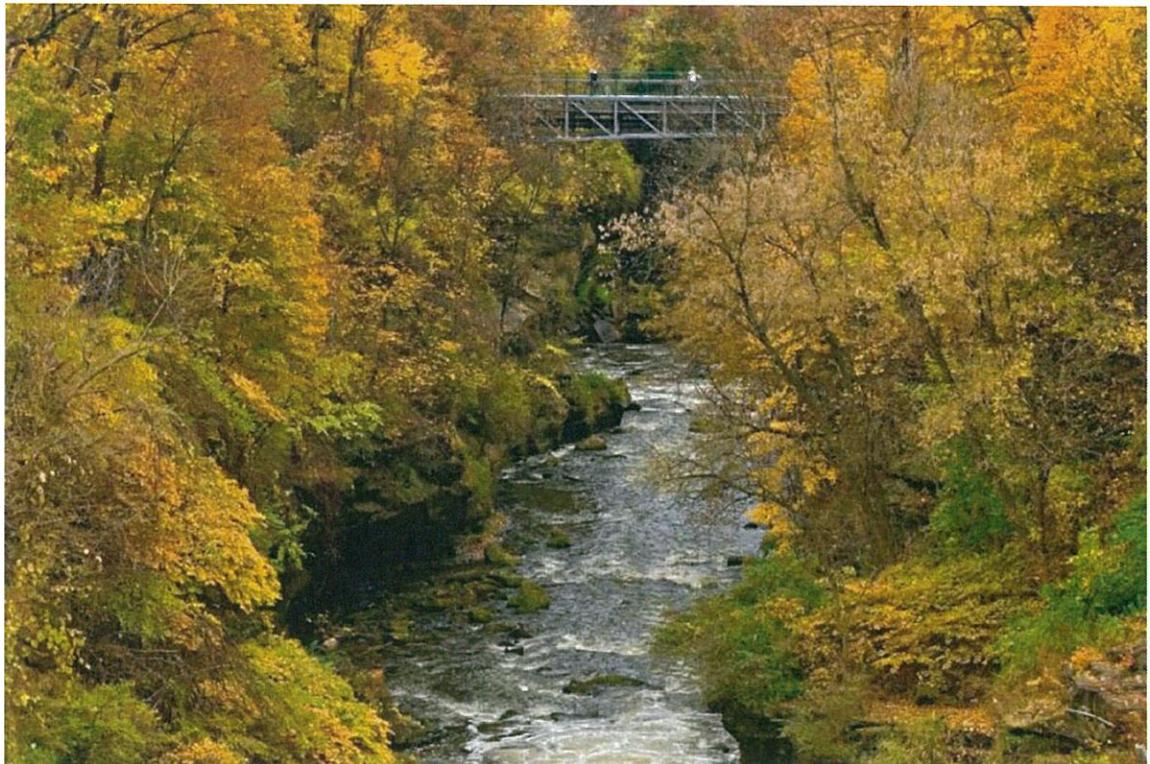
The City of Cuyahoga Falls has many special hazards that require the specific and specially trained response of the Special Operations Teams. These hazards include industrial confined spaces and chemicals, cliffs in the Gorge Park, construction trenches, various impoundments, and the swift waters of the Cuyahoga River. The members of the Cuyahoga Falls Fire Department Special Operations Teams responded to various calls in 2014. These responses include: searches for lost persons, rescue of persons from stalled elevators, rescue of persons from swift or icy waters, investigation of Hazardous Materials incidents, and SWAT Medical events.

In addition to the responses within the City, specially trained Cuyahoga Falls Fire Department members also participated with the Summit County Special Operations Team in water rescue events. Fire Department members continue to benefit from Operation Talon Shield, a federal disaster response training at the Ravenna Arsenal. This intense training exercise included a simulated building collapse and urban search and rescue scenario.



## Grants

The Cuyahoga Falls Fire Department actively researches grant opportunities. In the past 10 years, more than \$1 million has been awarded to the Fire Department by various private organizations and governmental agencies. Grants are utilized to purchase state-of-the-art equipment and supplies. The Department received the Ohio EMS Grant, and was awarded Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) to cover the costs of updating radio equipment in 2014.



## Silver Lake

Since 2008, the Cuyahoga Falls Fire Department has been delivering Fire/EMS /Rescue service to the Village of Silver Lake, and installing smoke detectors upon request. The Village of Silver Lake contracts with the City of Cuyahoga Falls for this service.

### 195 Silver Lake Calls in 2014

- 54 Fire / Explosion, Overheat
- 124 EMS
- 19 Good Intent
- 16 False Alarms
- 10 Hazardous Condition
- 22 Miscellaneous Service Calls



## Conclusion

**In 2014, the Cuyahoga Falls Fire Department provided the highest quality of professional emergency service to our community. This was done within a framework of empathy, compassion and dedication to the citizens we serve. The Fire Department promises to continue to review and renew every aspect of its service to deliver only the best to our community, while keeping it safe in 2015.**

