

CITY OF MILTON FIRE DEPARTMENT



2011 ANNUAL REPORT

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2011 was another good year for the City of Milton Fire Department, with relatively few real challenges, and which afforded a great opportunity to consolidate accomplishments of the previous years, placing the department in a very stable position for coming years. While overall emergency response activity was up considerably from the prior year, members were still able to remain busy with many ongoing projects, including the final “fitting out” the new fire station to complete all design features. This new facility, dedicated and occupied on September 11, 2009, offers greatly improved capabilities of which the department has taken great advantage throughout the past two years.

EMERGENCY ACTIVITY

Despite a dramatic increase in the overall number of emergency responses, 2011 was a year of relative calm, with very few major incidents requiring more than the response of the initial alarm assignment. The total number of emergency calls increased by over 11%, up to 1,641 calls, from 1,475 the previous year. This increase reflects a return to the long-term trend toward an overall 1.4 % average annual activity increase over the last 10 years.

Rescue calls this year again made up an increasing majority of our emergency calls, now totaling 1,367 calls, or 83% of our annual emergency activity. Rescue calls include: medical emergencies such as strokes, heart attacks, falls, etc.; all vehicle accidents including those that involve entrapment requiring forcible extrication with specialized hydraulic tools such as the “Jaws of Life”; and rescue calls like a child locked in a vehicle, elderly who have fallen and need help back into bed, and even the occasional animal rescue. In 2011 we responded to 1,102 medical rescues, 151 vehicle accidents, and 114 other rescue calls.

Fire responses, while always a relatively small portion of our total emergency activity, are our primary responsibility, and actually are the segment of our responsibility that requires the greatest resources, in terms of equipment, training and personnel. Although the vast majority of fire related incidents are quickly handled by the on-duty crew, we must always respond with the capacity to bring the full capabilities of the department to bear rapidly to effect rescue, protect exposures, and quickly bring a well-developed working structure fire under control. As we can never know when the next “big one” will occur, we must constantly maintain the readiness necessary to manage that incident. This includes continuous training of personnel and maintenance of vehicles and equipment to ensure that all is ready at a moment’s notice. This year we responded to only 204 fire related calls, amounting to 13% of our total responses. These included 20 structure fires, 6 vehicle fires, 13 brush or wildland fires, 99 false alarms or good intent calls, and 66 other fire related calls, such as illegal burning.

Our smallest category of emergency response, hazardous condition calls, make up only 3% of our emergency activity, but represents potentially the most dangerous aspect of our operations to both our members and the public. These include: natural and liquefied petroleum (LP) gas incidents; electrical problems such as downed power lines, arcing lines, and transformer fires; fuel leaks and spills, and all other hazardous conditions such as chemical releases, train derailments, building collapse, and terrorist acts. These incidents potentially involve very dangerous agents, present almost endless complexity, and often require responders to begin operations with very little information in a very dynamic environment. In 2011 the department responded to 70 hazardous condition calls, including 26 gas incidents, 16 electrical incidents, 2 fuel leaks or spills, and 26 other hazardous condition calls.

On 137 occasions last year, we were dispatched to an emergency call while one or more units were already assigned to a previous call (concurrent calls). This means that over 8.3 % of our emergency calls were received while we were already responding to, or on the scene of, a prior emergency call. On at least 13 occasions we were dispatched to three or more simultaneous calls during the same period of time. On five occasions one or more of the concurrent calls occurred in conjunction with mutual aid provided to another jurisdiction. In one case we were diverted from a response to a structure fire in another district to handle a call in our own district.

This is by far the greatest number of concurrent calls in any one year, and represents increasing stress on our overall response capability. In every case an appropriate response was made without undue delay, and no calls have gone unanswered. On several occasions Engine 23 was required to respond to a medical emergency in place of Rescue 23, which was managing a previous call. Each of these incidences of concurrent calls occasionally results in a situation in which Engine 23 is not staffed to respond to fire calls with its normal crew complement of four firefighters, creating extreme operational difficulties in addressing the immediate needs on the fireground.

MUTUAL AID

The maintenance of effective mutual aid agreements is a crucial element in our overall ability to meet the needs of our citizens. While we are able to manage the vast majority of emergency calls with on-duty personnel, supplemented when necessary by the recall of off-duty personnel, incidents do arise wherein the resources of the City of Milton Fire Department alone are not sufficient to manage the situation. In these situations we must call on the support of surrounding fire departments to develop a coordinated response structure. During calendar year 2011 the department provided mutual aid to other departments on 21 occasions, and received mutual aid on 6 occasions, amounting to 1.28% and .37% of total calls, respectively. The number of incidents in which mutual aid was provided decreased from 39 in 2010 while the number of incidents in which mutual aid was requested and received also decreased from the 2010 total of 11 instances.

EQUIPMENT ISSUES

Vehicle maintenance issues have continued to present some serious challenges throughout the year, but progress is being made to address this issue. Our department maintains a rather small fleet of apparatus, and age and hard service are combining to result in a number of mechanical failures, resulting in extended time out of service. Our front-line fire engine, Engine 23, is a 1998 Cyclone II Pumper manufactured by Emergency One Fire Apparatus in Ocala, Florida. This engine is due for replacement in early 2012, with the pending arrival of a new, custom rescue pumper from Emergency One Fire Apparatus. This new engine will be configured similarly to Engine 23, incorporating new design features such as a hydraulic generator, roll-up compartment doors, interior ladder tunnel, and increased compartment space, and will take the place of Engine 23, which will then revert to second-due status, and be re-designated as "Pumper 23". Our current second-due fire engine is a 1986 Pierce Suburban Pumper, with open "jump seats" and somewhat limited operational capabilities. This apparatus will revert to reserve status with the arrival of the new engine. Our current reserve engine, a 1979 Pierce Telesqrt with 50' ladder, is slated to be auctioned off, the proceeds being used to purchase a pick-up truck to function as a staff/utility vehicle.

ANNUAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

This year of relative calm afforded us the opportunity to essentially complete the “Fitting Out” of new fire station. Many of the “picky details” such as building shelving, hanging pictures and plaques, and landscaping were completed, as well as adjusting daily operations to fully utilize the beneficial design features of the building. One important item was the relocation of the mural from above the entry to the old fire station. This mural, painted on a 10-foot long section of plate glass that hung above the doorway of the dayroom in the old building, features a detailed depiction of the department’s first fire engine, a 1914 American Lafrance chemical hook and ladder, and the department’s current frontline engine, Engine 23, a 1998 E-One Cyclone II triple combination pumper. This mural was carefully moved, framed and mounted in the apparatus bays, and represents our department’s nearly 100 year history of service to the citizens of Milton.



After nearly fifty years of use in protecting the citizens of Milton from the ravages of fire, the old fire station on Bruner Street was finally demolished. This building was constructed in 1962, when the department was still primarily a volunteer department, and consisted of two apparatus bays, a watchroom, kitchen and dining area, an open second floor meeting room, hose tower, two small bathrooms, and an office for the chief. It was later expanded to add a third apparatus bay, a shop and classroom, and the meeting room was divided into a dayroom and four small bunkrooms. By the time the fire department relocated to its new fire station, operations had far outgrown the less than 6,000 square foot facility, and the old building was deemed too costly to maintain. The building was demolished in June and a new well house was constructed on the site to house the existing municipal water well previously located in the rear of the old station.



In the interest of maintaining our crucial communications capability and preparing for the upcoming FCC mandated narrow-banding of VHF frequencies, 8 new Motorola VHF portable two-way radios were purchased. This brings our total complement of these modern compliant radios to 15, generally allowing for a radio for each member operating on the scene of an emergency, a critical recommended element of safe fireground operations. These radios will also allow an automatic identifier to be transmitted, allow dispatch to identify the member transmitting in an emergency, even if that member is unable to speak. This will also increase our member safety in critical incidents.

Having served the department since 1988, Captain Keith Vinson retired in November after 23 years of service. Keith obtained his Associates Degree in Fire Science from Pensacola Junior College in 1996, obtained certification as an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) in February of 1998, and was promoted to Fire Captain in June of that same year. At the time of his retirement Captain Vinson served as the City's Liaison to the County Emergency Operations Center, the department's Uniform Officer, chairman of the department's Safety Committee, and was the department's senior Captain.

With this retirement, the extensive process was undertaken to fill the resulting vacancy. Applications were accepted and reviewed, interviews were conducted with the most qualified candidates, and Scott Kasper was hired as Firefighter/EMT. The Captain's Examination Process, consisting of a review of candidate's qualifications, a written test, and an oral board interview process, was completed, and Lt. Jim Custred was selected to fill the position of Fire Captain on B-Shift. Firefighter/EMT Geoffrey Freeman was appointed to fill the resulting Lieutenant's position on B-Shift until the Lieutenant's Examination Process can be held in early 2012. Necessary transfers and adjustments were made to realign shifts to move us into the coming year.

TRAINING

As always, training remains a vital part of the fire department's normal activity. With the wide array of situations to which the department is called to respond, it is imperative that all members of the department remain current and proficient in all areas of firefighting, basic life support, technical rescue, hazardous materials, etc. In accordance with the department's annual training calendar, each member undergoes a minimum of 20 hours of in-service training each month. In addition to this company training, many members have participated in additional specialized training.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

While internal training is a crucial element of department operations, external public education remains a very important element of the department's overall fire prevention program. The department operates with a stated goal to, "Put ourselves out of business through fire prevention and public education." While a lofty goal indeed, the department does consistently see a positive impact from their efforts toward educating the public. We would like to think that the reduced number of fire calls this year is at least partly attributable to our success through public education. The department attempts to offer a diversified public education program in an effort to reach all age groups throughout the community. Fire Prevention is taught through school programs, station tours, fire drills, fire extinguisher demonstrations, fire prevention classes, informational displays, and our Fire Safety Puppet Show. During 2011 the fire department conducted 17 school classes, reaching 740 students, 6 fire extinguisher classes, reaching 250 persons, 2 fire drills, reaching 275 students, and 27 other programs, including station tours, reaching 3,020 people, for a total of 52 programs reaching 4,285 people.

Among these programs were: *Fire Extinguisher Selection and Use* classes held for Santa Rosa Health and Rehab, Covenant Hospice, and Santa Rosa County School System Food Service Employees; *Marine Fire Safety* conducted for the United States Navy Sea Cadet program. Station Tours, which were once a major portion of our public education program, had been almost entirely curtailed due to the condition of the old fire station. With the occupancy of the new facility, with full handicap accessibility, we have resumed a regular program of station tours and again make this a vital part of our program, providing a memorable and impactful learning experience for school aged children. This year, during National Fire Prevention Week on October 15, we held our first annual Fire Prevention Open House. This 3-hour program featured equipment displays and demonstrations, station tours, displays and demonstrations by our community partners, our *Fire Safety Puppet Show*, fire safety demonstrations, refreshments, and door prizes. This event was attended by 300 – 500 people and was deemed a great success.



Our department also provides Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and First Aid Classes to target groups and the general public. With the outstanding classroom facility in the new fire station, we have been able to increase this program to offer a regular schedule of public classes, and again offer the program to all city employees. We generally offer CPR and First Aid to the public on the first Saturday of each month, and will gladly arrange special classes for groups that desire such training. Through the department's Training Center, headed by Firefighter EMT Steve Maddox, 47 individuals were taught CPR, including 5 department employees who renewed their CPR certification, and 12 were certified in First Aid.

FIRE PREVENTION AND LIFE SAFETY

The City of Milton Fire Department is also responsible for enforcement of the Florida Fire Prevention Code and Life Safety Code. Chief Reble serves as Life Safety Officer and Fire Official for the City of Milton. With the slow economy, development, and the resulting demand for inspections of new construction and new business had dropped off considerably. In 2011 this activity continued to rebound slightly. Chief Reble conducted 39 Life Safety Inspections, 21 Follow-up Inspections, 36 Construction Related Inspections, 78 pre-plan inspections, and 25 plan reviews, totaling 199 inspections and reviews, up nearly six percent from the previous year's activity.

INTO THE FUTURE

The work of the past few years has put our department in a very strong position, confident of our ability to meet the demands of serving and protecting the residents of Milton. We continue to work with our partner agencies, including Santa Rosa County Emergency Management to develop a strategy to meet future communications needs, including the impending FCC mandate for narrow-banding of all VHF radio frequencies by January of 2013. As our emergency call load continues to increase we will examine department staffing needs in order to insure that we will remain always ready to provide the level of service our citizens have come to consistently expect from our agency. Our new fire station facility provides us with the resources that will be needed to sustain our high level of service for many years to come. The anticipated arrival of our new fire engine, with all required equipment, will put us in a very strong position from a firefighting point of view. While the department must soon look to replace Rescue 23, our 11-year old first-due rescue vehicle, we find ourselves generally well equipped to meet the continued demands of protecting the lives and property of our citizens well into the future. We also look forward to planning an appropriate celebration of our department's 100th Anniversary in 2014.

CITY OF MILTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

MONTHLY ACTIVITY REPORT

CALENDAR YEAR 2011

ACTIVITY REPORT

ALARM RESPONSES

FIRE CALLS

TYPE:	Vehicle Fire	Structure Fire	Brush Fire	Alarm*	Other**	Total
NUMBER:	6	20	13	99	66	204

* Includes false and unintentional alarms, smoke scares, good intent, etc.

** Includes fire investigations, unauthorized burns, etc.

RESCUE CALLS

TYPE:	Medical Response	Vehicle Accident / Extrication	Other	Total
NUMBER:	1102	151	114	1367

HAZARDOUS CONDITION CALLS

TYPE:	Natural Gas*	Electrical Problems**	Fuel Leak/Spill	Other	Total
NUMBER:	26	16	2	26	70

* Includes gas leaks, smell of gas, etc.

** Includes downed power lines, transformer fires, arcing wires, etc.

MUTUAL AID:	GIVEN:	21	1.28%	RECEIVED:	6	0.37%
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TOTAL CALLS FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2011

1641

TOTAL CALLS IN

TOTAL CALLS IN 2011:	1641	2010:	1475
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PERCENTAGE INCREASE: 11.25%

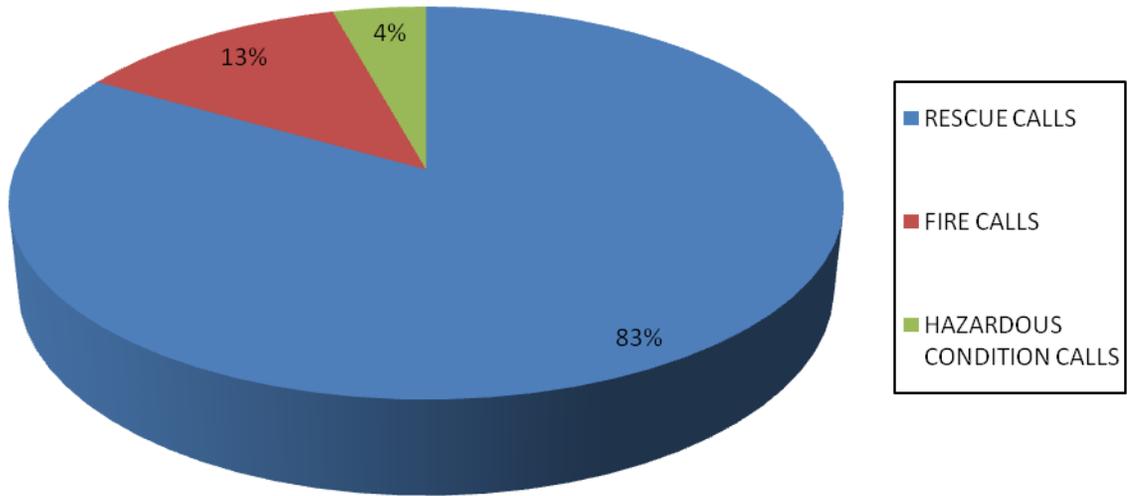
PUBLIC EDUCATION

TYPE OF PROGRAM:	School Class	Extinguisher Demo	Fire Drill	Other	Total
Number Conducted:	17	6	2	27	52
Number Attending:	740	250	275	3020	4285

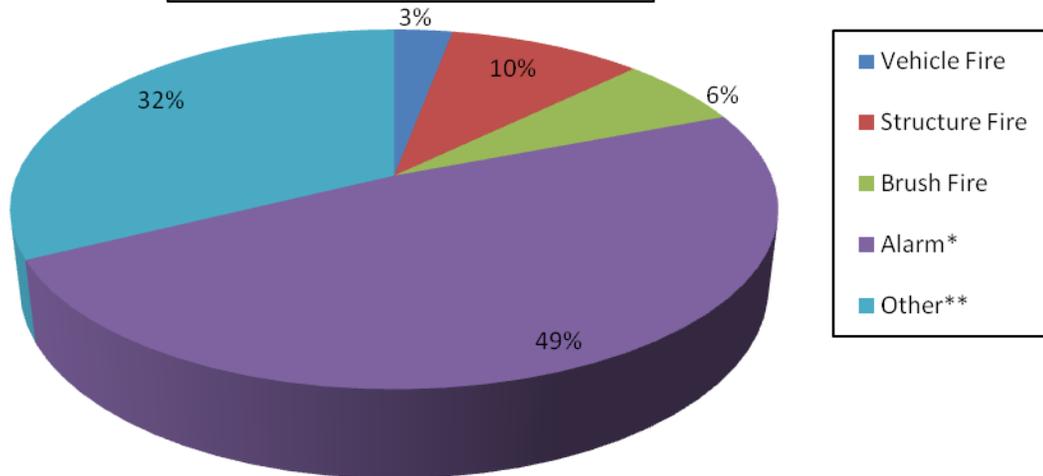
LIFE SAFETY

TYPE:	Life Safety Insp	Follow-up	Construction	Pre-plan	Plan Review	Total
Number:	39	21	36	78	25	199

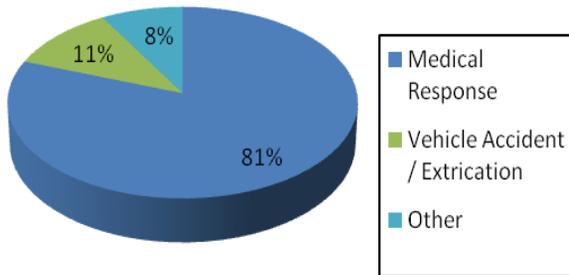
EMERGENCY RESPONSES CALENDAR YEAR 2011



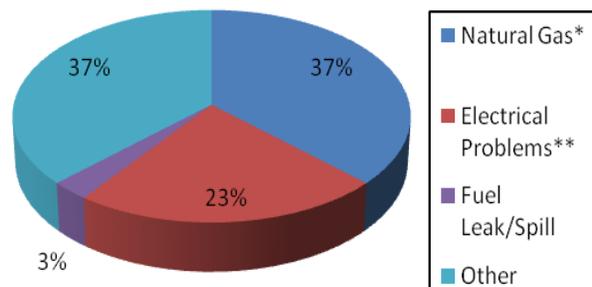
FIRE CALLS



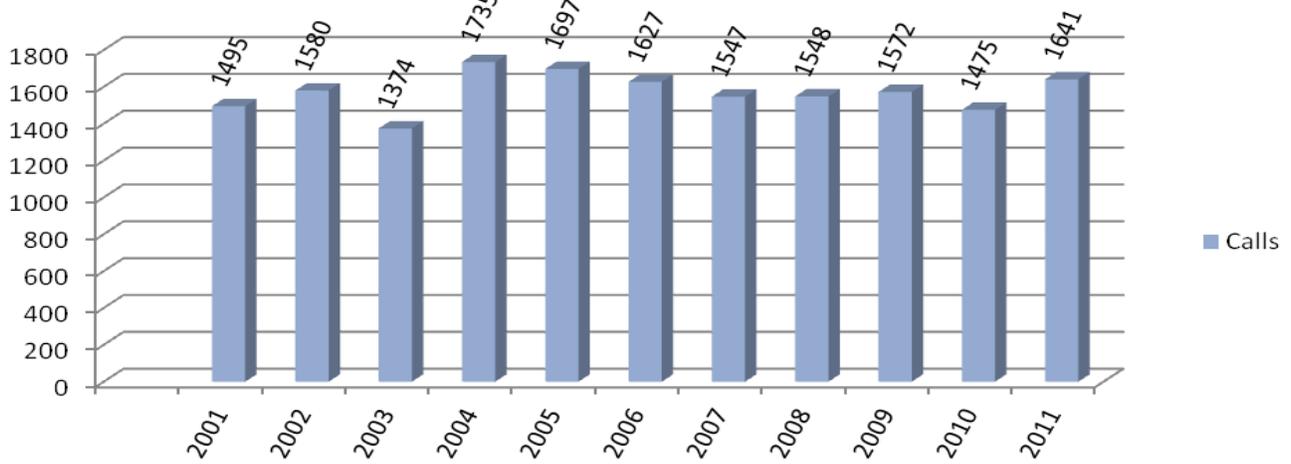
RESCUE CALLS



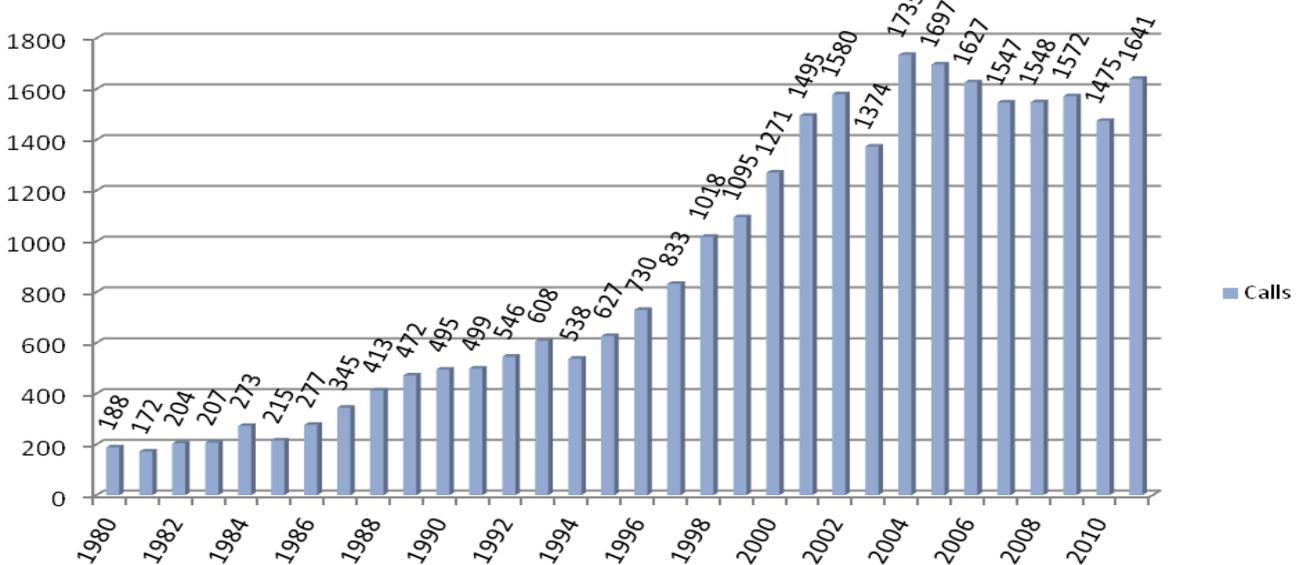
HAZARDOUS CONDITIONS



Emergency Calls 2001 - 2011



Emergency Calls 1980 - 2011



Annual Expenditure

