



**MORGANTOWN FIRE DEPARTMENT
ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2008**
“THE TIMES, THEY ARE A CHANGIN’”



Message from the Chief:

“Change” is the national catch-phrase for the upcoming year. It represents high expectations and a commitment to improvement. This same “Change” catch-phrase is applicable to the Morgantown Fire Department for 2009 as well. The decisions made and implemented in 2007 and 2008 have set up historic changes that will be realized by the Department in 2009!

First, and foremost, the expected completion of the North Side Fire Station project in mid-summer will facilitate the closure of the antiquated Wiles Hill Station that has been occupied by the Department since 1949. The last time a new station was built in Morgantown was in 1956, or over fifty years ago!

Additionally, the City has recently purchased an aerial truck for the Department. Never before has the City of Morgantown had more than one such vehicle in its inventory. Not only is the purchase of this vehicle historic, but it is the first time that the Fire Department has enjoyed the benefits of a “platform” aerial. In the past, only ladder trucks were purchased.

In the words of an old Bob Dylan tune, “*The times they are a changin’!*” Change, however, only occurs through support and sacrifice. The support and sacrifice required to make these most beneficial changes within the Fire Department came from two sources. Without the foresight of the City Council and the City Manager, as well as the expertise contributed by other City Departments, none of the changes would have been conceived and initiated. Still, a concept or a dream is only that until it becomes funded. As is always the case in government at any level, those served foot the bill. In this case, a fire service fee increase was required. This increase encompassed everyone with property in Morgantown including businesses, non-profit organizations, and families. It is a tribute to their support of the Fire Department that they shouldered this burden with little or no complaint. All of this support does not go unnoticed or unappreciated by the dedicated members of the Morgantown Fire Department. Simply stated, **THANK YOU!**

Now, it gives me great pleasure to present for your review the Morgantown Fire Department Annual Report for 2008.

Current Programs and Services:

Over the last year, the Department’s scope of operations, both emergency and non-emergency, has remained constant. This stagnation is due to the extensive portfolio of services already being provided by the Department. Those services include the following:

Proactive non-emergency services provided

- **Planning Services for commercial and residential occupancies**
- **Inspection services**
- **Construction Plan Review services**

- **Fire Code Compliance**
- **Arson Investigation and Cause/Origin Investigative services.**
- **Public Education Programs**
- **Public Training Programs**
- **Departmental Training Programs**
- **Equipment maintenance and repair**
- **Data Collection, Recordkeeping, and Analysis**
- **Counseling**
- **Physical Fitness Program**
- **Other non-emergency services**

Reactive emergency response services provided

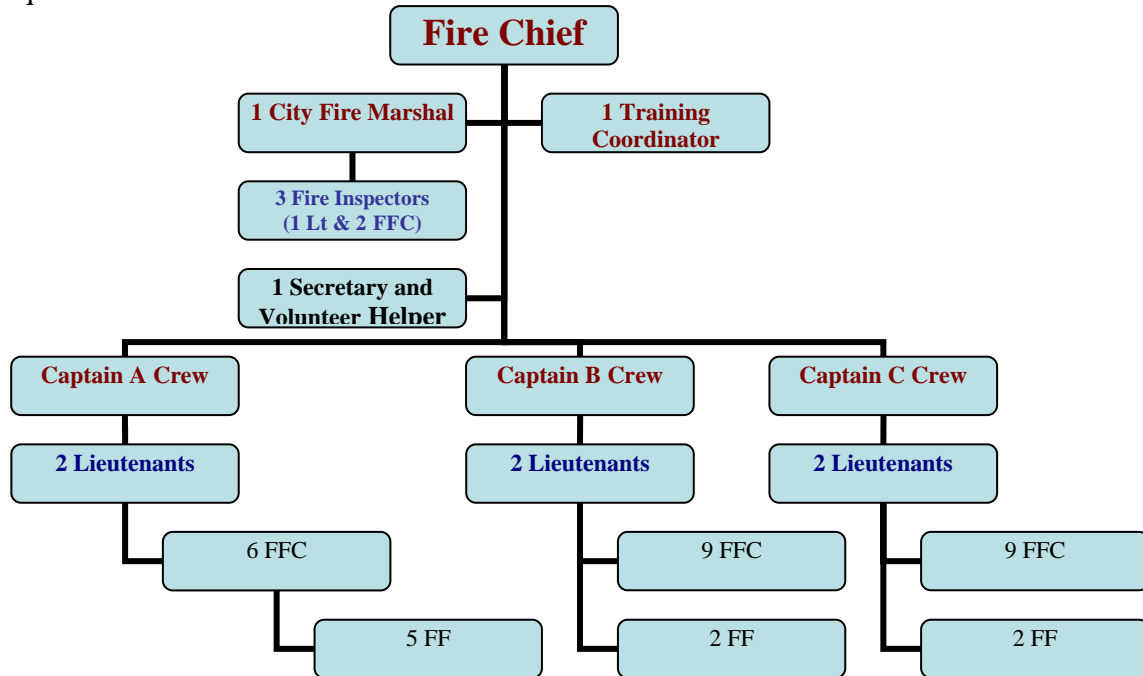
- **Firefighting**
 - **Medical First Responder**
 - **Confined Space Rescue**
 - **Elevated Rescue**
 - **High-angle Rescue**
 - **Extrication**
 - **Hazardous Material Response (Technician Level Trained)**
 - **Water Rescue**
 - **Underwater Dive Services**
 - **Search and Rescue**
 - **Mutual Aid Responses with surrounding departments**
 - **Scene Stabilization and Security**
 - **Natural Disaster Responses**
 - **Man-made Disaster Responses**
- Other Emergency Responses not otherwise classified**

Although the scope of services has remained the same, it is the Department's commitment to continued improvement within those services that drives the professionalism and allows the Department to compile the impressive statistics achieved throughout this report.

Resources:

The Fire Department occupies six separate physical locations. The Administration functions are performed within the Public Safety Building. These include the Fire Chief's office, Secretary, Training Coordinator, and Fire Marshal. The bulk of the Department's code enforcement activities and public education coordination activities take place in the City Hall building. The Wharf District Parking Garage provides some much needed storage for the Department's rail/trail and river response equipment. Finally, the suppression forces and associated response vehicles and equipment continue to occupy three fire stations on South High Street, North Street, and Hillcrest Avenue.

Over the last year, the Department has increased its manpower by one firefighting position. This addition was necessitated by the reassignment of one First Class Firefighter to the Department's Code Enforcement/Public Education Division. With this new additional firefighting position, each of the three suppression crews now has an equal 14 members.



There are two significant changes in the Department's vehicle inventory over last year's report. First, and foremost, the Department has added a second aerial platform unit at a cost of nearly \$900,000. This new unit will be put into service in 2009 and will be housed at the new North Side Fire Station. The second change occurred when the Department decommissioned one of its engines. This 1977 American LaFrance engine was taken out of service due to its deteriorating condition and its inability to pass a required annual service test. Refurbishing this unit would have been cost prohibitive for its intended purpose, however, the unit continues to serve the citizens in the Public Works Department. A replacement engine has been designed and ordered and the Department expects delivery of this unit in the spring of 2009. The following table illustrates the current inventory and placement locations of all units:

STAFF VEHICLES	STATION ONE	STATION TWO
1999 Ford Expedition	2000 Pierce Engine	2000 Pierce Engine
2002 Jeep Cherokee	1988 Pierce Engine 4WD	2008 Sutphen Aerial Platform
2001 Jeep Cherokee	1991 Pierce Minipumper	1926 Seagrave Antique
2006 Jeep Liberty	1996 Pierce Ladder Truck	2002 Ford F350 Pickup
2006 Jeep Liberty	1978 American LaFrance Rescue	2002 Boston Whaler Boat
2002 Dodge Durango		Dive Trailer
STATION THREE	WHARF PARKING GARAGE	Public Education Trailer
1994 Pierce Engine	2001 John Deere Gator	HazMat Trailer
1994 Chevy 1/2 ton Pickup	1960 Jon Boat	

Review of Past Year's Activities:

There are four primary areas of operation where most of the Department's efforts have been concentrated. These areas of concentration include emergency responses, training, code compliance, and public education/relations. The following statistical data will attest to the efforts put forth and successes achieved in each of these four areas.

EMERGENCY RESPONSES

Emergency response calls are up over 3% of what was included in the 2007 Annual Report. The Department responded to 2,545 emergency calls in 2007 and that amount has increased to 2,631 in 2008. Still, there were **NO FIRE RELATED FATALITIES** again this year!

Along with the increase in emergency responses, there has been a significant increase in the dollar loss figures due to fires in this year's report as well. Last year the Department was successful in keeping the fire losses to \$553,180. This year, however, fire loss figures increased to \$1,240,300. This represents an increase of 124 %. Although initially alarming, this year's loss figures are more representative of the norm over the last several years and last year's low loss figures were extraordinarily low. Regardless, when comparing the dollar value of the property being protected by the Morgantown Fire Department, and further comparing these loss figures to other comparable cities in West Virginia, it becomes readily apparent that Morgantown is a very well protected city with regard to fire.

The following table reflects the actual emergency call load by incident types and percentages:

MAJOR INCIDENT TYPE	# INCIDENTS	% OF THE TOTAL
Fires	229	8.70 %
Overpressure rupture, explosion, overheat- no fire	5	0.19 %
Rescue & Emergency Medical Service	899	34.17 %
Hazardous Condition (No fire)	175	6.65 %
Service Call	356	13.53 %
Good Intent Call	543	20.64 %
False Alarm and False Call	408	15.51 %
Severe Weather & Natural Disaster	6	0.23 %
Special Incident Type	10	0.38 %
TOTALS	2,631	100 %

TRAINING

The manpower level at the Morgantown Fire Department, relative to the number of people served, is the lowest of any paid professional fire department in the State; however, the fire loss figures comparable to the value of the property being protected is also the lowest of any paid fire department in the State. The obvious question would be how? There are many reasons including equipment, fire prevention, code enforcement, and the dedication and professionalism of the protecting workforce. One of the most important reasons, however, is the training level of those who serve on the Department. With that being said, the following statistical data supports the assertion that the Morgantown Fire Department personnel are some of the, if not the best trained in the entire State.

This year, three members of the Department concluded their State mandated Department of Labor Apprenticeship Program. Each had an average of over 7,915 hours of training throughout the program. Currently, the Department has six members enrolled in the same Apprenticeship Program. In all, the Department has recorded 13,112 hours of individual training for those participating in the Apprenticeship program.

Additionally, the Department has conducted 5,747 hours of Company training this year and has authorized individual members to take training courses provided by outside the department agencies to the tune of 1,994 hours. This outside the department training involved 38 different courses. Also, the Department's Staff Officers participated in 45 hours of Officer Training in order to be ISO compliant.

PUBLIC EDUCATION/RELATIONS

The Fire Department is a public service oriented industry. Sometimes those services are reactive in nature in response to emergencies. At other times, they are proactive in nature in the hope of preventing the former. The following figures illustrate the Fire Department's commitment to continuous improvement in this most vital area of operation.

In 2007, the Department provided public education and training for 6,150 persons. This year, that number was increased by 44% for a total of 8,845.

Adults = 2,963 Children = 5,504 Extinguisher training = 378

CODE COMPLIANCE AND INSPECTION

There is no better way to measure performance than through quantitative data. By utilizing such data and comparing it against a yard-stick of performance, strengths and weakness may be identified and appropriate action taken. The following code enforcement data reveals an unhealthy trend for which a root-cause analysis should be conducted and appropriate corrective action taken.

TYPE	2007 YEAR	2008 YEAR	DIFFERENCE	%
Business inspections	407	173	-232	-135%
Apartment inspections	1,255	1,293	+38	+3%
Assembly inspections	2,995	1,471	-1524	-103%
Fraternity/Sorority	71	27	-44	-160%
Lodging/Rooming	43	11	-32	-290%
Request Partner inspections	0	13	+13	
Life Safety Notices	78	30	-48	-160%
Plan Reviews	150	127	-23	-18%
Follow-up inspections	423	230	-193	-84%
Plans field inspections	79	100	+21	+27%
Complaints handled	97	37	-60	-160%
Occupant load calculations	37	16	-21	-130%
Investigations	30	13	-14	-130%
Certificate of occupancy	71	94	+23	+32%
Misdemeanor Citations	51	93	+42	+82%
Traffic Citations	61	65	+4	+6%
Fine amounts	\$23,403	\$33,289	+\$9,886	+42%
Court Appearances	140	81	-59	-73%

COURT DISPOSITIONS	2007	2008
Found Guilty	141	145
Found Not Guilty	3	2
Court Dismissed for any reason	3	0
Issuing Officer Dismissed	3	2
Total Fines Collected	\$23,403.00	\$33,289.00

INSPECTION RESULTS	2007 YEAR	2008 YEAR	DIFFERENCE	%
Code Violations Found	2,393	1,579	-814	-52%
Corrections Made	2,031	1,128	-903	-80%
Correction Rate	84.80%	71.40%	-14.4%	
Notice of Violations Issued	7	5	-2	-40%
Notice of Orders Issued	4	14	+10	+250%

This is an area where the Morgantown Fire Department has not maintained continuous improvement in all areas. To improve this area, the Department is working closely with other City Departments to share data bases, conduct joint inspections, and better integrate policies and procedures.

Forecast for Upcoming Year:

The culmination of many years of planning will come to fruition in 2009! As previously stated in this report, the new North Side Fire Station will open. This opening is expected to take place in July. In addition, the Department's new aerial platform will

be put into service and located in this new station. Also, it is expected that the delivery of the Department's new Engine will take place very near to the opening of the new station as well.

These events provide two operational options for the Department. The first option will be to maintain the current run procedures; whereby, the Fire Department considers the City boundaries as a whole. If this option is utilized, then the current aerial ladder truck will be initially dispatched throughout the entire City and the second aerial platform will only be utilized as a backup unit and will only be manned and operated by off-duty response personnel on a multiple alarm situation. This option can be minimally accomplished within the current manpower level.

There is, however, a second option available to the Department; however, this option would require additional on-duty manpower (6 more firefighters). With the new location of the North Side Fire Station, and the addition of the Department's second aerial platform, the City boundaries could be bisected and the City divided between North and South. In doing so, the entire run procedures for the Department could be adjusted accordingly and the initial response responsibilities could be divided as well. Therein, initial aerial response times could be reduced as well as wear and tear on these most expensive pieces of equipment. Additionally, accessibility to high life hazard occupancies could be assured during periods of high volume traffic within the City.

Regardless of which option is ultimately chosen, the completion of the North Side Fire Station and the addition of the second aerial platform is a monumental and historic milestone in the history of the Department. Truly, 2009 promises to be the best of the last fifty years at the Morgantown Fire Department!

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

This report contains quantifiable data regarding the performance levels achieved by the Morgantown Fire Department for the past year. It also outlines the resources utilized by the Department and how those resources are distributed. Some portions of this report reflect deficiencies and outline the reasons for those deficiencies. In doing so, the reasons for the deficiencies might be corrected and a path of continuous improvement might be re-established.

The report also offers future opportunities that might be derived, by the Department and the City, from the dynamics of the environment in which the Department operates. These opportunities are given in the form of options to be considered at a future time by the City's elected officials and by its most capable administration.

By far, the most important message conveyed by this report is the appreciation felt by the members of the Morgantown Fire Department for the support given to the Department by City Council, City Administration, the business community, and the citizenry at large. The Department's exemplary performance is only a reflection of the exemplary support that it is given by the aforementioned people and organizations.

