

A Message from the Desk of the President



Traditions, in general, are what drive our values in society as a whole. Personal and social traditions vary but are very similar in that we seek to continue these traditions from the past, always striving to create new ones.

Traditionally in the volunteer fire service, the members are required to participate in fund raising efforts, in addition to fighting fires and training. Throughout the year, departments rely on raffles, Fill-The-Boot campaigns and Bingo events to cover overhead costs, ensuring that these costs of providing the community with protection and services are maintained. Fund raising is essential and necessary when assistance from Federal and State sources in addition to the local municipality does not completely fulfill the need. Therefore creating a shortfall.

To date there are still more than twice as many volunteer firefighters as there are paid career firefighters. Since the 1980's according to the National Fire Protection Association, the number of volunteers has dropped by roughly 11 percent while the number of paid career firefighters has grown by more than 50 percent. This all comes at a cost. One of the contributing factors causing the downturn in volunteerism is a direct result of fund raising requirements which generally takes up half of the time volunteers spend on active duty. Membership retention suffers as firefighters consistently refer to the ongoing burden of fund raising. Surveys have shown that this consumes almost 60 percent of their time and one of the biggest factors of decreasing participation or worse, completely leaving the fire service.

There are other contributing factors. According to Federal standards, the time and training needed to become a certified firefighter takes hundreds of hours. While funding comes from Federal and State monies, often some of these costs are shouldered by the individual. Since the 1980's, according to a report from the 2013-2014 Senate Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee, firefighter personal protection equipment (PPE) has dramatically increased. For example, a single self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) has increased from \$900.00 to over \$5,000.00 and a fire engine costs \$400,000.00 more than it did 30 years ago. In recent years one way fire departments have had to shift the responsibility of needed funds to maintain budgets was to institute a fire tax which is added onto local property tax bills. While this may not be perceived as a popular measure, it is the reality. Other departments have merged with neighboring departments to cut costs and balance budgets. This seems to be the trend and viewed by most as the most popular and viable resolution. The Mountville Fire Company No. 1 has recently begun preliminary talks with four other local fire companies servicing four municipalities within the Hempfield School District.

These talks revolve around the possibilities of regionalizing. This structuring would potentially create a merger consisting of The Mountville Fire Co. No.1, West Hempfield Fire and Rescue, Hempfield Fire Co., Rohrerstown Fire Co. and East Petersburg Fire Co. It would create one fire district by which the five companies would operate under, consolidating all financial and operational aspects of each department into one. Each individual company would operate under the newly formed corporation. Essentially the strength of many under one. Ultimately for the benefit of the communities each service. We are now in the investigatory stages and more information will be channeled through various media sources as they become available.

In closing, on behalf of the members of The Mountville Fire Co. No.1, I want to ex-

tend our sincere appreciation for you, our community and neighbors for your trust in our professional abilities and your continuing support now and during our fund raising events through the year. Enjoy a safe, warm and peaceful holiday season.

Paul M. Rossi
President

DID YOU KNOW?

- Fire doubles in size every minute
- NFPA (National Fire Protection Agency) suggests replacing smoke detectors every 10 years
- Each house should have at least one smoke detector per floor
- Each bedroom should have a smoke detector
- The hallway leading to the bedrooms should have a smoke detector
- New smoke detectors come with a 10 year Lithium-Ion battery sealed within each unit

What can you do to help?

We are always looking for volunteers to help with the many aspects of the company. Firefighters and Social Members to name a few. Check our web site at www.mountvillefire.com or stop by the station some Monday evening to learn more and meet the team.