

MOUNT PROSPECT
FIRE DEPARTMENT



100
YEARS OF
SERVICE
1913-2013



On September 29, 1913 community leaders from the not yet incorporated Mount Prospect met at the Central School to form a fire department. At that time, the community had a population of only 300 but realized the need to protect its citizens from the very real possibility of a destructive fire. So with nothing more than a small group of volunteers equipped

with ladders, buckets and an antique hand pumper the Mount Prospect Volunteer Fire Department was born.

Over the next two decades, the Fire Department would purchase numerous pieces of equipment to further its mission. A bell and then later a siren were purchased to notify the volunteers in the event of a fire - volunteers would leave



SEPTEMBER 29, 1913

Community leaders form the Mount Prospect Volunteer Fire Department at the Central School.



NOVEMBER 8, 1913

Community leaders adopt the constitution and elect C.D. Busse the first Fire Chief.

SEPTEMBER 1914

The Department is equipped with six lanterns, eight buckets, an extension and a roof ladder, and a hand pumper purchased for \$60 from Niles Centre Fire Department.



1917

Mount Prospect incorporates into a village, a subscription system is developed to provide funds for firefighting equipment.

1915

The Department purchases its first Buick Chassis truck from William Busse's Buick dealership.



1918

Mount Prospect fights a fire on Herman Oehlerking's farm - a straw stack at the 800 block of East Prospect Avenue.

work to respond to a fire in the early days of the fire service. The Department would also purchase its first vehicle, a Buick Chassis truck, and first fire engine, an American LaFrance referred to as “Ol’ Betsy.” Most of the fires the Department responded to during this time period were on local farms, although the Department did battle a large fire in the Elk Grove forest preserve,

which helped save thousands of acres of land for Cook County.

As time went on, and the Department responded to an increasing number of calls, pay was approved for firefighters. In the mid 1940s, the Department built its first permanent building to provide space for the fire apparatus. The total construction cost was \$122,600. The



JULY 1921

Captain William Busse and his volunteer firefighters battle a two acre fire in the Elk Grove forest preserve saving thousands of acres for Cook County.

1924

First electric siren purchased and mounted on a telephone pole at Main Street and Busse Avenue.



1928

A bond is issued for a new fire truck, “Ol’ Betsy” and served the Department for many years.



1929

Frank Biermann becomes MPFD Fire Chief and serves until 1956.

The first American LaFrance pumper is purchased.

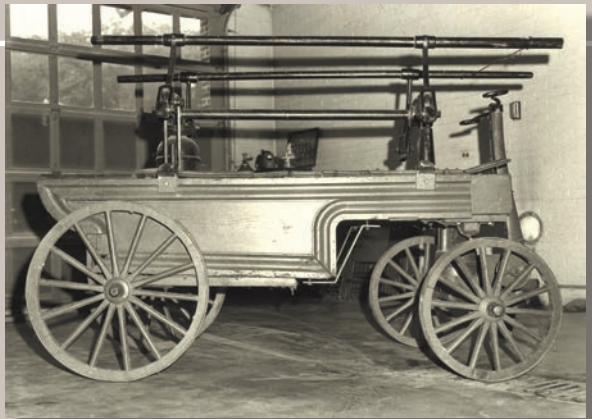
The first First Aid Kit is placed in service.

Public education begins with printed cards for residents with emergency telephone numbers.

The first smoke mask is purchased for firefighter use.

1932

The hand pumper is retired from service.



Department also continued to upgrade its equipment with a \$22,000 American LaFrance Fromite fire engine in 1952, which came in handy when a Navy jet crashed near Weller Creek in 1956.

The 1960s and 70s saw tremendous change in the fire service, including here in Mount Prospect. With the construction of Randhurst, the Mount Prospect Village

Board voted in 1961 to make the Department full-time, but “supplemented by ‘paid on call’ (volunteer) firemen as needed.” This change necessitated the addition of a second story to the downtown fire station to accommodate these firefighters and, a few years later, the construction of a second station at Golf and Busse Roads. The Department also purchased its first ambulance and welcomed a mascot, a

Rural Fire Protection League To Serve Two Fire Districts

Officers of Mount Prospect Rural Fire League by the purchase of one truck has solved the problem of furnishing fire protection to its former members who are today members of two fire protection districts supported by taxation.

The league has purchased a new Ahrens Fox GMC, 200 h.p. fire truck. Seven bids were received but the above truck was the unanimous choice. This truck and other equipment, owned by the league, will furnish fire protection for Elk Grove Fire Protection district (south of Mount Prospect), and Mount Prospect Fire Protection district, north of that village. The equipment will be available for use of Wheeling Fire Protection district until it receives its own truck, delivery of which will be in about five months.

The rural league now has all new equipment. A new 10,000 gallon water tank was purchased a year ago. By special agreement with the village of Mount Prospect the equipment will be housed in the fire station of that mu-

nicipality and manned by its firemen. The truck can be used for fires within the village when occasion arises. The fire fighting equipment will be owned by the Rural Fire League, which in turn has entered into an agreement with the directors of the fire protection districts to provide the service at specified fees which in turn are collected as taxes from the individual districts.

Announcement of the truck purchase was made this week by Alfred Landmeier, president; Arthur Busse, secretary and Edwin Meier, treasurer.

The fire league was organized 16 years ago with membership dues for farm buildings of \$15 and \$7 for home and garage. This gave its members fire protection for farm buildings of less than \$1 a year and for homes of less than 50 cents a year.

In the older days 98% of residents willingly joined the league. In recent years the newcomers have not shown the same spirit. This made necessary the organization of a tax supported fire protection district.



1936

Chief Biermann helps organize the Mount Prospect Rural Fire League to protect outlying rural areas of Mount Prospect.



1937

Dr. Alfred Wolfarth becomes member of the MPFD. He instructed firefighters in advanced first aid techniques and oversaw the addition of lifesaving equipment.



1946

The Village of Mount Prospect approves pay for firefighters.

MP Volunteer Fire Department constructs its first permanent building for \$112,600.

Land in Cornfield

Four national guard airmen were injured slightly yesterday when their B-26 bomber crash landed in a cornfield near Elmhurst and Golf rds., near Mount Prospect. The crash occurred soon after the plane had taken off on a routine flight from O'Hare field.

Brig. Gen. Frank L. Allen, commander of the national guard 66th fighter wing, to which the plane was attached, said one of the craft's engines failed in flight. The fire was extinguished by the Mount Prospect fire department and army fire equipment after the crash.

Gen. Allen identified the pilot as 1st Lt. Frederick C. Whitney and the instructor-pilot as Lt. Budd E. Revesz, who were treated at Glenview naval air station for cuts and bruises. The other crew members were Capt. Claire Shelberg, a navigator-bombardier, and Pvt. Joseph R. Tobiaszkie, a gunner.

1950

A B-26 Bomber departing O'Hare Field makes an emergency landing in a cornfield near Elmhurst and Golf roads near Mount Prospect. The MPFD extinguishes the fire.



1952

MPFD purchases an American La France Fromite Fire Engine for \$22,000.



Dalmatian named Smokey who liked to ride in and on top of the fire engines.

In the early 1970s, the Department grew again when the Village annexed and took over the Forest River Fire Protection District, adding a third fire station. The Mount Prospect Fire Department would prove just how ahead of the times it was in 1972 when it joined with Northwest Community

Hospital to start one of the first paramedic programs in the country. During this time, the Department would also start a cadet program, help establish the first centralized emergency dispatch center in the Chicagoland area, hire its first full-time Public Education Officer and call for assistance from neighboring departments to fight one of its largest fires at Goldblatt's department store. A lot of change in only a few short years!

1956

MPFD suppresses a fire when a Navy jet crashes near Weller Creek.

1960

Two full-time firefighters are hired by the Department.

The first ambulance is purchased.

Smokey, a beloved Dalmatian was one of the first firefighters and last fire mascot.



1964

A second floor is added to the Public Safety Building to accommodate firefighters.

A second station is built on the corner of Golf and Busse roads.



Dr. Stanley Zydlo's motto: "Just try to stop us from helping people."

Tribune photo by Hung

'People shouldn't die'

Dr. Stanley Zydlo, the man who turned ambulance drivers into paramedics

By Mark Mandernach
SPECIAL TO THE TRIBUNE

Dr. Stanley Zydlo of Inverness is a lifesaver in every sense of the word. He's the chief of emergency medical services at Northwest Community Hospital in Arlington Heights, the third busiest emergency room in Illinois. On any given 12-hour shift, Zydlo attends to a non-stop stream of people with chest pains, respiratory problems, broken bones, burns, sprains, contusions, cuts and just about everything else imaginable. And Zydlo meets

everyone he treats with a smile. "To me, medicine is all about Zydlo, who at 60 still has the ent first-year intern. "Last night at boy comes into the emergency bad cut, and we got him cleaned ing in no time at all. That's gr away people's fears and anxie fantastic feeling. That means me."

But Zydlo's impact extends Northwest Community's emer More than 20 years ago, Zydlo v



FOCUS DISTRICT 214 COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER Cadets Learn Skills of Fire Dept.

A major program involving paramedics and ambulance drivers is being given credit work at the Mount Prospect Fire Station as 12 students from Prospect, Forest View and Rolling Meadows High Schools take and learn the art of fire fighting as Fire Department Cadets.

The pre-aid program, the head- chief of Mount Prospect, Kenneth Kaiser, includes classroom learning the theory of fire fighting, and on-the- job training handling the apparatus and accompanying fire engine on actual

The boys are taught by the ad- vanced cadets and by a professional fireman. As members, the advanced students often are better able to communicate with their own age group, and teaching the subject greatly con-

tributes and increases the student's knowledge. The practical application of these studies comes into play each week as the students rotate on the apparatus by maneuvering the truck, or knowing the meaning of the signals of green and flash which means the activation of the program.

For Kaiser, the activity is the cul- mination of an idea started by the volunteer fire departments since being production years of a potential fire- man's career by obtaining their credit to save lives.

With the help of Rose Steiner, David J. Ryan (Mount Prospect), he hopes a successful campaign to lower the state law requiring a fire- man to be 21, and with the cooperation of District 214, Kaiser's program was underway.

The students are able to attend their regular school classes in the morning and then from 1 to 3 p.m., through the Districtal Occupations Program and with the encouragement of the U. S. Coordinator, Alfred DiPietro, the students learn their com- plex and more the more work. After the cadets graduate, they may take a further examination, and because of their course work, they will receive an additional five points on their final score.



Cadet Randy Chavez works on Pioneer Det Ukich and Cadet Larry Meier manuever the Mount Prospect Fire Department's model truck during a training session.

(Cont'd on Page 2)

1970

The MPFD joins with neighboring departments to form Division 1 of the Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS), a formal agreement for resource sharing between departments.

1972

Dr. Stanley Zydlo and Northwest Community Hospital help establish one of the first paramedic programs in the country to serve the northwest suburbs, including Mount Prospect.

Mount Prospect joins with Arlington Heights and Elk Grove Village to establish Northwest Central Dispatch, Chicagoland's first centralized emergency dispatch center.

The Fire Cadet program is started by Firefighter Len Kaiser in cooperation with School District 214 to instruct high school students interested in firefighter careers.

The Village annexes the northeastern portion of Mount Prospect and takes over fire protection for the Forest River Fire Department, a third fire station is added.

The Dive Team is established to train firefighters to rescue victims from water emergencies.

Beginning in the 1980s the responsibilities of the Fire Department expanded significantly. The Department saw a significant increase in the role of emergency medical service (EMS) in its daily operations and formed specialized response/rescue teams for hazardous materials and technical rescue incidents. Mount Prospect also increased its resource sharing with neighboring departments

through the Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS) – the Department is part of MABAS Division 1 as one of the program’s founding members. Following a series of large scale disasters such as 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina in the early 2000s the Department would also take on the responsibility of overseeing emergency management for the entire Village.

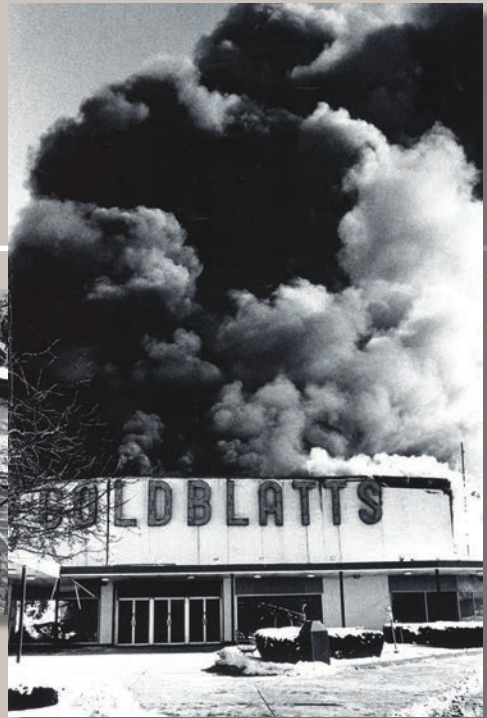
1974

The first full-time Public Education officer is appointed.

Eighteen year old Firefighter Randy Cherwin, a graduate of the Fire Cadet Program, becomes the youngest firefighter hired by the MPPD.

1977

Firefighters respond to a fire at Goldblatt’s department store at Mount Prospect Plaza. Crews are unable to save the building and the store never reopens.





1979

The MPFD establishes the annual Children's Fire Safety Festival held at Randhurst Mall.



1986

The Hazardous Materials Response Team is formed to respond to the dangers of the release of toxic materials spills.

1989

Northwest Assembly of God Church catches fire. Firefighters battle the fire through the night, but all that is left are the church foundations and a metal cross.



1988

The Special Rescue Group (now Technical Rescue Team) is established to train firefighters to safely rescue victims of above ground or below grade entrapments.

This September the Fire Department will turn 100 – celebrating a century of service to the Mount Prospect community. While the Department’s mission has remained mostly unaltered since its inception in 1913 the people, equipment and techniques used to serve Mount Prospect residents have changed dramatically over the years. Today, the Mount Prospect Fire Department

responds to almost 6,000 calls for service each year and has three stations, four engines/trucks, three ambulances and 88 total personnel. The past 100 years have brought new faces and experiences, which have kept the Department flexible and ready to adapt as the decades pass. It is this flexibility that will allow it to continue to adapt and prepare to face the challenges the next 100 years will present.

1990

Mount Prospect joins Arlington Heights, Elk Grove Village and Des Plaines to form a four-town Hazardous Materials Team to share resources and manpower capabilities.

1993

The new Fire Station 13, headquarters opens at 112 E. Northwest Highway.



2005

Firefighters from the MPFD travel to Louisiana to help in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.



2011

Lightning strikes an apartment building on Algonquin Road, starting a second alarm fire.

September 11 Remembrance Ceremony held to observe the 10-year anniversary of 09-11-2001.



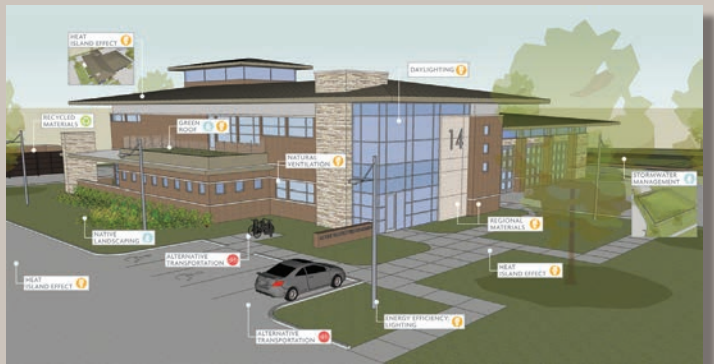
2013

The Mount Prospect Fire Department celebrates 100 years of service.



2010

The new Fire Station 14 opens at 2000 E. Kensington Road with a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold designation.



MOUNT PROSPECT FIRE CHIEFS



C.D. Busse
1913 to 1919

Ernest Busse
1919 to 1920

Joe Ehard
1920 to 1921

H.F. Meyn
1922 to 1929



Frank Biermann
1929 to 1956



John Pencic
1933 to 1934

Edwin Haberkamp*
1956 to 1970



Lawrence Pairitz
1970 to 1986



Edward Cavello
1986 to 1997

Michael Figolah
1997 to 2010



John Malcolm
2010 to present



*Chief Haberkamp was a volunteer until 1961 when he became the Department's first full-time chief.

STATION 12



1960s



2013

STATION 13



1940s



1960s



2013

STATION 14



1960s



1970s



2013

THANK YOU...

Thank you to all the men and women who have served the Mount Prospect community as members of the Fire Department over the past century. Their service and dedication have made the Mount Prospect Fire Department the exemplary organization that it is today.

Thank you to the Mount Prospect Historical Society and resident Mike Zarnek for the use of their photographs.



www.mountprospect.org

TODAY

