

SUGAR HILL FIRE DEPARTMENT

During 2010 your Fire Department continued to be very active in training and with emergency calls. Our calls dropped during 2009, but increased to 62 in 2010 which is more consistent with the recent past. Fortunately, there were no serious structure fires.

Your Fire Department is well equipped, adequately staffed and highly trained. The Department has added 2 firefighters this year and lost 3 firefighters; two to retirement and one to leaving the area. The Department has 22 dedicated firefighters who are well trained and active.

The firefighters are your neighbors who give freely of their time and make significant sacrifices for a small stipend that often does not cover the expenses associated with serving the Town. Although the firefighters are part-time, they are committed to providing the Town with the coverage and the services usually found only in full time Departments.

We continue our extensive training a minimum of two times per month. We continued to concentrate on the basics. The skill level of your firefighters is very high for a community our size. This year, 16 of the firefighters were involved in Emergency Vehicle Driving Training taught by the State Fire Academy.

The training consisted of 8 hours of classroom, 8 hours of practical driving skills and an additional 10 hours of driving time. Many of you have seen the trucks on the road a lot this fall while the Firefighters were getting their driving time. This was excellent training for a most important skill.

We also had 5 firefighters take a 55 hour emergency medical course to increase the capabilities of the firefighters to handle medical emergencies. Your Department is recognized as one of the best equipped, trained, and professional Fire Departments in the region.

Due to a variety of reasons we were not able to install dry hydrants on Toad Hill Road, Hadley Road, and Streeter Pond Road. The wetland permits are in process for that work and the materials needed have been purchased. At Town meeting the Town approved the warrant article to dredge the pond at the church on Birches Road and install a dry hydrant. Unfortunately, the owner of the pond was not able to grant the Town an easement for the work and accordingly no work was done as without the easement it would result in the expenditure of Town funds on private property.

As was discussed last year, we are facing the need to replace one of our fire engines this year. There is never a good time to have a major expenditure and certainly this is true in the current economy. The Town has been wise and has been setting funds aside in a reserve for the eventual replacement of the fire apparatus. Last year, the Town set aside \$50,000 and we now have approximately \$155,000 set aside. We would normally raise another \$50,000, but this year we are requesting \$100,000 be placed in the reserve so that we have sufficient funds to replace Engine 3.

That will result in reserves of approximately \$255,000 which we believe is sufficient to purchase a new truck. There are several reasons why it is important to set aside \$100,000 this year. First, due to the economy, Fire Trucks are not being purchased and pricing is down, but as the economy recovers, prices will go up. Second, federally mandated less polluting diesel engines that are now required add \$20,000 to \$30,000 to the cost of a fire

truck. There are still “old” diesel engines in inventory that can be utilized, however the inventory is not likely to last much longer. Third, Engine 3 is now 27 years old, has ongoing brake and pump issues and parts are getting hard to find.

Engine 3 has served the Town well for many years, but it does not even come close to meeting current standards or the needs of the Department. The reliability is lacking and safety is a concern. Our Engine 1 has a body and pump that is in excess of 34 years old on a chassis that is 13 years old. In order to provide adequate protection to the Town a new fire truck is needed.

We have continually applied for grant money to replace one of our trucks with no success. Receiving another grant for a truck is not likely, because we received a grant for one fire truck already and the funds are becoming less and less available.

Through the program of improving our equipment, increasing our training and developing good water supplies, we continue to work to lower the insurance protection class for the Town. We are confident that we will lower the insurance protection class and as a result your property insurance cost.

The Fire Department responded to the following:

<u>TYPE</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2005</u>
Brush/Grass Fires	0	1	0	1	0	0
Chimney Fires	0	1	2	1	1	2
Dumpsters	0	0	0	1	0	0
Fire Alarm Activations	12	10	17	10	9	9
Furnace Problems	1	1	2	3	0	0
Hazardous Conditions	12	2	15	10	13	15
Hazardous Materials	2	0	0	5	0	0
Motor Vehicle Accidents	7	5	5	9	7	8
Mutual Aid – Cover	9	2	4	8	7	3
Mutual Aid – Scene	9	11	30	6	14	11
Rescues	1	2	0	1	1	1
Service Calls	2	0	5	1	3	2
Smoke Investigations	5	2	4	5	2	0
Structure Fires	1	2	0	8	1	4
Vehicle Fires	0	1	1	0	0	1
TOTAL	62	40	85	69	58	56

As of December 31, 2010 the Fire Department’s active roster consisted of twenty-two of your neighbors who are as follows:

	Chief Allan R. Clark	
Asst. Chief Doug Glover		Asst. Chief Doug Amsbary
Captain Gordi Johnk	Lieutenant Jim Snyder	Lieutenant Cliff Aldrich
Engineer Peter Szawlowski	Engineer Brinson Ireland	Engineer Ned Wilson
Eric Chase	Richard Christofferson	Bruce Cole
Amy Cyrs	Russell Gaitskill	Jody Hodgdon
Andrew Howe	Sam Johnk	Zach Johnk
Dan Kenerson	Jason Kern	Luther Kinney
	Tim Leighton	

We enjoyed holding an open house where many of the residents of the Town stopped by and spent a little time looking at our equipment and chatting with the firefighters. We

sincerely appreciate all of the kind words that those who stopped by had for the firefighters.

We were proud to be able to send off our past Chief, Bert Aldrich in a fitting manner. Bert was an important part of the Department for many years, and as evident at the funeral service well liked by many. His brother, Harold Aldrich retired this year from the Department after 60 years of service to the Town and Barry Bernstein retired after serving for many years.

It is truly an honor to serve such a wonderful community as Sugar Hill as the Fire Chief. Thank you for your support and thank you to the firefighters for their support and dedication. I especially thank the spouses of the firefighters for tolerating the many disruptions to their family life for the good of the community.

Respectfully submitted,
Allan R. Clark
Fire Chief