

Portage Fire Department

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February 7, 2018

To: Mayor James Snyder
Ref: 2017 Fire Department Year End Report

Mayor James Snyder, Clerk Treasurer and City Council Members,

The Portage Fire Department is moving forward and we are working to provide the best service in Indiana. Some of the projects started in 2017 that we are currently working on are: utilization of the states "Safe-T Network, purchasing of an ambulance or "Rescue" and fire truck or "Ladder," and work on the Multi Agency Academic Cooperative "MAAC". These projects, although started in 2017, will be completed in 2018.

We were the first in the county to utilize the states "Safe-T Network". With our direction and determination, the county moved to bring all communications over to the Safe-T network. That project should be complete and all our radio traffic should be transferred to the system in July.

Two apparatus were purchased and are currently being built. We should take delivery of our new Rescue in April, and our new Ladder in July. With the purchase of these new apparatus, our department is maintaining a fleet that is dependable with a lower cost to maintain.

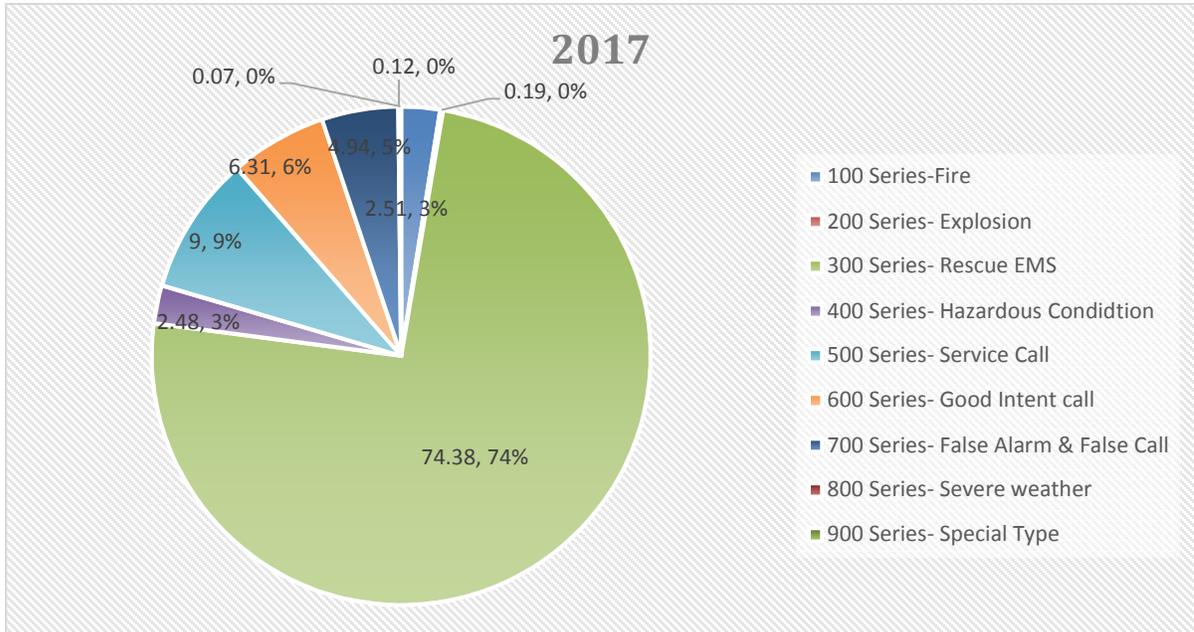
We also worked with other local fire and police departments that partnered with Task Force Tips, a local fire appliance manufacturer, to build the one of the best training facilities in the state. We will focus on training this year and put our firefighters through the most realistic live fire experience we can provide in a controlled environment.

Fire

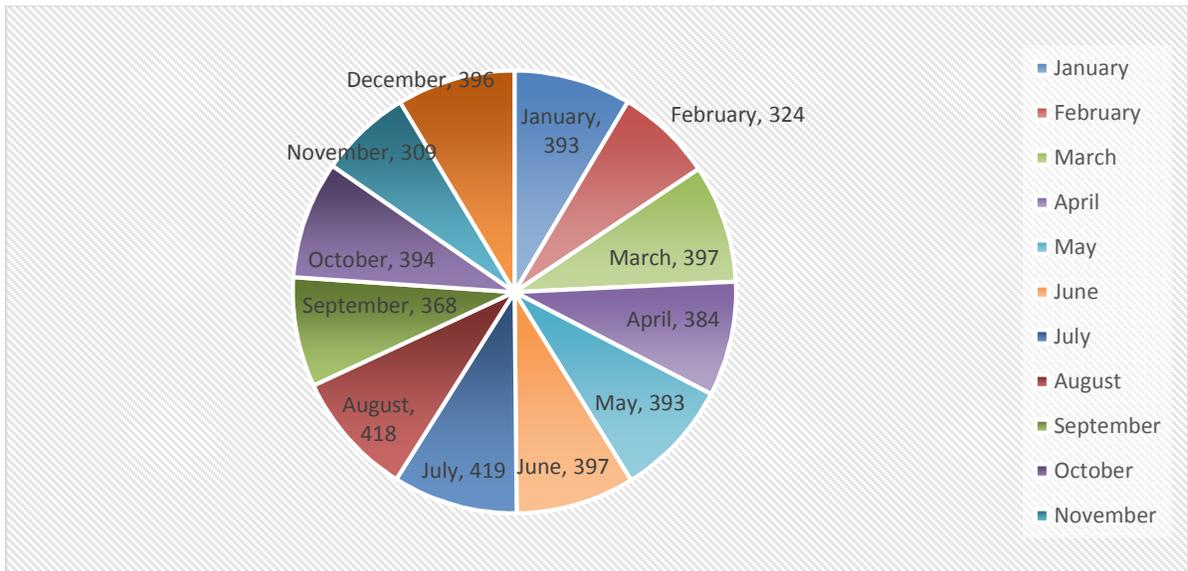
The Portage Fire Department had a total of 4591 runs for the year 2017. There were 105 fires, 8 explosion, 3470 responses to EMS calls, 87 hazardous conditions without fire that consist of electrical issues, carbon monoxide, and fuel spills, 426 calls of service for smoke or odor removal, water leaks, lock outs and lift assists, 295 good intent calls where the call was unfound or we were cancelled before arrival to the scene, 194 false alarm & or false call, 1 severe weather & natural disaster, and 5 special type, which include citizen complaints.

We had a total fire loss of \$826,000.00 in 2017. It is important to note that fire loss is estimated and may not reflect the true cost of repair or replacement of our customers' property.

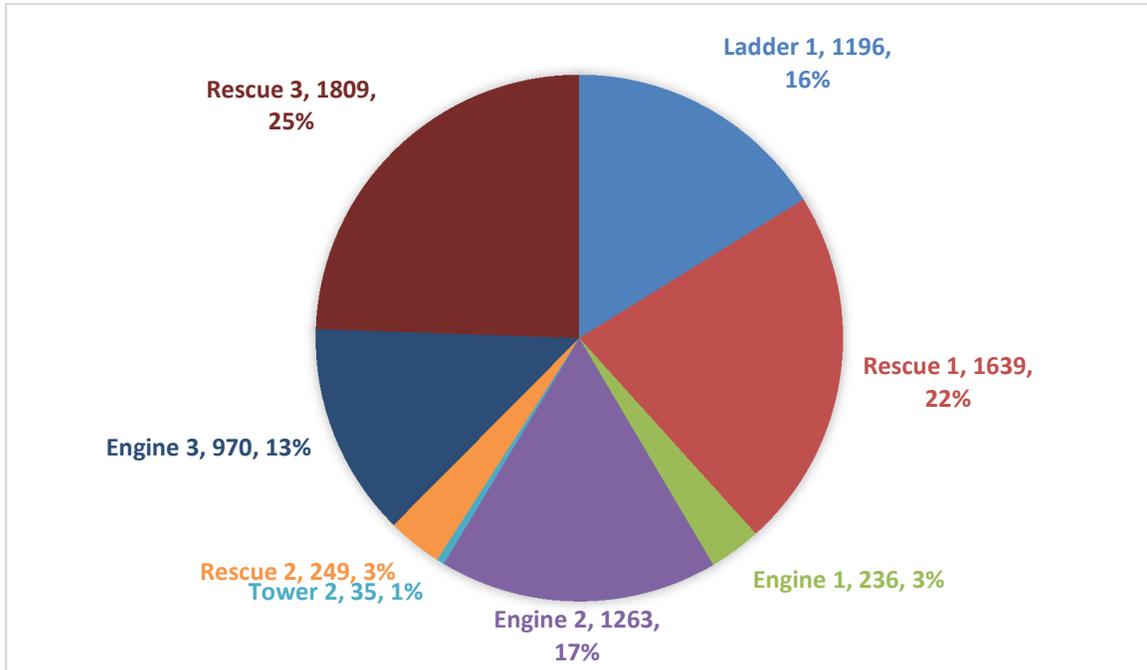
Incidents by call type



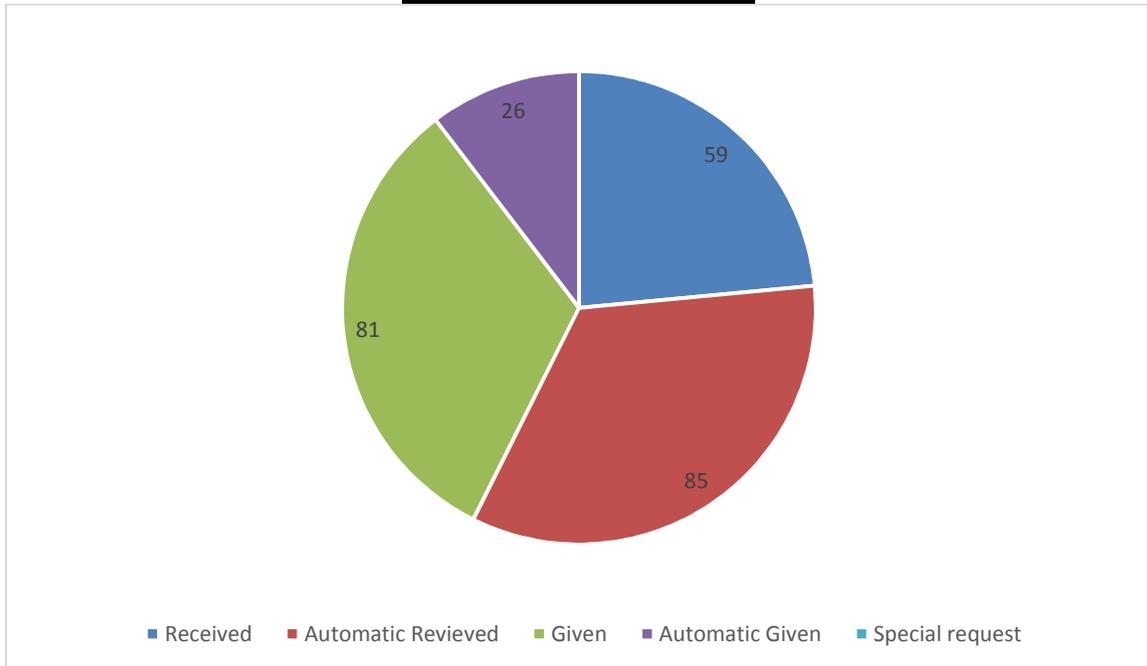
Incidents by month



Incidents by Apparatus



Mutual Aid Calls



Firefighter Health & Wellness

Last year the fire department concentrated efforts on health and wellness by promoting two areas of firefighter safety and survival. The first area of concern is when a firefighter gets into trouble on a fire scene, known in the fire service as a “mayday.” The other area of concern is high cancer rates and stress found in the fire service.

With the acquisition of a vacant house that was generously offered to the fire department for training purposes, firefighters were able to conduct numerous firefighter mayday, self-rescue, search and rescue and rapid intervention team drills. These trainings are all aimed at improving a victim’s chance of surviving a fire and provided valuable training so that a firefighter will react appropriately in a “mayday situation”.

Our health and wellness program focused on areas involving firefighter stress and cancer prevention. Both cancer and firefighter stress, particularly suicides, have become some of the leading causes of firefighters deaths. In recent years, firefighter suicide has surpassed the number of firefighter deaths caused from fire suppression activities. In 2016, our department implemented an aggressive Cancer Prevention Guideline aimed at reducing the exposure of firefighters to carcinogens, and thereby lowering the risk of developing cancer during the firefighter’s career or even later into retirement. We have added an aggressive gear washing and tracking policy that further decreases the risk of continual exposure to carcinogens that are left on the firefighters gear after being in a structure fire. Unfortunately, Portage is just one of a few departments in the area that has implemented such a policy. We have been contacted by other local departments that are interested in establishing similar policies for their department, so hopefully others will soon benefit from our leadership in these areas.

EMS

Medicaid Ambulance Federal and State of Indiana Reimbursement Program

2011 Federal Portion	Received January 2014	\$229,090.84
2012 Federal Portion	Received January 2014	\$251,132.66
2013 Federal Portion	Received December 2015	\$260,996.85
2014 Federal Portion	Received December 2016	\$285,158.94

Newly Add State of Indiana Portion

2013 Indiana Portion	Received August 2016	\$116,404.99
2014 Indiana Portion	Received August 2017	\$126,572.84
Total Collected		\$1,269,357.12

The \$285,158.94 received above in 2016 represents the 2014 federal portion of Medicaid program reimbursement. Subsequently the \$116,404.99 received in August of 2016 is the 2013 State of Indiana portion newly added program. Prior to 2016 we only were receiving 66% of the amount allowed. As of 2016 the State of Indiana allowed with a match for the city to recover the 33% state Medicaid portion to be recovered. The total amount we have recovered to the city is now \$1,268,357.12.

Trending of EMS runs vs all Reponses

The fire department received 4,591 calls for service. Represented in the chart below is how many total runs vs EMS runs 5 years looking back to 2017. The total runs each year are now up 776 each year from ten years ago. Respectively the total EMS runs each year are up 596 each year from looking back ten years ago.



Training

Portage Fire personnel received 10,524 man-hours of training in 2017. That translates to an average of over 169 hours of training per firefighter. These training hours included basic and advanced firefighter training, EMS education, engineer and driver's training and company officer and leadership training. We have been working very diligently to not only provide numerous training hours but specifically more focused, quality training.

The Firefighter Training System for Indiana Department of Homeland Security's District 1 held an area wide career firefighter academy in 2017. This academy, paid for by the State of Indiana, was held at the newly created MAAC. Several veteran PFD instructors, assisted with the academy and provided over 1800 man-hours of training to our 5 new cadets. This training would have cost us nearly \$6,000.00 to complete in-house and over \$12,000.00 if the firefighters were sent to a fire academy out of the state.

We take pride in the CPR training we do in the community. We are an AHA community training center. Here is the breakdown of the classes taught in 2017.

Class	Number of classes	Students
BLS healthcare Provider Course	97	505
Heartsaver CPR / AED (all disciplines)	65	455
Heartsaver First Aid with CPR	50	434
Heartsaver First Aid	5	17
Bloodborne Pathogens	7	109
Instructor Course	1	6

PFD has a total of 78 Instructors affiliated from Portage FD, Chesterton FD, Porter FD, PC EMA, Merrillville Schools, YMCA, Mittal, South Haven FD, PC Dispatch, Ritten House NH, Washington TWP FD, Northshore Healthcare, Portage PD, Ogden Dunes FD, Lake Station FD, Wheatfield EMS, Ivy Tech and several private businesses. Total CPR classes taught; 225 for a total of 1,526 students.

Inspections and Prevention

Fire safety inspections were made in 137 public buildings to minimize fire risk. The general use of the buildings inspected were for 9 - hotels, 6 - hospital/nursing homes, 4 - apartment complexes, 1- factory, 7 -daycare/ educational, 64 - office/personal, 26 - mercantile, 8 - storage/warehouses, 12 – restaurants.

The Fire Prevention theme for 2017 was "Every Second Counts: Plan 2 Ways Out!" It reinforces why everyone needs to have an escape plan. The theme is chosen each year by The National Fire Protection Association. Prevention efforts were concentrated to fire prevention education in the schools. A fire prevention program was given at all elementary schools for grades Kindergarten through 5th grade. The program for each grade level, teaches the student what to do in case they are in a building that catches on fire. Starting

with Kindergarten, the student is introduced to a firefighter who shows them their protective firefighting gear. The firefighter puts the gear on as he explains its purpose. 1st grade is taught fire safety basics: Stop drop and roll, 911, and to “go outside” if the building is on fire. 2nd grade is shown a cartoon video that shows one of the characters having a fire at their house. 3rd grade learns the importance of a home escape plan and is shown how to make one. 4th grade learns how to prevent fires and is given a home safety checklist. 5th grade is a review of all the past lessons with a “Jeopardy” type game, where students get to give a question to the fire answer.

The fire department hosted its annual Fire Prevention Open House September 30, 2017. The fire trucks and ambulances were available to get in. Children could try on fire gear and spray a fire hose. Home fire safety was demonstrated in the Edith Trailer. Food and drink were also served.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Th Fieffer', written in a cursive style.

Thomas Fieffer
Fire Chief