



PUBLIC SAFETY

Above: North Coventry Volunteer Fire Department's new Rescue Truck came on line in late fall of 2013. Photo courtesy NCVFD.

COVENTRY POLICE DEPARTMENT

1585 MAIN STREET



ANNUAL REPORT

Fiscal Year 2013-2014

Mark A. Palmer
Chief of Police



We are pleased to present this annual report that describes some of the highlights and accomplishments of the Coventry Police Department during the past fiscal year. This report also provides the Department and the community an opportunity to evaluate whether we have met the goals that were set out at the beginning of the year. Hopefully, this report will not only be informative, but also help the reader to gain an understanding of the variety of services that the Coventry Police Department provides throughout the year.

As submitted in our budget document last year, our goals for fiscal year 12/13 were;

ADMINISTRATION

- **Continue to comply with CALEA and POST accreditation standards. Achieve CALEA reaccreditation in November 2013.**

The department was awarded a certificate of Advance Reaccreditation by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies in November 2013 after a successful on site assessment in June 2013. The agency is one of only 13 municipal police departments in the state to hold this distinction.



Accreditation by the State of Connecticut Police Officers Standards and Training Council remains in effect until March of 2015. The department continues to comply with POST standards and is preparing for reaccreditation by POST next year.

- **Increase specialized training for field officers particularly in evidence collection.**

In addition to meeting the mandated training requirements, the agency sent personnel to numerous specialized training programs during the past fiscal year. A number of officers received specialized training in the area of evidence collection, identity theft, cyber-crime and traffic services. Agency personnel completed annual firearms training as well as additional training with patrol rifles.



Sergeant Chris Fiore and Officer Ted Opdenbrouw, in conjunction with the Law Enforcement Council of Southeastern CT conducted active shooter refresher training for all agency personnel. Detective Michael Hicks attended investigative training in social media crimes as well as training on GPS mapping for criminal investigations. Officer Brian Flanagan attended training regarding recovering data from cell phones for investigative purposes. Officer Mark Samsel attended a training seminar on Disaster Preparedness for Agriculture hosted by the CT Farm Bureau. All officers received training in the Lethality Assessment Screening which was developed to provide immediate assistance to victims of domestic violence. Sergeant McDonagh has received training as a certified instructor in this area and has trained agency personnel as well staff from Community Health Resources, the area domestic violence service provider. All sworn staff has received legal update training. Officer

Michelle Hicks has been trained as a hostage negotiator and has been added to the Capitol Region Emergency Response Team (CREST) as part of the crisis response team. All officers attended a training session hosted by the Vernon Police Department and cosponsored by the US Department of Justice on cultural awareness of the Muslim and Sikh communities.

- **Participate on Safety drills at each school at least twice per year.**

The department and the school district continue to collaborate on issues affecting school children. The department worked in conjunction with the school district in reviewing and amending its emergency response plan and protocol which has been disseminated to all school staff members. Chief Palmer worked with the school district in submitting a school security enhancement grant. As a result of receiving this grant, a number of physical improvements to all four schools were able to be funded. As part of the grant application process, the department conducted security surveys of each school facility. The department also worked with the school district staff on evaluating and recommending physical improvements in the schools to enhance security. A number of these improvements were made during the year and others are in the planning stages. While the department continues to participate with the school on safety drills, staffing did not allow for full participation as hoped. The department and school district will continue to work towards fully participating in school safety drills in the future.

- **Continue to seek grant funding for costs associated with enforcement initiatives as well as equipment needs.**

The department submitted and received reimbursement of over \$8,000.00 from the State Department of Transportation to cover overtime expenses for three sobriety checkpoints as well as directed patrol targeting driving while impaired. Funding was also received for seat belt enforcement during the Click It or Ticket campaigns.

The department submitted a grant to CVS Pharmacies in order to obtain a prescription drop box which will be made available in the lobby of the police department. This box will allow citizens to dispose of unused or outdated prescription medications, preventing them from being diverted to illegal use or from harming the environment if disposed of unsafely.

OPERATIONS

- **Provide adequate patrol coverage throughout town 24 hours a day. Complete field training and integrate new patrol officer positions into schedule for more effective coverage and decrease in overtime expenses.**

While continuing to be a challenge, adequate patrol staffing has been provided throughout the year. On occasion, overtime was necessary, or officers were 'ordered in' to duty to cover vacant shifts. An officer out on extended leave exacerbated the staffing shortage. Occasionally, the officer assigned to detective duties had to be used to cover patrol shifts. The agency transitions to ten hour patrol shifts in order to provide for better and more efficient staffing.

With the retirement of the second of what were previously two lieutenants, patrol officers were hired to fill those positions and provide for more efficient patrol coverage.

The agency submitted a budget that included an additional officer to assist with patrol coverage as well as being a school liaison officer. The first budget referendum did not pass and subsequently this position was cut from the budget submission.

- **Collaborate with School District and Youth Services office on presenting traffic safety programs to school-aged youths.**

Various members of the department made presentations to school children throughout the year on a variety of topics. These presentations included presentations to students who were at or close to driving age regarding traffic safety and police and the law.

Officer Gail McDonnell organized and conducted a trip to York Correctional Facility in Niantic for fourteen female high school students.

Sgt. Chris Fiore conducted a trip to Osborne Correctional Institution in Somers for a group of male high school students.

Chief Palmer attended the Trike-A-Thon at the Coventry Early Childhood Center and gave safety presentations.

Chief Palmer participated in the Read Across America program at Coventry Grammar School.

- **Respond to all calls for service and investigate reports of criminal and suspicious activity in an efficient manner**

Officers continue to conduct follow-up activities on a number of residential burglaries as well as thefts from vehicles. These investigations are very time consuming but officers made a number of arrests on these cases this year.

The continuing increase of cases involving identity theft as well as reported threats or threatening language on social media sights continues to be a challenge. These types of investigations are very time consuming and generally require search warrants to recover information and data needed to properly investigate. While officers have in-car computers, these types of investigations must be done from the office due to their nature and complexity.

- **Continue training with patrol rifles and complete distribution of weapons received from the US Military Law Enforcement Support Office to all sworn officers.**

The department modified its active shooter policy based upon a newly released policy guideline from the IACP. All officers have received and been trained on this policy.

All sworn personnel have been issue a patrol rifle which is required equipment while on a patrol assignment. The department is in the process of requisitioning additional enhancements to these rifles, including shorter barrels and more effective sights. All officers have been trained in active shooter response and continue to receive this training.

- **Continue to participate with Metro Traffic Services to aggressively enforce DUI law and hazardous moving violations. Conduct two sobriety checkpoints, two seatbelt checkpoints and four concentrated enforcement efforts focusing on hazardous moving violations.**

During this fiscal year, the department conducted three sobriety checkpoints and two seatbelt enforcement checkpoints. Additionally, Coventry officers participated in four checkpoints in other communities who participate in the Metro Traffic Services Agreement.

- **Increase enforcement of distracted driving violations by 10%.**

While members of the department continue to enforce distracted driving violations, the number of infractions actually decreased 20% from 200 in FY 12/13 to 161 in FY 13/14. The number of written and verbal warning did however increase.



It is noted that while use of devices used for talking and being held to the ear may have decreased, it is believed that texting has increased. Drivers tend to shield texting from view by holding the phone in their lap or down and to the side. Renewed efforts will be undertaken to increase the enforcement of distracted driving and utilize some non-traditional enforcement methods to combat this growing problem.

SUPPORT

- **Effectively utilize the Community Service Officer in order to make more efficient use of police officer's time**

The Community Service Officer continues to investigate and address calls of abandoned and/or junk vehicles on private property. The CSO works in conjunction with the town's Zoning Enforcement Officer to handle these types of calls. The Community Service Officer also assists in patrolling town parks during the summer months and assists with parking enforcement in both the parks and on town roadways.

In addition to animal control and fingerprinting duties, the CSO is often utilized for other duties to assist patrol officers with their assignments. The CSO again conducted the licensed dog survey which allows the town to keep 60% of the dog license fees collected.

- **Coordinate with other law enforcement agencies in the regional service sharing agreement in motor vehicle and other enforcement efforts and seek grant funding to support operational goals.**

The department continues to participate with other agencies in the region on area enforcement efforts.

Officer Michelle Hicks received training in hostage negotiations and has been added as a member of the Capitol Region Emergency Services Team (CREST) Hostage Negotiations Unit. After discussions with the CREST member agencies, UCONN Police

Department has joined the CREST team and will begin to participate in training exercises.

- **Utilize the Power DMS document management system to provide efficient access to agency directives and associated publications. Further utilize this system to conduct knowledge-based testing to assess understanding of an adherence to agency policies and procedures.**

All agency policies, directives and forms are on PowerDMS which is now available directly from the patrol vehicles. This enables officers to search and recall policies, procedures, protocols and forms directly in the field for reference during an investigation. The testing module is now used regularly to assess and employee's knowledge and understanding of agency policy, training bulletins and other important documents. A number of short training videos are now placed on Power DMS.



Other Agency Highlights

PERSONNEL CHANGES

Officer Russell Iger completed his field training on September 22, 2013 and was assigned to patrol duties.

Officer Thomas Kuhns completed his field training on December 15, 2013 and was assigned to patrol duties.

Lieutenant Nancy Thurnauer retired on December 24, 2013 after 32 years of service. The vacated lieutenant's position will not be filled but a patrol officer will be hired for the vacant position.

Officer Mark Samsel was hired on March 10, 2014 to replace the position made available by Lt. Thurnauer's retirement. Since Officer Samsel had prior POST certification and many years of experience with another agency, Officer Samsel completed and abbreviated field training program and was assigned to patrol duties on April 15, 2014.

The department Administrative Assistant Ellen Jamaitus resigned from the department in early April. After a very competitive process in which sixty applications were received, a position was offered to Kevin Roberto who recently retired from the UCONN Police Department as a sergeant. He will begin his duties in early July.

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

Officer Michelle Hicks was awarded the Distinguished Service Award for her skills in responding to a serious domestic violence incident that unfortunately ended in a murder/suicide situation. In addition to managing multiple duties and coordinating additional equipment and personnel resources, Officer Hicks assisted family members during this most difficult time in a caring and compassionate manner.



Officer Kevin Vail and Officer Michelle Hicks were given written commendations for their response to a serious domestic violence incident and the efforts they made to protect the victim and arrest the suspect who was later found to have a loaded weapon in his vehicle.

Sergeant Michael McDonagh and Detective Michael Hicks were awarded Distinguished Service Awards for their thorough investigation of allegations of sexual assault against members of the Coventry Volunteer Fire Department.

Officer Gail McDonnell, Officer Jeffrey Spadjinske and Officer Michelle Hicks were recognized by Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) for their enforcement efforts to combat drunk and impaired driving.

Ellen Jamaitus and Dispatcher Sue Wolfe were given written commendations for their work in help the agency in its efforts toward accreditation and successful on-site assessment.

The department participated with other Vernon PD, UCONN PD, the CT State Police and the Rockville State's Attorney's office in 'Operation Joint Venture'. This project was designed to attempt to serve more than 100 outstanding arrest warrants from the agencies involved. Five members of the department participated in this very successful endeavor.

OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST

The department purchased new handguns for all its officers. These guns were purchased using law enforcement block grant money. All officers received training and qualified on the new weapons.

After an investigation that has been on-going for approximately 1 ½ years, Detective Hicks arrested a suspect who had been selling synthetic marijuana over the internet and advertising he was from Coventry. As it turns out the suspect was not from Coventry. Searches were conducted in several towns in southwestern Connecticut and a number of assets were seized. The case is on-going and Detective Hicks is working with the DEA and US Attorney's on follow-up activity.

On August 21, officers responded to a one-car accident on Route 44 in which two young people were killed. Officer Spadjinske assumed the investigation with the assistance of the Metro Accident Investigation team. On August 23, officers responded to Stage Rd. to a domestic disturbance that resulted in a homicide. The suspect, the spouse of the victim, then took his own life. The Capitol Region Emergency Response Team provided tactical personnel and equipment to respond to the scene. After the initial response, the CSP major crime squad was requested to assist in the investigation. The investigation determined that the female was murdered by her husband who then took his own life.

~~~~~

#### **Vehicle Pursuits**

*Members of the department became involved in four (4) pursuits during the fiscal year. The first pursuit was a slow speed pursuit that started after the offending vehicle fled a motor vehicle accident. The vehicle was stopped a short distance later and the operator was transported to the hospital for injuries sustained in the accident. She would be later arrested for DUI, Engaging Police in a Pursuit, Reckless Driving and Evading Responsibility. The second pursuit involved a vehicle passing an officer at a high rate of*

speed. The officer activated the vehicle lights and siren to stop the vehicle however the officer terminated the pursuits after a short distance. The third pursuit was a stolen vehicle from a neighboring town that had been pursued into Coventry by another agency. This pursuit was also broken off for safety reasons. The final pursuit was a very short distance during the response to a domestic disturbance complaint. The vehicle stopped and the operator was arrested and charged with multiple crimes including Reckless Driving, Disobeying a Signal, Weapons in a motor vehicle and Interfering with Police. All pursuits were reviewed and found to be in compliance with Connecticut law and department guidelines. Written policy and agency culture direct officers to use pursuit as a last resort and to not risk the safety of the officer or community for possible motor vehicle violations.

### **Use of Force**

There were nine (9) incident throughout the year where officers were required to use force as part of their duties.

Officer Michelle Hicks pointed her firearm at a suspect while taking her into custody after a brief pursuit.

Officer Iger and Opdenbrouw physically struggled with a suspect they were taking into custody. The suspect received minor injuries as she kicked the police vehicle while being placed inside.

Detective Michael Hicks briefly struggled with an intoxicated suspect who was being escorted out of the Bidwell Tavern. No injuries and no arrest.

Officer Flanagan struggled with a juvenile suspect who reportedly had a knife. The resident of the group home was restrained and brought to the hospital for evaluation. The officer received minor injuries to his finger.

Officer Spadjinske and Officer Kuhns struggled with a combative subject who was threatening to harm himself. The subject was restrained and committed to the hospital for evaluation. No injuries.

Officer Spadjinske, Officer Michelle Hicks and Officer Kuhns struggled with a suspect who was trying to harm herself. The subject was restrained and committed to the hospital. No injuries.

Officer Kevin Vail and Officer Michelle Hicks restrained a suspect involved in a domestic violence incident. The suspect was later found to have a weapon in his vehicle. No injuries.

Officer Kuhns and Officer Spadjinske had been physically struggling with a suspect who had outstanding arrest warrants. During the struggle, Officer Kuhns deployed a Taser in drive-stun mode. The suspect was then taken into custody. No injuries.

Sergeant Chris Fiore physically struggled with a juvenile suspect at the group home on Dunn Rd. who was acting aggressively. The subject was taken into custody and transported to the hospital for evaluation. No injuries, no charges.

Pursuant to agency policy an administrative review is conducted for each use of force or response to aggression incident. All incidents were found to be within agency policy and legal guidelines. An annual calendar year analysis is also conducted.

## **Personnel Complaints**

*It is the policy of the Coventry Police Department to investigate all complaints of alleged employee misconduct and to equitably determine whether the allegations are valid or invalid and to take appropriate action. All allegations of departmental or officer misconduct shall be properly investigated whether such complaints are received verbally, in writing, through a third party or anonymously.*

*The Coventry Police Department employs a structured disciplinary system to be followed in cases of alleged or suspected violations of department rules, orders, Town of Coventry personnel rules or any applicable state or federal statutes by members of the department. This procedure is meant to assure prompt and thorough investigation of complaints to clear the innocent, establish guilt of wrong doers and facilitate fair, suitable and consistent disciplinary action. The personnel complaint procedure is explained on the department website.*

*There were three (3) personnel complaints involving members of the agency during this fiscal year. Two of the complaints were generated by citizen complaints and one was generated internally off an external incident. The first was a complaint about an employee's demeanor over the phone and failure to properly address a complaint. This was ultimately decided by a verbal counseling to the employee. The second was about two officers' interactions with a suspect in a disturbance during a complaint. The complainant alleged that the officers told him they were going to evict him from his grandmother's home. The complainant became unreachable and based on the limited existing information, the complaint was not sustained. The complainant was finally contacted a month later and stated that he misunderstood what the officers told him and that he wished to withdraw the complaint. The final complaint resulted from an employee's actions outside of work in another state. The employee separated from the department prior to the conclusion of the investigation. That was determined to be an appropriate resolution of the matter.*

*We maintain that the limited number of complaints demonstrate the courtesy and professionalism of the department members.*

### *Professional Policing – Community Commitment*





# Coventry Police Department Incident Analysis

7/1/2013...6/30/2014

| Shift       | Total |
|-------------|-------|
| 1st<br>1005 | 7926  |
| 2nd<br>4173 |       |
| 3rd<br>2754 |       |

| UCR  | Nature                           | 1st | 2nd | 3rd | Total |
|------|----------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-------|
|      |                                  | 2   | 0   | 4   | 0     |
| 001  | Marine Patrol Activity           | 0   | 18  | 12  | 30    |
| 002  | Beach Association Check          | 1   | 1   | 1   | 3     |
| 029  | Disabled Motor Vehicle           | 16  | 74  | 69  | 159   |
| 09A  | Hom Murder & Noneg Mansl         | 0   | 0   | 1   | 1     |
| 11A  | Sex Forcible Rape                | 0   | 1   | 0   | 1     |
| 11B  | Sex Forcible Sodomy              | 0   | 0   | 1   | 1     |
| 11C  | Sex Assault w/ An Obj            | 1   | 0   | 0   | 1     |
| 120  | Robbery                          | 0   | 1   | 0   | 1     |
| 13A  | Assault Aggravated               | 0   | 0   | 1   | 1     |
| 13B  | Assault Simple                   | 1   | 3   | 20  | 24    |
| 13C  | Intimidation                     | 1   | 19  | 22  | 42    |
| 151  | Suicide                          | 0   | 1   | 1   | 2     |
| 152  | Suicide Threat/Attempt           | 8   | 6   | 12  | 26    |
| 210  | Extortion/Blackmail              | 1   | 0   | 0   | 1     |
| 220  | Burglary                         | 2   | 32  | 12  | 46    |
| 23C  | Larceny Shoplifting              | 0   | 3   | 1   | 4     |
| 23D  | Larceny Theft From Building      | 1   | 16  | 4   | 21    |
| 23F  | Larceny Theft From MV            | 10  | 27  | 6   | 43    |
| 23G  | Larceny Theft of MV Parts        | 0   | 2   | 2   | 4     |
| 23H  | Larceny All Other                | 1   | 29  | 18  | 48    |
| 240  | MV Theft                         | 1   | 3   | 1   | 5     |
| 250  | Counter/Forgery                  | 0   | 2   | 1   | 3     |
| 2604 | Fireworks/Gunshots               | 5   | 23  | 46  | 74    |
| 2608 | Abandoned MV                     | 1   | 4   | 1   | 6     |
| 2609 | Littering                        | 1   | 7   | 3   | 11    |
| 2619 | Building Check                   | 1   | 4   | 4   | 9     |
| 2625 | Notification                     | 0   | 1   | 2   | 3     |
| 2631 | Public Hazard                    | 14  | 50  | 50  | 114   |
| 26A  | Fraud False Pretenses            | 0   | 5   | 1   | 6     |
| 26B  | Fraud Credit Card/ATM            | 0   | 6   | 3   | 9     |
| 26C  | Fraud Impersonation              | 1   | 5   | 1   | 7     |
| 26E  | Fraud Wire                       | 0   | 0   | 1   | 1     |
| 280  | Stolen Property Offenses         | 1   | 1   | 0   | 2     |
| 290  | Vandalism                        | 6   | 27  | 16  | 49    |
| 2914 | Animal Complaint                 | 15  | 241 | 104 | 360   |
| 3009 | Susp Person/Activity/MV          | 84  | 291 | 297 | 672   |
| 326  | Illegal Parking                  | 2   | 9   | 1   | 12    |
| 332  | Harassment/Harassing Phone Calls | 4   | 21  | 26  | 51    |
| 334  | Untimely Death                   | 2   | 5   | 3   | 10    |
| 343  | MV Accident (Injuries)           | 3   | 28  | 16  | 47    |
| 344  | MV Accident Evading              | 7   | 8   | 11  | 26    |



# Coventry Police Department Incident Analysis

7/1/2013...6/30/2014

|      |                             |     |     |     |      |
|------|-----------------------------|-----|-----|-----|------|
| 345  | MV Accident Fatal           | 1   | 2   | 0   | 3    |
| 346  | MV Accident (No Injuries)   | 24  | 81  | 86  | 191  |
| 351  | Alarm                       | 75  | 150 | 100 | 325  |
| 353  | Medical                     | 93  | 282 | 116 | 491  |
| 355  | MV Stop                     | 232 | 539 | 397 | 1168 |
| 35A  | Drug/Narcotic Violation     | 0   | 1   | 9   | 10   |
| 35B  | Drug Equipment Violation    | 1   | 1   | 0   | 2    |
| 367  | Prowler                     | 0   | 0   | 1   | 1    |
| 36B  | Sex Statutory Rape          | 0   | 1   | 1   | 2    |
| 375  | Routine Assistance          | 41  | 255 | 166 | 462  |
| 377  | Open Door/Window            | 3   | 4   | 5   | 12   |
| 388  | Miscellaneous               | 14  | 81  | 40  | 135  |
| 396  | Escort                      | 3   | 16  | 12  | 31   |
| 398  | Missing Person              | 4   | 16  | 44  | 64   |
| 399  | Lost And Found              | 5   | 59  | 22  | 86   |
| 400  | Family Matter - Non Arrest  | 9   | 30  | 39  | 78   |
| 401  | Repossessed Vehicle         | 0   | 1   | 0   | 1    |
| 4811 | Finger Printing             | 16  | 374 | 2   | 392  |
| 4858 | Fire                        | 16  | 34  | 30  | 80   |
| 4873 | Assist Other Agency         | 30  | 96  | 71  | 197  |
| 520  | Weapon Law Violations       | 0   | 1   | 1   | 2    |
| 810  | Bomb Threat                 | 0   | 0   | 1   | 1    |
| 82   | Runaway/Non NIBRS           | 1   | 1   | 16  | 18   |
| 861  | Disturbance (Non-Domestic)  | 8   | 30  | 30  | 68   |
| 863  | Town Ordinance Violation    | 0   | 6   | 0   | 6    |
| 866  | Noise Complaint             | 12  | 4   | 34  | 50   |
| 889  | Check Welfare               | 9   | 57  | 40  | 106  |
| 890  | MV Erratic Operation        | 16  | 62  | 88  | 166  |
| 891  | MV Lock Out                 | 5   | 39  | 15  | 59   |
| 90A  | Bad Checks                  | 0   | 1   | 0   | 1    |
| 90C  | Disorderly Conduct          | 0   | 1   | 4   | 5    |
| 90D  | DWI                         | 9   | 6   | 25  | 40   |
| 90F  | Family Offenses, Nonviolent | 1   | 1   | 1   | 3    |
| 90J  | Trespass of Real Property   | 0   | 0   | 1   | 1    |
| 90Z  | All Other Offenses          | 5   | 11  | 21  | 37   |
| 911  | 911 Hang Up Call            | 16  | 100 | 75  | 191  |
| H109 | Junk MV                     | 0   | 7   | 0   | 7    |
| Sup  | Supplemental                | 163 | 849 | 486 | 1498 |



## **FIRE MARSHAL/ EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

*Noel Waite, Fire Marshal/Director EMHS*

**Fire Marshal-** It was another busy year for the office, 176 annual inspections were conducted. Final inspections were for the opening of Francesca's restaurant and a new building and major renovation to another building at Channel 3 Kid's Camp. Ashley's Place, the new building at the camp, is space which is specifically dedicated to children with special needs. Ten fires were investigated including one large loss house fire of a two family home. Throughout the course of the fiscal year, the Fire Marshal attended 141 meetings to discuss various department topics and issues.

**Emergency Management-** It was another active year for Emergency Management. A July 2013 tornado hit the south end of Coventry with tree damage and slight damage to a barn on South Street. The Hazard Mitigation Plan has been renewed and updated. We underwent statewide drills to educate Emergency Services Coordinators how to respond in times of crisis. The beginning phases of a Regional Shelter Agreement have been worked upon between Mansfield, Willington and Coventry.

Respectfully,

Noel Waite  
Fire Marshal/Emergency Management Director

# NORTH COVENTRY VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

This year with the election of our newest Chief Ray Eldridge Jr., we saw our call volume increase with our department dual responding with Coventry Volunteer Fire Association to all calls in our town, making sure no call went unanswered. We currently average six (6) personnel responding per incident and with an 8.09 minute response time to 1057 calls (listed below). This is below the national standard of 10 minutes and is one of the things we will be focusing on to reduce even further. With 23 active, 5 probationary and 6 junior members, we performed 13,605 of man hours in activities, training and calls. We have 7 members that increased their response level by taking State certified classes, Emergency Medical Responder, Emergency Medical Technician and Firefighter basic level one and advanced level two.

## **Calls:**

Fire 35, 11 involved buildings, 454 EMS (medical), 226 Rescue, 47 Hazardous conditions, 62 Service, 179 Good intent, 52 False alarms, 2 Special incidents

We enhanced our fleet with the replacement of our old rescue truck with a state of the art heavy rescue that allows us to operate more safely on rescues, calls with the ability to bring everything we need to the scene including but not limited to a ; 9,000 watt light tower, multiple hydraulic rescue tools that we can operate all at the same time, 300 gallons of water with a pump for fire protection/suppression, ice sled, cold water suits and trench equipment.

In the fire service, fire and house officers come and go. We were lucky enough to have one constant, dedicated person in Michael Heimer who stayed in the Deputy Chief position for 19 years then an additional year as the Assistant Chief, creating a strong grounding point. This is not an easy position to fulfill with all the extra time and effort you need to put in as a chief officer, On May 31, 2014 Mike Heimer decided it was time to step down. Although, Mike has stepped down to the rank and file he is still there for our community, responding as a firefighter/EMT and is a valuable asset with helping develop our lower line officers.

## **VOLUNTEERING IS WHAT MAKES A COMMUNITY**

Back on January 20, 1961 John F. Kennedy made his Inaugural Address, where he used these words; "And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you — ask what you can do for your country". With a little adaptation of his next sentence:

"My fellow citizens: ask not what Coventry will do for you, but what together we can do for the citizens of Coventry through volunteering".

The Bureau of Labor states: "Volunteering in America is at an all-time low for the past decade". Volunteering promotes a positive impact on our community and can have benefits for you too; a means to discover something you are really good at and develop a new skill, ultimately helping others and having an impact on the wellbeing of others this is a good way to connect with your community.

73% of employers would recruit a candidate with volunteering experience over one without, 94% of employers believe that volunteering can add to skills, gain life experience, develop interpersonal skills, offer incredible networking opportunity and allow you to be a role model for children, teaching them about social obligations and promoting future volunteers.

However. The fire service is not for everyone. It demands more hours than a more traditional volunteer position. We are required to be trained, respond to emergency calls that come in at all hours of the day, including holidays, and it can be more physically/mentally strenuous than most people cannot deal with.

After reading this, you must wonder why anyone would be a volunteer for the fire service. It is the satisfaction that words cannot describe when you help a person in need. If you want to experience that feeling, then please join our Fire Department!

Respectfully submitted,  
North Coventry Fire Department

# COVENTRY VOLUNTEER FIRE ASSOCIATION

The Coventry Volunteer Fire Association Inc., (CVFA) provides town-wide ambulance service and provides primary firefighting service in the South Coventry District. Additionally, the CVFA assists with firefighting service in the North Coventry District, as well as providing firefighting and ambulance backup to surrounding towns, including Mansfield and Willimantic.

Currently, the CVFA responds to about 1,100 calls a year, of which about 80% are medical calls. While the CVFA provides ambulance transport and basic life support (BLS) care, we are assisted by local paramedic services for advanced life support (ALS) care; these services include Windham Hospital, Ambulance Service of Manchester (ASM), and American Medical Response (AMR) paramedics. Our most frequent destination hospitals include Windham Hospital, Manchester Hospital, Rockville Hospital, Hartford Hospital, CCMC, and St. Francis Hospital. In 2014, the most common medical emergency in Coventry was a psychological emergency, followed by motor-vehicle-accident related injuries.

In addition to numerous medical calls, the CVFA responds with two fire engines to fire calls. In 2014, the most common fire-related call was a false alarm, either an accidental alarm activation or activation from a benign source, such as smoke from cooking. Secondly, reports of outside fires was the second most frequent call. Additionally, 2014 also saw more actual structure fires than previous years, with at least four active house fires. Fortunately, over the past couple of decades, improvements in building construction and improved use of detectors have reduced the number of actual house fires.

Along with ambulance and firefighting response, the CVFA provides additional kinds of responses, including searches for missing people, often children, and emergency dive search and recovery operations, in conjunction with the county dive team. To these ends, the CVFA operates a Polaris all-wheel-drive off-road vehicle and a dive truck, which includes SCUBA equipment for trained and certified personnel. The CVFA also provides medical and fire standbys for town events, including Coventry Fest, Panthers football, and various other functions, including road races.

CVFA response includes trained emergency medical technicians (EMTs) and emergency medical responders (EMRs) for ambulance calls, and state certified Firefighter I, Firefighter II, Pump Operators, Training Officers, and Fire Officers for firefighting emergencies. Upkeep of these state certifications requires continuous training. Ambulance calls require a minimal crew of one EMT plus one EMR, whereas fire engine response includes certified firefighters plus a certified pump operator. All CVFA fire officers, who are responsible for CVFA medical and fireground operations, are certified as EMTs and at least to the Connecticut Firefighter II level, with higher ranking officers required to be Fire Officer I certified, or higher.

In addition to an active core of about 25 responders, the CVFA has an established junior firefighter program, with 14-17 year-old high school students with good grades allowed to respond with an adult EMT crew on the ambulance on emergency calls. While guidelines for junior firefighters are strict and documented, these high school students learn some valuable life lessons, leadership skills, and self-reliance by providing emergency response.

To meet the needs of providing emergency response, the CVFA is always looking for new adult and junior members. To this end, the CVFA works with the town, as well as independently, to recruit new members, but the reality is that volunteerism in the area is declining, and the fire department needs help with staffing. As part of the recruitment effort, the CVFA recently teamed up with a group of high school students, who helped plan and execute membership drives as part of a national community service competition. These high school students won their Connecticut competition and travelled to Iowa, where they finished fourth out of all the global entries in the international competition. A portion of team's work can be seen in murals in the high school and at the CVFA main fire station.

Emergency call response is not the only work that gets done by the CVFA. A considerable amount of the fire department's job is administration. The CVFA Board of Directors is responsible for Administration including budgeting, tracking expenses, maintenance of the firehouses, vehicles, and equipment, including the purchasing of supplies, such as medical oxygen. Furthermore, the CVFA is working diligently internally, with the town, and with the North Coventry Fire Department (NCFD), to streamline processes, reduce operational costs, unify operating guidelines, and better address the requirements, needs, and expectations of the Town.

The current Board of Directors President is Denny Dittrich, whom you will see at many town and county meetings related to the fire department. Running the day-to-day emergency operations of the fire service is Chief Ken Boutin, with assistance from fire service officers.

The CVFA encourages town residents to become more familiar with the emergency services we provide. While residents should always call 911 for emergencies, everyone is welcome and encouraged to stop by any of the firehouses at any time for a tour and to ask questions.

**Emergency Call Numbers**

---

| <u>Type of service</u> | <u>FY 11/12</u> | <u>FY 12/13</u> | <u>FY 13/14</u> |
|------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Medical Calls          | 937             | -               | -               |
| Fire Related Calls     | 265             | 258             | 258             |

---