

Ware Fire Department.

Annual Report.

To the citizens of Ware,

This is my seventh report as Chief of the Ware Fire Department. Many exciting changes have continued to improve your fire department. We increased our capabilities in wildland/brushfire firefighting abilities when we placed the new pickup truck with a skid unit into service. This apparatus allows us greater access to these types of fires. It also makes fighting brushfires safer and extends the endurance of our firefighters by allowing the water to be brought to the fire instead of the firefighters having to carry water to the scene of the fire on their backs. The brush truck was an important addition especially as we experienced over a 50% increase in brushfires and a nearly 150% increase in illegal burning. Most times response for these calls is with this piece of equipment.

Also this year, we received the new Jaws of Life and air bags. The airbags will be used to raise equipment, recreational vehicles, and vehicles, where a victim may become trapped underneath. These new Jaws of Life and airlift bags were purchased from a transfer from the ambulance fund; therefore this new equipment was obtained without tax dollars. Our department has completed training on this equipment and it has already seen important use in actual situations.

As I have reported in the past, we have successfully applied for several federal grants. This year we took delivery on replacement of all of our firefighter personal protection clothing. This badly needed replacement assures that the firefighters safety is maximized through more up to date personal protective equipment that is fully compliant with the National Fire Protection Association. The personal protection equipment, with a total cost of \$100,000, was purchased with a \$10,000 contribution from the Town of Ware. Included in the grant funds were funds to also purchase a commercial washer extractor. This washer/extractor will prolong the life expectancy of the personal protection equipment itself. More importantly, washing and extracting the personal protective equipment at the station isolates it and the cancer-causing by-products of combustion (from a fire) that coat the firefighters' gear. Up until now, firefighters had to bring the equipment home and wash it in their personal machines also used for their families and young children and thereby exposing them to these potentially hazardous chemicals too.

While we have been successful in obtaining three federal grants to obtain much-needed equipment, such as Tanker 1; unfortunately our grant application for 2006 was denied. We had applied to replace the emergency generator for the fire station and to install a source capture system for diesel exhaust. The emergency generator in the fire station is a World War II surplus generator. It is only capable of supplying electrical power to one half of the fire station. We do not have a source capture system for diesel exhaust, and diesel exhaust is a known cancer carcinogen. It is imperative for the health

and safety of all our firefighters, that we do our best to eliminate this potential hazard. We will reapply in 2007 to try to obtain this needed equipment. The competition for these grants increases every year because the federal government decreases the amount available for grants yet the number of fire departments applying for grants increases. I remain confident that we should be able to replace this equipment through a federal grant.

Training continues to be a high priority, as we have experienced a much-welcomed influx of new paid on call firefighters. The Ware Fire Department has an established policy that all new full-time and paid on-call firefighters will attend the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy. All firefighters both full-time and paid on call are certified at the firefighter 1 and 2 level by attending classes at the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy. I believe it is directly because of this training that we have seen a decrease in the number of injuries sustained by our firefighters. These firefighters are to be congratulated as this training is highly time-consuming and requires a tremendous commitment for both the firefighter and the department. I strenuously believe that it is of paramount importance to assure proper and consistent training for new firefighters. As Chief of the department I believe in continued and constant training. Only by a having a true commitment to training and education are we able to improve. We continue to train as a department on the first Monday of the month to stay current with any changes in equipment or policies and standards of practices. We have continued to support training through members' attendance at the National Fire Academy for both the two-week certified classes and the Massachusetts National Fire Academy weekend. Personally, I have completed my four-year Executive Fire Officer class at the National Fire Academy and am awaiting my certificate of completion. I anticipate completing my Bachelor's Degree in Fire Science Administration this year as well (3 more classes to go!).

With our recent purchase of Ware's new Tower 1 ladder/tower, the Fire Department's apparatus requirements should be stable without any major purchases in the near future. Our current fleet of apparatus consists of three pumper\engines, one tanker, one ladder\tower, one brush unit, one utility unit, two advance to life-support ambulances, and the one basic life support ambulance. The oldest front line pumper\engine is a 1982. The useful life for a pumper\engine in the Town of Ware is 30 years. Therefore it is my suggestion that a capital plan for the replacement of this engine began soon to assure proper funding for replacement in about the next five years.

The call force remains at a full complement and an active part of our department. The full-time department remains of a full complement of 14 firefighters. This level of staffing is needed to continue to provide the level of services at the citizens of Ware have come to expect and certainly deserves.

Fire losses for 2006 total \$546,069.00. There were no intentionally set building fires for 2006; but there were two intentionally set motor vehicle fires. Thirteen fires in private dwellings in 2006 resulted in a total fire loss of \$285,018.00. Two apartment fires and one non-residential fire totalled \$95,000. A total of \$155,000 fire loss was due to storage and structures. Motor vehicles accounted for \$16,048.00 of fire loss. A total of

77 false alarms were received by the Ware fire department in 2006. There were two non-critical firefighter injuries in 2006.

The following is a report for the year 2006 for the Ware fire department:

Smoke detector inspections	190
Oil fired heating equipment\fuel storage	87
LP gas storage	67
Copies of reports	42
Open Burning Permits	1101
Industrial, commercial, and building inspections\drills	745
Blasting Permits	5
Black Powder	1
Storage of Compressed Gases	0
Installation of Alarms\Sprinklers	15
Underground Storage Tank Removal	8
Fire Drills	16
Structure Fires	11
Box Alarm	32
Vehicle Fire	4
Trash Dumpster Fire	1
Service Call	7
Report of Smoke or Alarm Sounding	10
Hazardous Materials	4
Incident Investigation	28
Mutual Aid	7
EMS assist	6
Illegal Burning	27
Chimney Fire	5
Brush Fire	22
Faulty Alarm\Alarm Work	5
CO Response	11
MVA-extraction	8
Group Call	18
Still Alarm	114
Total	2597

Another major, time-consuming and sometimes challenging commitment to endure was achieved in 2006. We completed our upgrade to advance life-support in the ambulance service. Several firefighters completed and tested to upgrade their skills to a paramedic level. I am happy and proud to report that shortly another 5 of our full-time firefighters will be fully licensed as Paramedics; some have already done so. These firefighters attended hundreds of hours of classes, in-hospital observation and practice, testing, certifications and hands-on experience not only in Ware; but also in communities such as Fall River, Springfield, Amherst and Worcester.

Our ambulance service continues to be viewed as a model by many communities in Western Mass. We are a self-sufficient service that has upgraded our level of practice to the community at no cost to the taxpayers. Call volumes have risen steadily in the last few years and because of that we now have three ambulances. We have begun a new service, where off duty firefighters are available during the daytime hours for facility transfers. Mary Lane Hospital regularly schedules interfacility transfers with our ambulance service. Our availability for this service assures that requirements for third-party services are minimized. Use of third-party services, due to travel distance and availability themselves, often means delayed transport and increased expense to the community and individual patients, our taxpayers. I would like to thank the staff of Mary Lane Hospital for their continued support to our service and community and for continuing to foster such an integral relationship with our town and department.

The report for the Ware fire ambulance service for 2006 is as follows:

Total Billed	\$676,598.00
Total Received	\$386,499.00
Contractual Right Offs	\$242,832.38
Medical Emergencies	818
Interfacility Transfers	405
Motor Vehicle Accidents	63
Medical Examiner	13
Refusals	129
Total	1428

This total represents an increase in ambulance activity of 206 calls, or a 17% increase in the past year alone of 2006.

In closing, I like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Ware Fire/Rescue Department for the support they have extended to me. The dedication to the department and the community is continually a source of personal pride. It is my pleasure to serve the citizens of Ware. Our Fire/Rescue Department exists for the sole purpose of supporting and contributing to our community and I believe we continue to exceed expectations. Your support to the department is greatly appreciated. Thank you to the appointed and elected officials for your support and help during the year. I look forward to an even more successful 2007.

Respectfully submitted,



Thomas Coulombe
Fire Chief