



Salt Spring Island Fire Rescue 2013 Fire Chief's Year End Report



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April 28th, 2014

Salt Spring Island Fire Rescue (SSIFR) continues to monitor and process within operational configuration, financial management, training, equipment purchases & safety requirements within its numerous mandates. Accomplishments are the result of partnering participants working responsibly in creating a positive atmosphere and strong teamwork. A working relationship on a daily basis is key; partnering with the SSIFPD Trustees, the Paid On – Call SSI Firefighters Association, the IAFF Local 4467 Career Firefighters Association, and the resource staff, provides the SSIFR the ability and the equipment to provide a Public Safety level of service day in and day out.

The Salt Spring Island Fire Protection District (SSIFPD) Trustees support the SSIFR in a consistent manner, for which the SSIFR is appreciative. The focus for Firefighters is based on the SSIFR Mission, Vision, and Value Statements, which includes reflections using the “Pyramid of Success” and other motivational and modern cultural improvement concepts that deal with internal and external challenges we face.

The vision and discussion relating to the SSIFPD three stations continued to enhance during 2013. The non- successful referendum outcome for replacing Hall #1 meant a renovation project to create additional office space for staff, while also creating more storage space. Hall #2 had a number of cleanups, repairs and utilization components upgraded including additional training props to the Training Ground. Hall #3 had no changes in 2013. All locations received grounds improvements.

As for staff deployment, Hall #1 is utilized daily as our main headquarters, while Hall #2 is open on Tuesdays (April to October) with one staff member positioned there when available, and Hall #3 housed a staff member(s) five days a week from our Inspection & Prevention Division.

Calls for Assistance in 2013 reached 482 compared to 566 in 2012. The reasons for the reduced number may be attributed to enhanced Public Education, Fire Prevention, Media Relations and Public Awareness towards safety and less severe weather conditions.

The SSIFR focused outcome to internally strengthening is by means of the membership itself in the ways of teamwork, leadership, consistency and support. This is based on witnessing enhanced positive benefits within the short, mid and long term timeframes as noted early in this report using proven and modern methods to support our requirements and changes. The membership created and driven, SSIFR Mission, Vision & Value Statements as well as the “Pyramid of Success” are being utilized as motivators and reflection options



It was another busy year on the training front for SSIFR. Our members put in a combined 5,427 hours of drills and practices on Tuesday nights and Wednesday mornings over the year, with an additional 2,360 hours of weekend courses. Similar to past years we continue to review all aspects of Firefighting from basic Personal Protective Equipment right through to Fire Officer Certification. Five of our members obtained their NFPA 1001 Firefighter I & II certificates bringing our total NFPA 1001 certified Firefighters up to 21 of our 32.

The other big training event for SSIFR every year is our Annual Training Weekend. 2013 was another huge success seeing almost 100 Firefighters from departments all over BC, with many bringing their family members to spend the weekend enjoying all that Salt Spring has to offer. Hosting this training not only provides certified training at a reduced cost, saving time and travel expenses, it also provides invaluable networking within the fire service and reinforces our family first commitment within SSIFR by offering a number of spousal and family events during the weekend. SSIFR would like to thank all the people and businesses of Salt Spring Island who help make this weekend a success year after year.

The training ground facility at the Fulford Fire Hall saw a major addition early in 2013 when the building simulator was erected. This building is used on a weekly basis and has allowed us to create far more realistic scenarios and drills which translates to property savings for our community on the emergency front. It also gives us a safe and secure place to practice recruit skills such as laddering and hose handling without fear of damaging private buildings or property as well as highly technical skills like Rapid Intervention and Rope Rescue.

In terms of financial accountability, the management continually works to maintain within the annual budgeted total. Training opportunities as well as advancements for members produced a strong move forward in the areas of Firefighters Safety, Officers Management, Front Line Live Fire Training Suppression, Incident Command, Communications, and Teamwork that enhanced within physical and psychological values.

Several purchases contributed towards supporting the Firefighters in addressing emergencies and Firefighter safety, such as our Hall #2 Training Facility, training props, enhanced equipment, pagers, portable radios, protective clothing, as well as upgrades to our communication systems.

The Hall #2 Training Ground facility is a huge asset to our Firefighters and our community in means of real simulation training and being located locally. In years to come this facility will prove to be even more valuable and a positive addition to our service. Safety and Human Resources is, and always will be the number one priorities for management and our members. Continual educational sessions and discussions were conducted to promote, inform and instil the need to address safety, no matter what the situation.

Risk management and the awareness of the components that make up risk management around the Island are key elements in safety, preplanning, fire prevention, training and constructive preparedness for the community. Limiting risks and understanding risks is critical to prevention. Our Inspection / Prevention Division continue to enhance with the commitment of the two members within it. The Inspection mandate and the overall program goals continued to progress very well in 2013. A total of 391 Commercial inspections were conducted in 2013, with another 37 Re-Inspections. As well, numerous community projects and training / prevention programs were provided to residents in a number of different methods. With assistances coming from our partnerships, Paid On-call members and the community participation, this Division has made huge advancements within 2013. We regularly enhanced our electronic technology within this Division to better address "in the field" capabilities relating to Inspections.

Staff members endlessly process inquiries and concerns on a daily basis from both residents and visitors. In response to the variety of community safety inquiries, our members take great pride in working with the public on conducting educational awareness and providing public safety. Our Inspection / Prevention Division conducted numerous public-education sessions as well as taught our recruit class and regular members in a variety of training topics.

Over 2500 persons were positively affected by direct contact through Public Education and Fire Prevention sessions in 2013

Public Education ranges from Hall tours, school tours, home inspections, fire extinguisher training, car seat installations, open houses, (not including referendum open house numbers), Fire Prevention Week, neighbour groups, seniors groups, Junior Fire Chief for a Day, CPR Training. P.A.R.T.Y, (Prevent Alcohol & Risk Related Trauma in Youths) Program, Lock Box Program and two community fireworks displays.

The inspection Program continues to be successful in the sense of education and awareness for all public buildings. Other inspections include propane and other utility services in subsidized housing, hoarding, appliance safety, and general building construction safety. We were able to train 8 of our members as certified car seat technicians. This was a free course offered by BCAA, and the course was offered here on the island. Three other members took a Fire & Life Safety Educator course at our annual Training Week end as well.

Salt Spring Island Fire Rescue Prevention Division 2013 Yearly Totals

- Commercial Inspections 391
- Re- Inspections 37
- Category 3 Burn Pile Inspections 44
- Sub Division/Plan Reviews 14
- Smoke Alarm Installations 72
- Carbon Monoxide Alarms 6
- Fire Safety Plan Reviews 8
- Fire Alarm Systems Checked 4
- Car Seat Installations 4
- Fire Drills Conducted 11
- Driveway Inspections 11
- Water Storage Tank Inspections 6
- Lock Box Installations 3
- Special Events Permits 14
- Juvenile Fire Setter Intervention 2



It would be remiss if we didn't mention all these activities took place throughout the year, with heavy hearts, mourning the loss of Lt. Travis Guedes. Travis was a Lieutenant within the Fire Inspection / Prevention Division since 2010 and with SSIFR since 2004. He is missed every day at SSIFR and his legacy of hard work, integrity and dedication will live on.

*Lt. Travis Charles Guedes
October 29th, 1977 ~ April 17th, 2013*

Iris Beck continues to be our welcoming personality for all the visitors and inquiries. With the inclusion of our administrator, this position continues to grow and includes a wide variety of enhanced media tools for the public to access as well as our interior daily needs. During 2013 we gained a fill in person for the times when Iris is on vacation or other, being Sonia Shaw, who is a very positive asset to our team.

Social networking for our organization has progressed continually in 2013 in modernizing our communications internally and externally. Our team of communications experts have created multiple ways and systems to keep people & members informed and educated, while providing an opportunity to voice their thoughts and create dialogue. We encourage you to visit or follow us on our website:

www.saltspringfire.com or 

During the past year we continue to grow in partnerships to help enhance public safety, communications, community support, improved understandings and general positive relationships. We have worked with multiple agencies within BC and beyond. In the commitment of positive progress within our service and Island, there continually must be open, respectful communications with a mutual understanding of the necessity to partner and resolve challenges by working together.

The vision and reality for a new Emergency Centre or Fire Hall for Ganges, which would be a positive step in addressing long standing challenges failed in an October referendum. This means for any future new Building, a new vision and process must come forward. Equally important to the new Building is training of our first responders, both the present ones and our future ones, while also ensuring that the apparatus is modern and replaced on scheduled timeframes. We must be realistic to the Island's needs, Firefighter safety, changes and future by providing a Sustainable, Affordable, Functional and Effective main headquarters, and the required working items within. This in turn, will provide safety to Firefighters who respond to the public's calls for assistance.

One of several public interested items during 2013 was the discussions concerning ventilation upgrades for all three stations, especially Hall #1 in Ganges.



In 2014 the SSIFR will continue to advance by managing and addressing the operational requirements in support of Firefighter safety, partnering in the revision of a SSIFPD Strategic Plan, community needs, public concerns, policies and mandates, while remaining responsible, accountable and effective within the elements that make up the SSIFR operations via the Fire Trustees governances and policies.

Recruiting new members to join the SSIFR is critical in enabling this organization to meet its mandates. Diversity and looking at the options within provides a wider horizon for those members that do not want to be Front Line Firefighters. In 2013 we remodelled our recruitment process to become more manageable and realistic, which is a positive accomplishment. Recruitment has continued to enhance over the past number of years and we look forward to that trend continuing by means of positive community participation and positive word of mouth.

A tremendous “Thank you” goes out to the members of the SSIFR who provide an incredible level of service in protecting this Island and its residents. The many hours of training, responses and community participation is not generally understood by most Island residents or visitors unless they have received assistance by the SSIFR for an emergency or have a direct relationship or interest within the organization. The commitment by the membership is reassuring. Each year these individuals respond to “Calls for Assistance” and unite to assure an extremely high level of public safety.

Respectfully Submitted,
 Chief Tom Bremner
 Deputy Chief Arjuna George

2013 CALLS FOR ASSISTANCE

Type of Call	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	
Alarm	4		4	8	5	6	7	8	6	2	5	4	59
Bush/Grass Fire			1	1	1	1	2		1	1			8
Chimney Fire	1	1	2						1			2	7
First Responder	16	18	15	17	23	12	32	25	17	21	12	21	229
Hazmat	1		3	1			2	4		2			13
Hydro	2	1	1		1		3	1					9
Miscellaneous				2	1	12	9	19	7	6	5	1	62
Motor Vehicle Incident		2	3		6	2	7	4	6	8	2	3	43
Police Assist				2	2		1					2	7
Public Assist	3	4	6	6	4	1	3	2		2	1	1	33
Rescue					1	2	1	1					5
Structure Fire	1		1				1			1	1		5
Vehicle/Boat Fire				1				1					2
Total	28	26	36	38	44	36	68	65	38	43	26	34	482