

## **2012 Report of the Fire Department**

I am pleased to present the 130<sup>th</sup> annual report of the Abington Fire-Rescue & Emergency Services Department for the year 2012.

2012 saw many new programs and policies come to fruition for your fire department, after much planning and preparation in 2011.

Beginning in January, we were able to place two new Massachusetts Firefighting Academy graduates, Firefighter/Paramedics Anthony Conso and Jarrod Driscoll, to Groups One and Two, respectively. This brought these two work groups back to a shift strength of five members- the first time since 2009. At the same time, Firefighter/Paramedics Justin Silva and Christopher Cotti came off of their work shifts to be temporarily reassigned to the Brockton Fire Academy. This still kept two of our work shifts at four members. January also saw the Open Burning permit program go on-line for the convenience of our residents.

In February, one of our members returned from a lengthy work-related injury, thereby reducing one more shift vacancy. This month also began the physical relocation of redundant fire alarm receiving equipment from Station Two to the Holbrook Fire Station, in preparation for Holbrook to begin providing dispatch service for our responders. Training was provided to the Holbrook Dispatchers on the use of the fire alarm equipment, who were then able to provide continuous fire alarm monitoring when the Abington stations are empty. This began well before Holbrook began full dispatch, and filled a chronic but dangerous gap in our department's abilities.

In March, training began on the department's new fire reporting and administrative software program, which will allow for easier and more streamlined record keeping and administrative operations. Abington also began using a new ambulance billing vendor, with the goal of providing a more sustainable and quality assured service.

April was the month which we had all been waiting for, as our two Firefighter/Paramedics graduated from the Brockton Fire Academy. This provided the last two positions needed to fill and maintain all four of our work shifts at five members each. Station Two on Rockland Street was re-opened and staffed for the first time since November, 2009. Ambulance 3 and Engine 2 were relocated to Station Two, and continue to be the primary apparatus protecting the southern side of Abington.

On May 1, dispatch operations were officially transferred to Holbrook. This allows for constant radio communications with our responders, constant fire alarm monitoring for any building in Abington connected to the municipal fire alarm system, emergency medical instructions provided directly to the callers prior to the arrival of emergency responders, and the ability to notify and coordinate any resource that may be needed during an emergency incident. This has evolved from a possible theory to solving the department's needs to a proven service vital to our operations, and has been tested almost from the start during a very busy year with numerous complex incidents without fail.

June was a festive month in Abington due to the Tricentennial celebrations, and the Abington Fire Department was honored to play several roles. On June 10, Abington's fire apparatus was joined by many fire trucks from Plymouth and Norfolk Counties for the Tricentennial Parade through town. Much planning and preparation was involved to allow for a safe and traditional field day celebration on June 23, complete with a professional fireworks display at Memorial Field.

The Abington Firefighters Local 2080, with the assistance of the Rockland and Whitman Firefighters, hosted an old fashioned Fireman's Muster on August 12, behind the Abington High School, the first such event in a quarter century for Abington. This was also part of the Tricentennial celebration, with lighthearted competition kept to a limit between the three original towns of Old Abington. The Abington Firefighters won the overall competition.

In September, a joint Abington-Rockland FEMA fire radio grant was awarded, which will allow for the complete replacement of all radio equipment for both fire departments. This project should be completed in the spring of 2013, and will save Abington around \$300,000.00 on much needed equipment. Grants were also written for the replacement of the department's expired self-contained breathing apparatus bottles, the replacement of Engine 4, and the Student Awareness of Fire Education program; all of which we are still awaiting the result.

Training was a major consideration throughout 2012, due to the fact that five new members, or a quarter of the department, had recently been hired to replace retired and lost positions. It was important not only for the new members, but also to have all of our members train together to provide the correct mix of old and new methods required to operate a modern fire department. Aside from the normal daily equipment training, emergency medical protocols and familiarity with Abington's buildings and fire protection systems, the following specialized programs were provided, each incorporating experience and ideas from other agencies:

- Roof ventilation techniques in Rockland
- Laddering techniques taught by the Brockton Fire Department
- Large water pumping relays, with Rockland Fire, provided by Southfield, in Weymouth
- Rapid Intervention Teams (Mass. Fire Academy program), taught by FF/P Matt Croall
- Wildland and Brush Fire Operations at Plymouth Airport, by Carver Fire Department
- Major spill control techniques and legalities, taught by Mass. D.E.P.
- IMC Fire Software modules, throughout the year

2012 was a busy year for the Abington Fire Department, with several major incidents. These included a serious motor vehicle accident on Adams Street involving entrapment from colliding with a fuel delivery truck, which came to rest against a high voltage power pole adjacent to the MBTA tracks, and directly over a storm drain. No fuel was spilled during the rescue and mitigation.

Several larger fires occurred, including extensive damage to three residential homes, a restaurant, a vacant storage garage which was considered arson, and numerous vehicle fires.

Emergency medical responses, which also include motor vehicle accident responses, continue to increase. For this reason, the majority of our employees are cross-trained as firefighter/paramedics, to allow the greatest flexibility to handle most types of emergency calls. Many times, both fire and paramedic skills and equipment are needed during medical emergency calls or motor vehicle accidents. Having personnel available who are trained in both is cost effective and saves time when it is needed the most.

Abington, like many area communities, continues to rely heavily on mutual aid for these larger incidents, or for simultaneous emergency calls. This can be seen by the number of cities, towns or entities which provided direct response to the Town of Abington in 2012, including- Avon, Boston Medflight, Bridgewater, Brockton, Hanover, Holbrook, Randolph, Rockland, Whitman, Dept. of Fire Services, and forest fire units from the Dept. of Conservation and Recreation.

With the exception of Boston Medflight, these responses involved actual fire apparatus which assisted directly at an emergency incident, and do not include mutual aid ambulance responses.

Conversely, Abington Fire also provided direct emergency assistance, not including our ambulance, to these cities and towns in 2012- Brockton, East Bridgewater, Holbrook, Plymouth County Dive and Technical Rescue Teams, Rockland, Scituate, Southfield, Weymouth and Whitman.

The Abington Fire Department is proud to provide fire, emergency medical care, all hazard rescue, hazardous materials release, prevention programs and education to our residents. We provide these services directly from our highly trained professional employees, as well as from mutual aid agreements for assistance or specialized equipment.

I wish to thank my fellow Abington residents, taxpayers and voters for supporting your fire department's budget requests, which allowed the department to return to a safer staffing level and re-open Station Two.

I would also like to thank the Town's boards, Town Manager, and all departments for the countless assistance given throughout the year to help keep this department operational, and the town safe.

A special thanks to Deputy Fire Chief Edward Belcher, who works tirelessly in fire prevention with our residents and business owners to ensure that the homes and buildings within the Town of Abington are safe now and for future generations.

Finally, I wish to thank our most important assets within the fire department, the officers, firefighters and paramedics. It is this group, and from working with their organization of Abington Firefighters Local 2080, that has successfully enabled the many difficult but necessary changes to the department over the past two years. It is from these changes that the Abington Fire Department now provides a more effective and efficient emergency service to our residents.

Respectfully submitted,

John M. Nuttall  
Chief of Department

**Members of the Abington Fire-Rescue & Emergency Services Department 2012:**

John M. Nuttall, Chief/EMT-I  
Edward F. Belcher, Deputy Chief/EMT  
Patricia Gordon, Executive Assistant  
David M. Farrell, Captain/EMT  
John Glynn, Captain/Paramedic  
Ronald Howe, Captain/Paramedic  
George Gardiner, Jr., Captain/Paramedic  
Michael Murphy, Firefighter/EMT-I  
Donald M. Farrell, Firefighter/EMT-I  
Michael Driscoll, Firefighter/Paramedic  
John Force, Firefighter/Paramedic  
Robert Neumeister, Firefighter/EMT-I

Don DiDomenico, Firefighter/Paramedic  
Kevin Finch, Firefighter/Paramedic  
Richard Smith, Firefighter/Paramedic  
Shawn Hardy, Firefighter/Paramedic  
Brian Fogg, Firefighter/Paramedic  
Christopher O'Toole, Firefighter/Paramedic  
Matthew Croall, Firefighter/Paramedic  
Justin Silva, Firefighter/Paramedic  
Anthony Conso, Firefighter/Paramedic  
Jarrod Driscoll, Firefighter/Paramedic  
Christopher Cotti, Firefighter/Paramedic

**The Abington Fire Department responded to 3,176 emergency calls for service, including:**

32	Structure Fires
9	Vehicle Fires
24	Outside/Wildland Fires
7	Other Fires
2,032	Emergency Medical Responses
100	Rescue
239	Hazardous Conditions
217	Service Calls
176	Good Intent Calls
297	False Alarms
43	All Other Calls

In addition to emergency or service requests, we also provided the following Fire Prevention, Inspectional and Public Safety Services:

1014	Inspections
433	Permits
702	Open Burning Permits
100	Child Safety Seats Installed