

**The
History
Of**

**Sunman Firemen's
Association**

**Town of Sunman
Fire Department**

**Sunman Rural
Fire Department**



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HISTORY OF THE SUNMAN FIRE SERVICE

The first settlers started to clear the land and put up buildings in the area which is now the town of Sunman and in 1851 the first business was started. The railroad came thru this area in 1853 and in 1856 the first plots of ground were laid out and sold. There was a rapid growth of the first people and their interest in this village. During the next 30 years if there was a fire it was battled by crude methods of brooms, mops, and bucket brigades, which was adequate at that time. In 1865 we saw the John Martz saloon and dance hall burn which was located west of the depot or on Fitch Avenue north of West Washington Street, in 1873 Herman Niemen hay barn burnt and also flames consumed Fred Peters Jr. hay, grain, and feed business which was at the present location of the Pond Doctor or at 119 North Meridian street, in 1875 Herman Niemen had a cattle barn burn at the present site of the Sunman IGA , and in 1876 the Has Hagen residence and store building went up in flames which was located at 104 Jackson street or the present site of Cross Late distributors.

Due to the concern of fire, the inhabitants saw fit to organize a volunteer fire department, in 1884 (see attached legal papers) and to properly equip that department. The equipment, though primitive compared to today's standards, was the best that could be purchased at the time. The hand pumper was the very latest variety, and the bucket brigade augmented that prized piece of equipment when necessary. The equipment sufficed as long as the flames had not gained too much headway when the firemen arrived; however, the use of gasoline greatly increased the fire hazard. A disastrous fire in the year 1886 proved that good fire equipment is important to a community. The fire destroyed the Goldschmidt residence and store building, the Pat Daber frame residence and saloon, the John Tangman hay, grain, and feed warehouse, and the Nieman hay press building.

The Town Of Sunman was officially incorporated in the year of 1898 and in 1899 the Volunteer Fire Association transferred their property and equipment to the Town. In 1900 ground was leased from the Railroad Co. for the erection of a fire house on West Washington Street. 1905 was an eventful year, and in March 23rd a disastrous fire wiped out all the buildings (including the large water tank) on the west side of Meridian Street between the railroad and Beilby's store, and everything along the south side of West Washington Street to Filmore Street with exception of the buildings bordering Vine Street. Many other buildings were damaged and most of the contents of the buildings were destroyed. This fire still remains the greatest amount of buildings destroyed on record in this department.

In 1924 the Town Board of Trustees looked into the possibility of the improved fire apparatus being manufactured at the time and decided to purchase a Prospect fire truck completely equipped with modern firefighting devices.

The fire department was reorganized and the men spent many hours preparing for the time when their services would be required. They learned how to use their new equipment and how efficiently to fight the flames.

Proof of the efficiency of the Sunman Volunteer Fire Department was evident when the Osborn and Trautman barn fire developed, although the flames had gained considerable headway, the volunteers acquitted themselves well and proved the worth of their new engine. Prompt response to the alarm made short work of the flames.

The old Prospect 300 GPM pumper mounted on a Model T chassis served the community for 13 years. In 1938 a new Howe piston type 450 GPM pump was mounted midship on a new 1938 Ford Chassis. This new pumper carried 1000' of 2 ½" hose, 300' of 1 ½" hose, 200' of booster line and 350 gallons of water in this booster tank. The purchase was made through a special fire fund. Value of the pumper was set at \$ 2,500. This 1938 Ford Pumper made its first run to the Ed Holzbacher home where there was an explosion that partially destroyed the house and caused a small fire. In 1942 the largest fire in Sunman since the downtown fire of 1905 was the saw mill at the end of West Washington Street.

In 1943 the Sunman Fire Department added a 1935 International chassis which they purchased from a hardware store in Friendship, Indiana for \$ 300. From the Federal Government war surplus agency, a front mount Darley centrifugal 500-GPM pump was purchased for \$ 1,000, and this was mounted on the front of the International chassis, Sunman now had two fire trucks to serve both the community and the rural area.

In 1944 the town purchased an outside siren to notify firemen of fires, this could be heard for several miles around. On March 9, 1944 it blew for the first time for a fire at the Mendel house occupied by Jim Coyle, now the site of Wiedeman Heating and Electric Company. During the year 1948 the fire department was moved from West Washington Street to a larger station on Jackson Street, which the town purchased from Feller Bakery. After several years of planning by the town fathers the fire cisterns in the streets (which ran dry often in summer weather) saw fit to update the fire protection and installed a Municipal Water system. On September 1, 1951 this system was put into operation. On November 2, 1952 this pressurized water works was used for the first time on the Ben Boggess house in the northern part of town. It proved its value on this fire alone. It also brought with it a serious problem. Prior to this time the department could take fire equipment anywhere they wished to go in town or the rural community. With the coming of this water system the Fire Insurance classification was reduced in the town from 10th class to a 8th class, making anyone living in town will get a cheaper insurance rate. One of the stipulations was the approved 1938 Ford Pumper which was the most up to date equipment the town had, must be kept in town and not leave under any situation.

This meant the 1935 International with no water and limited supply of hose and equipment must serve the rural area and help our neighboring towns. This proved in the next 2 ½ years to be very embarrassing situation as hookups at fire scene to water supply were slow, no water on the truck, and no up to date small hand tools were available. As time went by in these 2 ½ years, numerous attempts were made to update equipment but every time it failed. Then in 1953 the department worked to no avail in soliciting donations from the community to purchase a new fire truck for the rural area and at this time the Sunman Fire Department underwent a major reorganization. It was incorporated and became independent of the town. It was now self governed and elects its own officers and keeps its own records. The town still maintained ownership and operation of the 1938 Ford Pumper, but was operated by the same group of men that made up the Rural Organization. The name of the newly organized fire department is now the Sunman Rural Fire Department Inc. After a successful fund drive as mentioned above the department on May 15, 1954 took delivery on a new pumper, built on a Ford Chassis and built by Howe Fire Apparatus Company of Anderson, Indiana. It carried 750 gallon of water in its booster tank, 1000 feet of 2 ½" hose, 400 feet of 1 ½" hose, 30 feet of hard suction line, 400 feet of ¾" inch booster hose, ladders, and a variety of miscellaneous fire fighting equipment. The cost of this equipment was approximately \$ 12,000. The entire amount was raised by a door to door canvas of the fire district.

On July 18, 1954 this new pumper made its first run to the Robert Hoog property near St. Peters for a grass fire. On May 1, 1938 the International Tanker was replaced by a 1948 International chassis and transferred the tank from the older International, plus the necessary fire hose and other fire fighting equipment.

In 1957 another advance in fire protection was made. The latest in radio equipment was installed. This equipment allows sending and receiving messages to and from the fire trucks, and provides a system of communication with all of the neighboring communities. A remote station was located at the Dreyer Nursing Home and was attended 24 hours a day. It brought police and fire protection from other towns and villages within a fifty mile radius to Sunman with a simple broadcast message. Cost of the equipment was \$ 1,800. One half was paid by the office of Civil Defense and half shared by the Town and volunteer Fire Department. A stand by light plant was purchased for \$ 50. This is used in case of power failure for operation of the radio and emergency equipment. The portable water pumps and power plant were an outright purchase by the Volunteer Fire Department. AS funds became available the department bought a portable light plant, Scott air packs, and additional radio receivers. The fire district included Weisburg, New Alsace, Dover, Guilford, Yorkville, Lawrenceville, St. Peters, St. Leon, Spades, Penntown, Negangards Corner, Clinton, Twin Oaks and Manchester.

On September 15, 1959 the first major fire in Sunman since November 2, 1952 was the Louis Gillman store fire on Meridian Street. The additional equipment and radio communication made this a very workable situation. The need arose for a four wheel drive grass truck to help relieve the heavy more expensive equipment on grass fire runs in the fields and woods. On April 25, 1963 the department purchased a used four wheel drive 1 ton Dodge truck and mounted a 280 gallon tank, pumps, hose, and other equipment on this truck.

As the department acquired more equipment, the fire station became too small. After considerable discussion the department decided to construct their own facility, as the town had no funds for this expenditure. On February 19, 1964 the department purchased from Margaret Klassner a parcel of ground at the corner of Jackson Street and Eastern Avenue in Sunman. During the year of 1964 the men of the fire unit and citizens donated their time and helped Steinkamp and Company of Batesville, in building the station on Jackson Street. The Farm Shop supervised the plumbing, wiring, and heating of this building with labor from the firemen.

On January 1, 1965 the department moved into their new facilities which had room for 6 pieces of equipment, rest rooms, and storage. At this time the town owned the 1938 Ford Pumper, and the Rural Fire Department owned the 1954 Pumper, 1958 Grass Truck, and the 1948 tanker. On June 20, 1966 the Town was informed to keep their present insurance rate they must update their 1938 Pumper to one that would satisfy the Rating Bureau. The estimated cost would be \$ 25,000, after 3 months of deliberation the Town could find no way to come up with this kind of money. On September 12, 1966 the Sunman Rural Fire Department took it upon themselves again to canvas the town and rural area to update the fire service in this community. Some 6 months later a goal of \$ 22,000 was reached and a new pumper was ordered. On June 13, 1968 the Sunman Rural Fire Department took delivery on this new truck from American Fire Apparatus Company of Battle Creek, Michigan for \$ 25,000. Also in June of this year a new outside siren was purchased and installed. The department realized that to continue a workable and efficient fire department we must plan ahead for extra revenue above what was available at the present, at that time the annual firemen's festival was started in August of 1968. In June of 1969 the department moved into the new meeting room constructed on the north side of the fire house. In the year 1970 the department purchased a used 1968 2-ton truck chassis and a stainless steel tank, which holds 2100 gallon of water.

The department personnel constructed the pump, tank piping, sheet metal work, and painting on this truck for a cost of \$ 9,000. The used tanker was sold to Manchester Fire Department. The fire department purchased the 1938 ford pumper at this time for a cost of \$ 1.00 from the Town of Sunman and this relieved the town of all fire equipment.

On April 29, 1970 the firemen received 23 home monitors and additional equipment at the fire station, so that each fireman will have radio contact with station. This equipment was a donation from the Louis Bruns estate, price of this was \$ 2,800. \$ 800 of this amount was paid by the Fire Department. On September 25, 1971 the department installed a more powerful base radio station for \$ 1,600; this radio was paid for by the ladies auxiliary. In August of 1972 the department updated its foam equipment for petroleum fires at a cost of \$ 650. In September of 1973 the department spent \$ 9,000 for a new grass and field fire truck and is also used for automobile and certain truck fires, this is a 1973 Ford $\frac{3}{4}$ ton truck with a 230 gallon water tank, pump and equipment. This truck has been working about $\frac{1}{2}$ of the runs, reserving the other equipment for more serious fires. The year 1974 saw the organization purchase a 1974 Chevrolet Van 1-ton truck, rescue tools to free trapped individuals in accidents of various kinds for a cost of \$ 9,000. This truck is called the equipment truck and also carries 720 cu. Feet of breathing air, smoke ejectors, resuscitator, air masks, tarpaulins, generator, ropes, and miscellaneous tools. We also updated the breathing apparatus from 4 units to 6 units, all the new style, and 6 extra cylinders. With the coming of the Sunman Area Life Squad in 1974, they did not have a home and the fire department furnished a bay to store their unit in till the building was finished in 1977.

Insurance Services Offices, which sets guidelines and rates for fire insurance policies, which has been mentioned previously as the Indiana Rating Bureau suggested the 1954 Pumper be replaced with a new truck. In 1979 a new 1000 Gallon per Minute pump was delivered along with the full and latest equipment per NFPA # 1901 for a total price of \$ 78,000. The equipment truck or the 1974 van became to small to handle all extra equipment and after considerable time reviewing various pieces of equipment, this department took delivery on a new 1985 Heavy Duty Rescue Truck, with a front mount winch, quick access breathing air equipment, numerous extra breathing air tanks, a complete set of Rescue Tools including air bags, air cutting equipment, hydraulic powered equipment, and numerous other supplies related to firefighting. Cost of just the new truck was \$ 79,000. The 1974 van was sold to Abington Fire Department of Wayne County. Also in the year 1979 a radio tower was installed to improve communications as the old tower consisted of a short piece of pipe, cost of this tower was \$ 832.

To save heat in winter new garage doors were installed in the year of 1984 for a cost of \$ 6,500. Also in 1984 a new roof was placed on the station for \$ 4,656. In 1985 a copier was purchased for the office at \$ 1,860. In 1986 a camera and recorder was purchased for Investigation of fires for \$ 1,730.00. The year of 1987 saw the department purchase air bags for \$ 1,550 to further the extrication work of the organization. Year 1988 saw baffles installed in the 2100 gallon tank of the tanker for \$ 3,913. As previously mentioned firefighters were alerted for emergencies by bulky radios that could not be taken away from homes or places of business. To better serve the public each firefighter was supplied with a new pager costing the department \$ 10,000. Also in the year of 1989 during May the department saw the need to buy a computer and printer to store records of the department and to identify ever location we serve, this listing consist of name, address, phone number, road name, township, and county where this location is, and a step by step on how to reach the described property, the value of this equipment was \$ 4,200. In the year 1991 the department upgraded the air bags at a cost of \$ 2,500, plus new radios for dispatch and on scene activities at \$ 4,006.

In 1992 a new generator for the station was purchased for \$ 549, along with a foam nozzle for \$ 1,075. In 1993 a new computer was purchased for \$ 1,690. In 1994 the following items were purchased new encoder for \$ 700, new portable radio's for \$ 1,029, 11 complete sets of air masks for \$ 15,213, and wearing apparel for fire fighting at \$ 23,761. Also a new pumper was purchased from Ferrara Fire Apparatus in Baton Rouge Louisiana for a cost of \$ 166,000. In 1995 2 new cylinders for breathing air was purchased for \$ 780. In the year of 1995 the department sold the 1968 pumper to Lovett Fire Department in Jennings County for \$ 7,000. During the year of 1996 firefighters updated their radio equipment consisting of pagers and portable radios for \$ 16,216.

The firefighters repaired the roof on the fire station for \$ 10,426. A new computer was purchased for the office for \$ 2,270. Rescue equipment was added and updated for a cost of \$ 7,572. The base radio at the station was updated along with necessary accessories for \$ 3,009; all of these purchases were made in 1997. In the year of 1998 the department made the following purchases, a fold a tank was purchased for \$ 1,136. To update the rescue equipment \$ 1,273 was spent. In the year of 1998 the department purchased a new 2400 gallon tanker for \$ 140,000. In 1999 the following acquisitions were made. 6 hand held radios were purchased for \$ 4,850. New hose was purchased for \$ 2,205. To keep abreast of the increasing demand for rescue work the department added a new hydraulic power unit to power rescue tools and other additional equipment for \$ 5,126. Voice radios were added to the breathing apparatus for \$ 2,117. A building to store additional equipment and storage for festival supplies was built on property leased from Sunman Dearborn Schools for \$ 31,674. Also in 1999 the department purchased a new brush and grass rig from Kenco for \$ 85,000.

During the years of 2000/2003/2004/2006 the department spent \$ 9,596 for training material and cost associated in making trips to other locations to further there necessary training. In the years of 2001/2003/2005 we saw the firefighters spend \$ 24,079 for pagers and radios to communicate on the fire ground and receive a signal from dispatch of an emergency. We saw in the years of 2000/2001, 2002/2003/2004/2005/2006 the department purchased firefighting gear for a cost of \$ 104,817.

As the need for additional equipment and also new apparatus we saw the department outgrow the present station at 126 Eastern Avenue. Every year there were attempts to find property to build a new station and a way to pay for this update. The Weber family worked with the department to furnish property to build a station and planning in earnest started and in the year of 2002 the department moved in to this new 6 bay fire station at 621 North Meridian, the cost of this station was \$ 750,000. During the years of 2004 and 2005 we saw the department spend \$ 71,285 for updates of the breathing air systems. In 2005 the department purchased a new pumper from American LaFrance for \$ 275,365. It then sold the 1979 to a private individual in Hamilton, Ohio for \$ 4,000. In 2006 the department purchased a 2006 utility truck for rescue work and transportation of firefighters to fires for \$ 32,794. In 2007 the department purchased a new fill station for air bottles for \$ 10,500.

See additional page for history of emergency call reporting and communication of Sunman Rural Fire Department. Also see sheet for pictures of all past and present fire stations.

In summary, cost figures are in some places an estimate, not that we do not have accurate records, which we do have, but when you buy such an item as a fire truck there are many small items purchased from someone else rather than the fire manufacturer, that do not get included in the listed price. There are many items that are transferred from an old truck to a new vehicle that do not get listed. In the construction of the fire station there are many small items that are never added to cost. Audits of the financial records of the department are conducted every year by Collins, Heeb, & Miller, from Cincinnati, Ohio. This is still a volunteer department; nobody receives a salary or charges for time spent for fire related activities.

pg 6-7

Summan Ripley County Indiana

October 18' 1884

We whose names are hereto subscribed for the purpose herein expressed organized ourselves into a Voluntary Association to be known as the Summan's Fireman's Association, and by act in such name to hold, Real and personal property in furtherance of the objects of the Association, and to sue and be sued, and do all acts proper, by and in the name as above expressed

The property of the contemplated Association consist of an Engine, hose reel and necessary accompaniments already purchased and paid for

The members of the Association shall select three directors who shall hold their office for the term of one year from date of this election

Such Election shall be held in pursuance of a written notice to be posted in three public places in the town of Summan in Ripley County Indiana, such notice to specify the time and place of the meeting for election of such Directors, not less than ten days from the time of the posting the same

The Association shall elect a President, Vice President Secretary and Treasurer the above named officers shall be elected in compliance with the Constitution adopted by the Association.

The Treasurer shall give a bond of the penalty of Two hundred dollars payable to the Company in its Corporate name

The Capital stock of the Company shall be limited to One thousand dollars, Meetings of the Board of Directors may be held at any time upon the call of the President or Secretary and a meeting of the members of the Association may be held at any time upon the written notice of five of the members giving five days notice of such intended meeting.

The Association adopt for the inscription upon the seal to be provided for by the Secretary, "The Sumner Firemen Association"

The object of the incorporation is to prevent the destruction by fire of property in the town of Sumner in Ripley County, Indiana and vicinity.

These articles to take effect from the date of their filing.

in the Office of the Recorder of Ripley County, Indiana

Fred A Flodter

Fred Goldschmidt

Wm Goldschmidt

Otto C. Beer.

V. W. Bigney

W. R. Stephens

W. G. Bieby

W. H. Bruns.

Valentin Hartman

George Räske

Emil Goldschmidt

State of Indiana vs
Ripley County

Before me Martin Mollenkamp a Justice of the Peace in and for said County and State aforesaid personally appeared Fred A Flodter William Goldschmidt, V. W. Bigney, W. G. Bieby, Valentin Hartman, Emil Goldschmidt, Fred Goldschmidt, Otto C. Beer, W. R. Stephens, W. H. Bruns, George Räske & acknowledged the signing of the foregoing Articles of Association to be their voluntary act and deed.

Given under my hand and seal this the 18th day of October 1884.

Martin Mollenkamp 

SUNMAN FIREMAN'S ASSOCIATION

Misc Rec 3

Sunman Ripley County Indiana

Pg 6 & 7

October 18' 1884

We whose names are hereto subscribed for the purpose herein expressed organized ourselves into a voluntary Association to be known as the Sunman Fireman's Association, and by act in such name to hold, Real and personal property in furtherance of the objects of the Association, and to sue and be sued, and do all acts proper by and in the name as expressed.

The property of the contemplated Association consist of an Engine, Hose Reel and necessary accompaniment already purchased and paid for

The members of the Association shall select three directors who shall hold their office for the term of of one year from date of this election

Such Election shall be held in pursuance of a written notice to be posted in three public places in the town of Sunman in Ripley County Indiana, such notice to specify the time and place of the meeting for election of said Directors, not less than ten days from the time of posting the same

The Association shall elect a President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer the above named officers shall be elected in compliance with the Constitution adapted by the Association

The Treasurer shall give a bond of the penalty of Two Hundred Dollars payable to the Company in its Corporate name

The Capital stock of the Company shall be limited to One Hundred Dollars, Meetings of the Board of Directors may be held at any time upon the call of the President or Secretary and a meeting of the members of the Association may be held at any time upon the written notice of five active members giving five days notice of such intended meeting

The Association adapt for the incompleation reform the seal to be provided for the Secretary "The Sunman Fireman's Association"

The object of the incorporation is to prevent the destruction by fire of property in the Town of Sunman in Ripley County Indiana and vicinity

These Articles to take effect from the date of this filing in the office of the Recorder of Ripley County Indiana

Fred A Flodder	Fred Goldschmidt
Wm Goldschmidt	Otto C Beer
V. W. Bigney	W. R. Stephens
W. G. Bielby	W. W. Bruns
Valentine Hartman	George Rash
Emil Goldschmidt	

State of Indiana Jas
Ripley County

Before me Martin Mollenkamp a Justice of the Peace in and for said County and State afores and personally appeared Fred A Flodder, William Goldsmith, V.W. Bigney, W.G. Bielby, Valentine Hartman, Emil Goldsmidt, Fred Goldsmidt, Otto C. Beer, W.R. Stephens, W.W. Bruns, George Rash, and acknowledge the signing of the foregoing Articles of Association to this voluntary act and deed.

Given under my hand and seal this 18" day of
October 1884

Martin Mollenkamp seal
Justice of the Peace

History of emergency call reporting and communication of the Sunman Rural Fire Department

1. 1st reports of an emergency were by word of mouth to a department member.
2. A bell was purchased and installed on top of fire station on West Washington street, if a citizen needed assistance he must notify a fire department member, who in turn would go to fire station and ring the bell which could be heard all over town.
3. A outside fire siren was purchased and placed on top of engine house on West Washington Street, telephones were now prevalent and you could call a department member who could go to fire station and blow the siren.
4. Telephone wires were run to fire chief's house so he could blow siren Immediately from his home, 99% off the time the chief or his wife would dedicate themselves to be on call at all times to take emergency calls.
5. Thru an estate a civic minded man donated radio receivers for all firefighters to be placed in their homes. A two way radio was purchased for the fire chief's House, now he could notify any firefighter in time of need, thru a tone on the radio and then would put out a voice message.
6. As mentioned before to relieve the chief from staying at home and thru the local Telephone company and fire department and thru advanced technology, 10 phones in 10 different fire department houses were linked together and now one of the ten had to stay at home to answer an emergency call, and one of the ten also could set off the outside siren and set off tones of each fireman that had a radio.
7. Thru the years receivers were updated and the department purchased a tone Receiver and voice message receiver that each firefighter could carry on their belt, now they could receive a message and tone plus they could carry it with them 24 hours each day.
8. Along came 911 and now a message for assistance will go to the communication Center at Versailles and or Lawrenceburg and they in turn will tone department Out and give them a Voice message.
9. As this is written in the year 2007, each department member has a receiver they carry with them, 24 hours each day, all officers of the department have a two-way radio which puts them in communication with 911 dispatch where they can communicate with the center. Each fire department vehicle can converse with the Fire department headquarters or the 911 Center.

POINTS OF INTEREST SUNMAN FIRE SERVICE

The largest fire as mentioned before was the March 23, 1905 fire in downtown Sunman. Some interesting emergency runs that the Sunman Fire Department made were on November 7, 1938 the Edward Holzbacher home exploded resulting in the deaths of Mr. and Mrs. Holzbacher. The second largest fire in Sunman it was the Galbraith Saw Mill on May 16, 1942, this was located on the end of West Washington Street, Batesville assisted and both departments pumped water out of a pond at the site of the lumber mill, it was destroyed after continuous pumping for 10 hours. An act of heroism was by Mrs. Wilbur Bauman on August 15, 1945 when she rescued her small son and jumped from an upstairs window into a bush below and neither were seriously injured, the house was totally destroyed. A heartbreaking loss was on January 21, 1947 in zero weather at the San Francis home, three mile southeast of Sunman, was when the department had the house fire nearly under control and ran out of water, the house burned to the ground, in this era it would not happen with radio communication and neighboring departments. An interesting item would be the Louis Gillman home fire near St. Peters on March 12, 1948, the driver of the fire truck drove the engine down a ditch to keep from sliding off the slick roads on a steep hill near the fire scene. A fire of interest was the Freeman Giblin house fire in Sunman on April 24, 1951 destroying the home. On January 30, 1952 a home was lost on the Melvin Steinfert farm, 3 ½ mile west of Sunman, due to inadequate equipment, Indiana Rating Bureau would not allow No. 1 Pumper outside the town limits which started firemen and citizens to think about reliable equipment for the rural area. On June 10, 1953 Sunman & Milan departments worked to save the Stumpkes Corner Church where lightning struck the church.

A fire that should probably be recorded as the turning point in the fire service for the Sunman area was on November 11, 1953 at the Granville Back house fire, 7 miles southeast of Sunman, Firemen pumped about 2500 gallon of water on the fire from a cistern when today with its modern equipment, it could have been put out with 500 gallon of water, firemen holding fingers over the end of nozzles to conserve water, no fog nozzles and no water on trucks to make a quick attack on fire inspired firemen to take direct steps in forming a new department with new equipment, At this time there was no up to date equipment for the rural area and town equipment must not leave due to insurance reasons.

On April 7, 1954 in a driving rainstorm the Francis Wickemeyer barn was struck by lightning. Tremendous efforts were put forth to save other buildings after a barn fire was in progress at Homer Cash property on January 27, 1955. In the heat of summer time the barn burnt on the Estal Minneman farm on July 26, 1955, the department had a battle in saving the house. On October 1, 1955 a fire in an auto wreck one mile north of Penntown lead to the death of one of its occupants. 1 mile east of Penntown on State Road 46, the dates being April 5th and June 30th 1956 left 1 man dead and a large amount of property damage in the collision of two semi trucks in each accident.

On August 19, 1956 after driving over county roads for 6 mile, a barn fire with hay in it was burning after being struck by lightening, hard work by firefighters and neighbors saved the barn. Firefighters generally go to the scene of the fire but on February 26, 1958 the railroad called the department and said they were bringing a car to Sunman that was on fire. During the era of steam engines on the railroad numerous grass fires were started by engines burning coal and / or diesel fuel, it was not uncommon for one train to start several fires as they pulled the long hill east of Sunman. The department traveled 14 mile to put out a rail car on fire on August 16, 1958, this location was west of Guilford at a location called, Ross. A fire that is still described as humorous is the still fire, 2 mile northwest of Spades in a chicken house which brought State Police, Firemen, and Revenue men to the scene, firemen still talk about ducks that consumed some of the contents and were laying on their sides kicking their feet due to the effect of too much boozing, this occurred on December 16, 1958, following this fire at the same location on September 6, 1965 the barn burnt, a succession of fires continue on this property and on April 21, 1966 the John Sieg house was on fire where Mr. Sieg and another set of bones were found in the charred remains of the house, several unanswered questions still are not answered and a mystery will always surround this catastrophe. Paul Scholl had a barn fire on April 2, 1963. After driving 6 miles the department fought a house fire on November 10, 1964 which belonged to Fillmore Engle. The only major church fire the department was involved in was the Methodist Church at Manchester on December 28, 1967 where it was totally destroyed except the rear portion of the building. It was very cold on January 1, 1968 when the department traveled to the Arnold Gesell farm where the barn was on fire and numerous cattle were lost. A house fire occurred at the home of Robert Barnett on February 28, 1968 and the fire truck broke thru the bridge due to loose planks, no major damage occurred, other trucks traveled thru the field to get to fire. A fire that was related to labor dispute occurred at the George Rosemeyer farm on July 11, 1968 where the barn burnt. On December 5, 1968 brought the death of two people as Mrs. Willard Ballard and child perished in a house fire four mile northeast of Sunman on State Road # 46. On January 11, 1969, 5 mile southeast of Sunman, near Roberts Auction Barn a young man, Dale Lindon, suffocated and burned in a house fire, after escaping the fire he returned to get car keys and never came back out. A barn fire occurred at the Harris Mosmeier farm on March 10, 1971. Firefighters fought and saved the house on the Joe Hountz farm on June 30, 1971 after other outbuildings were on fire.

Knueven Bros store was struck by lightning on April 7, 1972 but quick action by firefighters save the store. Efficient work by firefighters and farmers on July 22, 1972 kept a barn fire from spreading to other buildings on the Kenneth Grossman farm. Sunman assisted Batesville department in fighting the Blanks Drug Store fire on January 4, 1973. On February 11, 1973 George Collier died in a house trailer fire, 1 ½ mile southwest of Sunman. An arson fire was determined and a conviction was accomplished in Sunman on December 29, 1973. Some frantic moments occurred when an auto was driven into main part of town, fueled by propane gas and it was leaking on May 18, 1974, firefighters evacuated a block area of town and shut off gas flow.

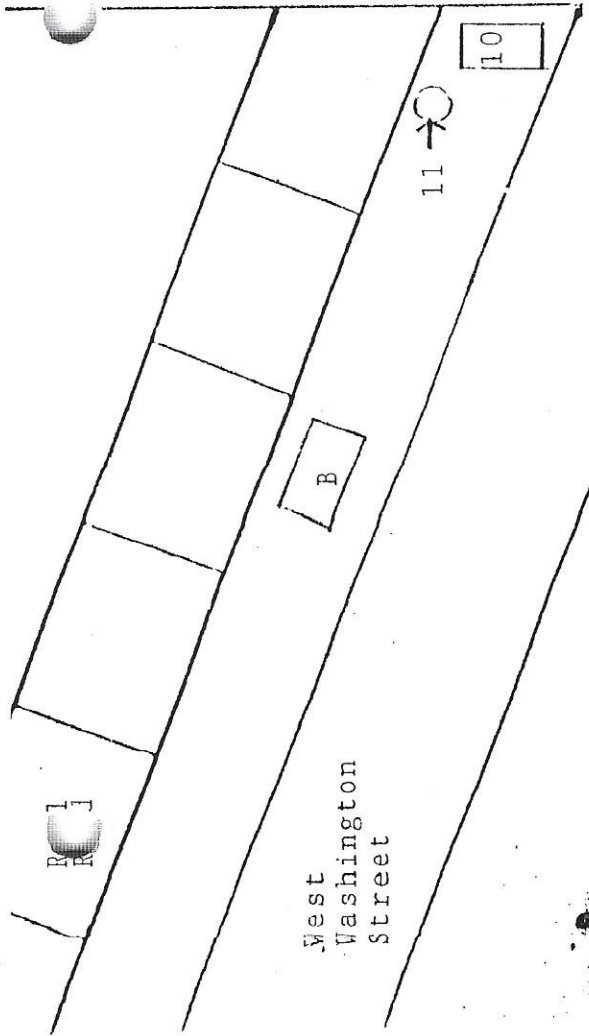
Firefighters traveled 13 mile to a semi tractor on fire on July 11, 1974 on I-74 and extinguished the fire, there was three semi's traveling piggy back, the back one was on fire. The department made their first run with the new extraction tools they had just recently acquired on January 20, 1975 on I-74 1 mile west of Batesville. The feed mill in Morris was on fire on November 17, 1975, Sunman and several departments assisted in containing the fire to the main building. An unusual fire was on December 24, 1976 when a pick up traveled about ½ mile off I-74 and then got stuck in a woods and caught fire. The department traveled 7 mile to the Clarence Jansing farm on April 28, 1977 to fight an outbuilding on fire and saved the barn which was close by. With deep snow drifts and snow the department traveled to the Glenn Robinson farm on January 20, 1978 and protected other buildings but lost the barn, all chauffeurs driving trucks did an excellent job in getting equipment to the scene. January 24, 1979 Pat Martin lost his barn to fire. The department traveled 20 mile to Versailles to perform extraction work on a 2 vehicle accident, 2 lives were lost, and the date was May 3, 1979. On November 27, 1980 the department fought a working house fire at Elmer Powell's residence. After traveling 8 mile to Yorkville on April 28, 1981 we found a house close to two other homes that we protected and saved, fire was at the David Rolfes residence. August Gindling barn burnt on November 21, 1981.

On October 18, 1982 a fire that smoldered for two days before breaking out was at the St. Peters Gym & School, it was extinguished and building is still in use today. At the John Willis home on April 14, 1983 a 40 mile per hour wind created problems in fighting this house fire, we had to push fire thru the house with the wind to get fire out, home was lost. A barn was lost on the Ron Fledderman farm on October 3, 1984. After traveling 10 mile firefighters lost a home in the Busse Church neighborhood on January 14, 1985, home belonged to Don Cleary. A fire run was made to the Cecil Vaughn home on October 21, 1986. Sunman Laundry Mat caught on fire on May 15, 1987, building is still in use. Sheldon Kroner house caught on fire on January 1, 1988. On February 9, 1989 at the E G Ammerman warehouse burned with a high dollar loss. Cecil Bauer lost his barn and all equipment in it, on November 15, 1989, this barn was excellent shape. On January 2, 1990 the Sunman department got involved in severe weather notification. On a very foggy night the St Peters restaurant burnt with a total loss, this was on January 29, 1991. Daniel Hildebrandt lost a piece of machinery when it struck a natural gas main and caught fire, this was on August 22, 1992. An excellent piece of firefighting was at the Ron Richardson home on May 5, 1993, when the home partially burnt. Dry manure burnt for 4 days before breaking out at the Thomas Vollet farm on September 24, 1993. At the John Retzner farm a man living at the residence lost his life when the house burnt on December 3, 1993, also lost in this blaze was a garage. While the firefighting efforts were in progress a house caught on fire at the Steve Delap home, Milan assisted in this house fire, with Morris, Oldenburg, and St Leon departments assisted at the Retzner fire.

On August 6th and 9th, 1994, the department encountered 2 fires, 3 days apart at the Schoettelkotte Store in Lawrenceville, the second being more serious than the first. After the investigation, we believe there was the third fire before any of the first two that went out by itself. On February 5, 1994 the Sunman Laundry Mat had a fire. Quick action by firefighters prevented a serious fire. September 28, 1996 a fire occurred at the Keven Vinson home, efficient and quick action prevented a major fire. A large fire occurred at the Leo Moster home on August 13, 1999 when nobody was home. On October 9, 1999 Tim Kramer experienced a fire in his home. James Stephanides had a fire in his home on March 3, 2001. 9 mile north of Sunman, with no one at home, on a dead end road, David Tepe had a house fire on April 3, 2001, the house was completely burnt before a neighbor saw smoke and went to investigate, and it also developed into a large grass fire. The church hall at Hubbles Corner on June 29, 2002 caught on fire, but was put out by firefighters, smoke and heat done a lot of damage. On April 22, 2005 Ron Allen had a building fire in Spades and he lost his life. A first for the Sunman Firefighters was a airplane crash with no fire, this occurred on July 25, 2005, in the area northwest of St. Peters, Gabe Hensley lost his life in crash. On August 31, 2007 at the home of Tom Slone in Manchester Township had a house fire, great work by Aurora, Manchester, and Sunman firefighters prevented a serious fire.

Several items of interest were, every year the ladies of the department have a Christmas party, there were 3 times we had fire runs just before the time was set to eat, 2 times we were able to eat late, 1 time we did not get to set down at fire station, some food was brought to scene of fire. At the start of this report in 1937 and until the earl 1970's grass and building fires were the runs we made. After 1970 accidents started to increase until now most of the runs are made to assist someone other than fire runs. Programs and training are welcomed, and firefighters have a great desire to better themselves and that is why they welcome training.

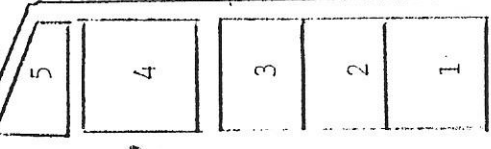
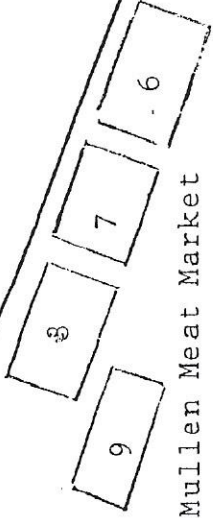
North
Meridian
Street



West
Washington
Street

11 → C

10



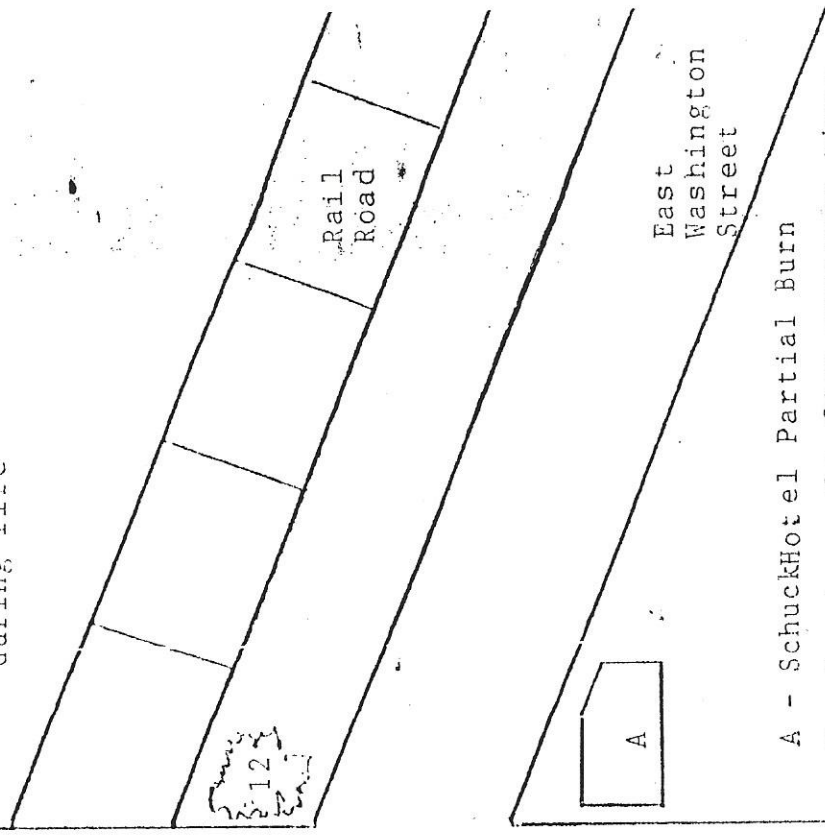
1. William McMullen Meat Market
2. William Osting Barber Shop
3. Vacant
4. Butler Livery Barn
5. Fred Brinkman Hotel & John Hashagen Barber Shop
6. Joe Wipple Residence & Saloon
7. Emery Heavy Residence
8. Ed Cook Residence & Saloon
9. William Huenke Barn & Tobbaco Store
10. Ed Behlmer Store & Residence
11. Railroad Water Tank
12. Grove of Trees

12 to 14 small outbuildings lost by fire

Total Loss \$ 40,000 \$ 13,00 covered by insurance

North

Cause: Ashes or disgarded cigar
Start; strong wind from southwest
then shifted to southeast
during fire



Rail
Road

East
Washington
Street

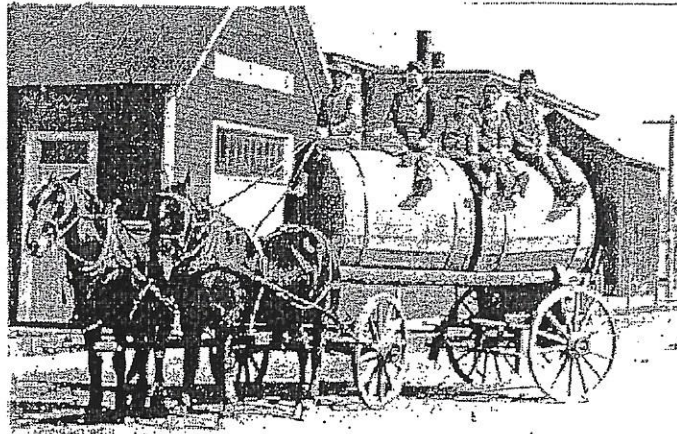
A - SchuckHotel Partial Burn

B - Depot caught fire numerous times
on roof, put out by railroad crew

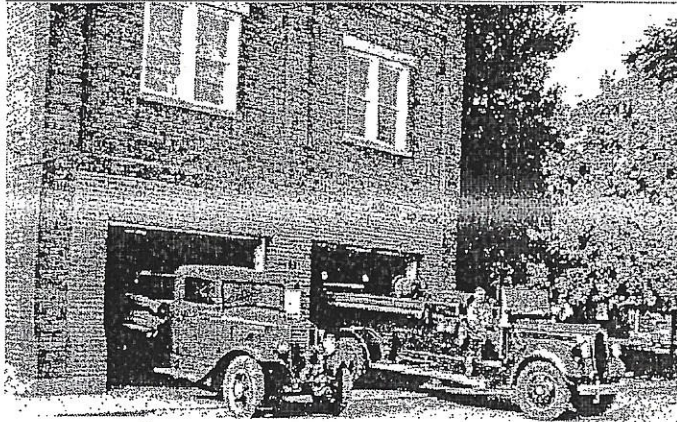
C - Location start of fire

South
Meridian
Street

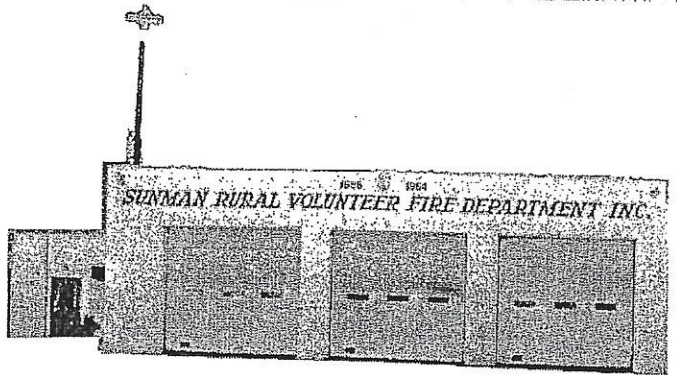
1903



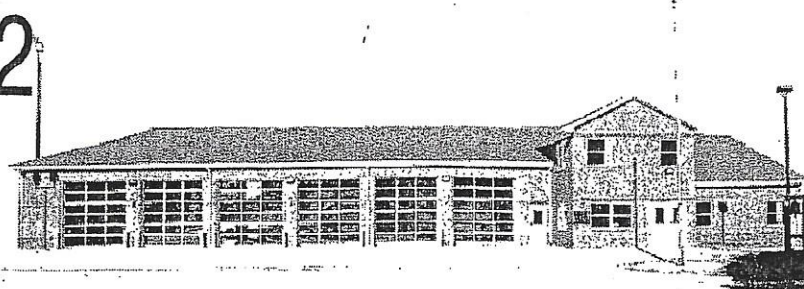
1948



1964



2002



The following are a list of firefighters who gave their time and served valiantly the Sunman community, if a firefighter served less than one year he would not be mentioned.

Name	Date of Employment	End of Employment
Fred Flodder		
William Goldschmidt		
W.W. Bigney		
W.G. Bielby		
Valentine Hartman		
Emil Goldschmidt		
Fred Goldschmidt		
Otto C. Beer		
W.R. Stephens		
W.W. Bruns		
George Rush		
Fred Grosekhouse		
Lewis Bruns		
Fred Dreyer		
J.P. Rimstedt		
Will Enders		
Henry Grosekhouse		
B.B. Gilmore		

Lewis Curran

John Schwendeman

Ervin Fultz

Edwin Woliung

Charles Hashagen

C.A. Marlin

Ed Dieselberg

Ed Mack

Norman Mendel

John Mack

Emery Heavey

Ed Berger

Howard Cook	6 - 1923	6 - 1973
Lewis Neukam	1 - 1924	12 - 1969
Harry Neukam	1 - 1924	12 - 1948
Ed Hill	1 - 1924	12 - 1956
Wilbur Hofmockel	1 - 1929	1 - 1956
Harry Zimmerman	1 - 1937	7 - 1952
Raymond Brownfield	1 - 1937	4 - 1965
Robert Miller	1 - 1938	1 - 1964
Al Brunzman	1 - 1938	12 - 1971

Ollie Wuellner	7 - 1944	1 - 1952
Maurice Naufarth	7 - 1944	1 - 1952
Clifford Selke	7 - 1948	11 - 1990
Carl Bruns	9 - 1949	
John Knueven Jr.	1 - 1950	12 - 1964
Earl Bruns	1 - 1950	1 - 1959
Freeman Giblin	10 - 1950	1 - 1963
Albert Bihr	10 - 1951	6 - 1973
Dallas Lattire	10 - 1951	11 - 1974
Joe Hartman	11 - 1951	2 - 1968
Russell Luhring	1 - 1952	1 - 1967
Ralph Neukam	1 - 1952	2 - 1968
Clarence Osburn	2 - 1952	4 - 1965
Robert Connelly	4 - 1952	5 - 1956
Mervin Luhring	6 - 1952	10 - 1982
Joe Lipps	7 - 1952	2 - 1969
Kenneth Selke	12 - 1953	11 - 1990
Arthur Theabold	12 - 1953	8 - 1966
Joe Allgeier	12 - 1953	1 - 1964
Howard Osburn	12 - 1953	1 - 1964
William Klusman	1 - 1955	3 - 1992
Irvin Kammeyer	9 - 1956	11 - 1987

Joe Hountz Sr.	9 – 1956	5 – 1960
Frank Allgeier	9 – 1956	1 – 1963
Paul Ashcraft	3 – 1959	9 – 1967
Paul Nedderman	5 – 1959	3 – 1993
James Brashear	12 – 1961	1 – 1978
Carl Anderson	12 – 1961	12 – 1982
Charles Carson	12 – 1961	4 – 1965
Roger Engle	2 – 1961	4 – 1965
Willard Knueven	7 – 1963	6 – 1980
Jerry Darling	7 – 1963	9 – 1968
Cornelius Eckstein	1 – 1964	1 – 1965
Roger Lang	4 – 1965	10 – 1996
Robert Lauber	4 – 1965	2 – 1968
Robert Guenther	4 – 1965	8 - 1966
Sylvester Volk	4 – 1965	8 – 1966
Les Harmon	1 – 1967	11 – 1990
Wilbur Gesell	1 - 1967	9 – 1970
Ernest Bischoff	1 – 1967	1 – 1972
Ed Fenton	1 - 1967	9 – 1978
James Beneker	1 – 1967	9 – 1968
Robert Jones	5 – 1967	5 – 1968
Paul Hess	3 – 1968	12 – 1969

Tom Fledderman	3 – 1968	4 – 1980
Clarence Weber	3 – 1968	7 – 1994
Don Federle	12 – 1969	1 – 1981
John Retzner	5 – 1970	6 – 1998
Eugene Bischoff	5 – 1970	6 – 1987
Ken Konradi	11 – 1971	7 – 1980
Dan Smith Jr.	11 – 1971	1 – 2005
Don Harmon	11 – 1971	7 – 1977
Donald Beetz	2 – 1973	9 – 1984
Jeff Zimmerman	10 – 1973	2 – 1980
Larry Bauman	3 – 1975	5 – 1982
Jim Powell	3 – 1975	9 – 1978
John Hudepohl	3 – 1975	12 – 1982
Mark Harmon	1 – 1978	2 – 1980
Kenneth Smith	1 – 1978	2 – 1996
Mark Konradi	1 – 1978	10 – 1990
Henry Eckstein	1 – 1979	6 – 1999
Gary Lattire	1 – 1979	8 – 1986
David Smith	1 – 1979	
Tom Ferry	3 – 1980	7 – 1986
George Hoff	3 – 1980	8 – 1996
Robert Miles Jr.	9 - 1980	12 – 1997

Jack Luhring	9 - 1980	1 - 2005
Virgil Woluing	9 - 1980	12 - 1984
Joe Hountz Jr.	4 - 1982	1 - 1991
Glenn Denni	4 - 1982	6 - 1985
Alvin Hoff	4 - 1982	12 - 2005
David Simmons	4 - 1982	8 - 1994
Tom Zins	8 - 1982	
Warren Bruns	9 - 1985	
Mike Demiglio	9 - 1985	
Ron Zins	9 - 1985	9 - 1977
Dan Doll	6 - 1987	
Jim Doll	6 - 1987	1 - 2006
Leroy Hountz	6 - 1987	
Ed Schoening	6 - 1987	1 - 1991
Don Craig	6 - 1987	1 - 1997
Nick Forthofer	6 - 1987	1 - 1993
William Strickland	11 - 1988	4 - 1995
Gerald Corson	11 - 1988	11 - 1998
William Craig	4 - 1991	
Henry Miles	4 - 1991	11 - 1993
Douglas Butt	4 - 1991	
Steve Noble	4 - 1991	3 - 1994

Scott Corbin	4 – 1991	
Michael Boyce	4 – 1991	12 – 1995
Gene Allen	5 – 1993	1 – 2002
Gerald Hartman	5 – 1993	3 – 2001
Tim Miles	2 – 1994	3 – 2001
Brian Noble	2 – 1994	1 - 2005
James Darringer	1 – 1996	
Kurt Doll	1 – 1996	
Jamie Riddle	1 – 1996	12 - 2006
John Loichinger	1 – 1996	1 – 2006
Mike Fledderman	1 – 1996	1 - 2003
Tom Burns	1 – 1997	
Dan Eckstein	11 - 1997	
Jeff Gill	11 – 1997	
Brian Smith	11 – 1997	2 – 2004
Ron Webster	11 – 1997	
Steve Noble	4 – 1991	3 – 1994
Terry Knueven	12 – 1999	
Mike McFadden	12 – 1999	1 – 2002
Cecil Spaulding	12 – 1999	
Kevin Callahan	1 – 2003	2 – 2004
David Stutz	1 – 2003	

Jared Wolf	1 – 2003
Jermy Smith	1 – 2003
Keith Huster	9 – 2004
Andrew Wolf	9 – 2004
Daniel R. Smith	10 – 2004
Stuart Schneider	12 – 2004
Kimberly Ripperger	12 – 2004
Jordon Craig	4 - 2005
Chris Hughes	5 - 2005
Ashley Hountz	3 - 2006
Anthony Dimeglio	3 - 2006
Tim Reder	5 - 2006
Dave Kraus	5 - 2006
Ron Powell	8 - 2007
Justin Kincer	8 - 2007

Firefighter Cadets

Nicholas Locke	5 – 2006
Christopher J. Decker	6 – 2006
Peter Thomas	8 – 2006
Cody S. Medley	3 - 2007
Theodore D. Schneider	9 - 2007