

*City of South Milwaukee*  
*Fire Department*  
*Annual Report - 2013*



*Serving the Community with*  
*Commitment ♦ Honor ♦ Compassion*





*City of . . .*

# South Milwaukee Fire Department

929 Marshall Court, South Milwaukee, WI 53172

Honorable Mayor Erik Brooks  
Common Council Members  
Police and Fire Commissioners  
Citizens of South Milwaukee

Ladies and Gentlemen:

On behalf of the dedicated members of the South Milwaukee Fire Department, it is with great pleasure that I present our 2013 Annual Report. This report is but a brief snapshot of the tremendous amount of hard work put forth by the members of our department. Once again, the members of the South Milwaukee Fire Department demonstrated their commitment to providing an exceptionally high level of service and standard of coverage with the limited resources at hand.

Call volume remained relatively stable during 2013 with a slight increase in the number of emergency medical service (EMS) calls. This increase is something that is being realized across our country as the demographics of our society change to reveal an aging population. While the number of incidents classified as “building fires” was less, the number of actual working fires increased. Our department requested mutual aid from our neighbors for 7 working structure fires in 2013. Dollar loss from these fires remained relatively unchanged when compared to 2012. Unfortunately, the fire department experienced its first fire fatality in a residential house fire in over 10 years in a fire that occurred on December 21<sup>st</sup> in a single-family home that claimed the life of an 80-year male. The cause of this fire remains undetermined.

One category of responses that was reduced significantly was the number of false alarms we responded to. While there exists no scientific data to support my theory, I firmly believe the proactive work of our Fire Inspectors is partially responsible for this through their focus on assuring that fire alarm and sprinkler systems are maintained properly through proper testing and inspection. In addition, strict adherence to a requirement that contractors must notify the fire department when they are working on systems has worked to reduce the number of alarm activations, as well.

In closing, the South Milwaukee Fire Department will continue to answer the call and maintain its high level of service delivery as we respond to the needs of the community as an all-hazard, all-risk department. Our focus will remain on community risk reduction, fire prevention, public education, and citizen interaction. The members of the South Milwaukee Fire Department and I would like to thank former Mayor Tom Zepecki, recently-elected Mayor Erik Brooks, the members of the Common Council and Police and Fire Commission, and our citizens for all their hard work and continued support.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Joseph Knitter  
Fire Chief

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*Dedicated to Excellence in Public Service*



**Residential House Fire  
North Chicago Avenue  
September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2013**

South Milwaukee firefighters arrived to find fire coming from first-floor windows on the front of this single-family residence. All occupants were out and accounted for. Although an aggressive interior attack limited the fire spread, damage to the house from smoke and heat was extensive.

**Residential House Fire  
Blakewood Avenue  
June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2013**

South Milwaukee firefighters arrived to find a fire in the kitchen of this single-family residence. While all occupants were out, a small dog was unaccounted for and was located by crews searching the dwelling. Interior attack crews contained the fire, but smoke damage was extensive due to the vaulted ceiling and open concept design of the house.



## *The Firehouse Dog*

It all began in the days of stagecoaches. Horse theft was so common back then that many stagecoach drivers strung a hammock between two stalls at night, then slept behind their horses to guard against thieves.

But, if the driver owned a Dalmatian, he could sleep in the house or the stagecoach hotel. Why? Because it was observed that Dalmatians formed an amazingly tight bond with horses. When they became close as with a team, no stranger would dare lay a hand on them.

Once the knowledge of this trait spread, more coach drivers went to great lengths to get Dalmatians to watch their teams. In fact, this practice became so common that Dalmatians were first called "coach dogs". They were used by coach drivers centuries ago in England, Scotland and Wales.

After witnessing this behavior, firemen realized it would be beneficial for them to use Dalmatians for similar reasons. When the horse-drawn fire apparatus reached the fire, the fireman left the dog to guard the team as well as the equipment on the apparatus. It is also well known that fighting fires was a very competitive event back in the day and the theft of tools and equipment was commonplace. That is, unless there was a Dalmation standing guard.

Since every firehouse back then had a set of fast horses to pull the pumper wagon, it became common for each group of firemen to keep a Dalmatian. The spotted dogs not only guarded the firehouse horses, they kept them company during their long, boring waits between fires. And, when they took off for a fire, the dog would run alongside the pumper.

The horses are gone from the fire stations today, but the Dalmatians aren't. The tradition has been carried on, and it may be as much for the looks and appeal of these beautiful dogs as it is for their nostalgic tie to yesteryear.

Finally . . . no . . . the South Milwaukee Fire Department does not have a mascot dog, it has to rely on it's trusty stuffed Dalmatians that ride up front on both of it's primary fire apparatus!



## *Mission Statement*

THE MISSION OF THE SOUTH MILWAUKEE FIRE DEPARTMENT IS TO PROTECT LIVES AND PROPERTY FROM THE ADVERSE EFFECTS OF FIRES, SUDDEN MEDICAL EMERGENCIES AND EXPOSURE TO HAZARDOUS CONDITIONS. THIS COMMITMENT IS ACHIEVED BY DEVELOPING, PROMOTING, AND MAINTAINING EFFECTIVE FIRE SUPPRESSION AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE. WE WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE THESE QUALITY SERVICES THROUGH EDUCATION AND TRAINING TO ALL WHO LIVE, WORK, VISIT OR INVEST HERE.

## **Department Information**

The South Milwaukee Fire Department is an all-risk, all-hazard department that provides fire suppression, rescue and emergency medical services to an estimated 21,424 residents who reside within an area of 4.78 sq. miles. In addition, we respond on a mutual aid basis to any community as part of the Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS) and on a reciprocal agreement program known as a “Working Still” to the surrounding communities of Cudahy, Oak Creek and Saint Francis, and the 128<sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Base at Mitchell International, for all structure fires. In return, these communities respond to our city when requested.

*SMFD Organized – 1893*



# City Officials

## Elected Officials

**Mayor Thomas Zepecki**

**Craig Maass**  
District 1 Alderperson

**Frank Van Dusen**  
District 1 Alderperson

**Ray Navarro**  
District 2 Alderperson

**R. Patrick Stoner**  
District 2 Alderperson

**Lisa Pieper**  
District 3 Alderperson

**Joseph Bukowski**  
District 3 Alderperson

**David Bartoshevich**  
District 4 Alderperson

**Erik Brooks**  
District 4 Alderperson

**James Shelenske**  
City Clerk

**Joe Murphy**  
City Attorney

**Karen Skowronski**  
City Treasurer

**Bill Fenger**  
Municipal Judge

## Police and Fire Commission

Darrell Francis, DDS

Jeff Plale

Peggy Clark

Patrick Moran

Mark Milinovich



# Department Personnel

Joseph Knitter  
Fire Chief

Gail Kaebisch  
Administrative Secretary

## Black Shift

Capt. John Czajkowski  
Lt. Daniel Lang  
FF/EMT Ryan Behling  
FF/P Kurt Egner  
FF/P Michael Olson  
FF/P Jerre Schlax  
FF/P John Rhinesmith  
FF/P Scott Wallis

## Green Shift

Capt. Glen McCoy<sup>1</sup>  
Lt. John Frost<sup>2</sup>  
FF/EMT Ron Wainio  
FF/P Tad Beutin<sup>3</sup>  
FF/P Brian Bieganski  
FF/P Andy Mahn  
FF/P Ben Olberding  
FF/P Tom Reid

## Red Shift

Capt. James Dorangrichia  
Lt. Craig Boschke  
FF/EMT Jason Helmlinger  
FF/EMT Ryan Kurz  
FF/P Steven Bartlein  
FF/P Michael Landgraf  
FF/P Ryan Wendt

<sup>1</sup>Promoted – May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2013

<sup>2</sup>Promoted – June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013

<sup>3</sup>Retired – June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2013

## Paid-on-Call Personnel

FF/EMT Alex Andryk  
FF/EMT Ryan Porter  
FF/EMT Kyle Quirk

When fully staffed, the South Milwaukee Fire Department maintains a three-platoon system utilizing three shifts of 8 personnel each on a 24-hour, 7-day-a-week schedule. Off-duty personnel, including paid-on-call firefighters, are also notified by pager when staffing levels at the station fall below a pre-established minimum or when the department responds to a report of an emergency incident that will require additional personnel to mitigate.

# Special Assignments

Capt. John Czajkowski	Apparatus / Facilities Maintenance Personnel Records Radios & Communication Facilities and Grounds
Capt. Jim Dorangrichia	Training Coordination Health & Safety Reports & Policies Personnel Protective Equipment
Captain Glen McCoy	EMS Coordination Information Technology Electronic Patient Care Reporting
Lt. Daniel Lang	EMS Coordination
Lt. Craig Boschke	Public Education
Lt. John Frost	Radios & Communications
FF/P Kurt Egner	Fire Inspection
FF/EMT Ryan Kurz	Fire Inspection
FF/P Brian Bieganski	Fire Inspection

Check out our website at . . .

[www.smfdwi.org](http://www.smfdwi.org)

“Like” us on Facebook . . .



# Emergency Medical Services Report

Fire Department-based Emergency Medical Services (EMS) continues to be a major part of our response profile. The central location of the fire station allows for minimal response times of specialized equipment and well-trained personnel. By utilizing a flexible staffing model, the South Milwaukee Fire Department is able to provide emergency care to the Paramedic level on any given call. A Basic Life Support (BLS) ambulance is available when Paramedic staffing is unavailable. Citizens in South Milwaukee benefit from a high level of service when requesting Emergency Medical Care.

## TOTAL EMS RESPONSES \*2523

### Total ALS / PFR / BLS Responses

\* includes ALS out-of-city responses

<b>1447 - Transports to St. Luke's - South Shore Hospital</b>	<b>145 - Transports to St. Luke's - Main Campus Hospital</b>
<b>51 - Transports to St. Francis Hospital</b>	<b>95 - Transports to Wheaton Franciscan (Franklin)</b>
<b>67 - Transports to Froedtert Hospital  7 - Transports by Flight For Life</b>	<b>25 - Transport to Children's  45 - Transports to other Hospitals</b>
<b>58 - Medical Examiner, Funeral Home</b>	<b>322 -Transport Refused</b>

### General Response Information – All Responses

2055 / 72%

**Responses to Homes / Residences**

291 / 10½%

**Responses to Nursing Homes / Residential Institutions /  
Medical Clinics**

273 / 9½%

**Response to Schools, Industry, Mercantile, Other**

241 / 8%

**Street/Highway, Outdoors**



***FIRE BASED EMS  
VITAL TO THE COMMUNITY!***

# Apparatus Report

One of the most frequent compliments paid to members of our Department is the extremely clean and well-kept appearance of both our apparatus and fire station. Visitors are often impressed at the condition of our apparatus and are shocked to learn their vintage and high level of use. Members of our Department take great pride in the care and maintenance of both the apparatus and fire station. We proudly care for the equipment and building that the citizens of South Milwaukee have entrusted us with.

Below is a list of our current apparatus and their relative condition:

<b>ID</b>	<b>Type of Apparatus</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Make / Model</b>	<b>Condition</b>
1663	Engine	2003	Pierce Enforcer – 1250 GPM Pump, 750 Gal. Water Tank	Very Good
1665	Engine	2007	Pierce Enforcer – 1250 GPM Pump, 750 Gal. Water Tank	Very Good
1671	Aerial Ladder	1995	Pierce Lance 105' Heavy Duty Ladder – 1500 GPM Pump, 300 Gal. Water Tank	Good
1680	Ambulance	2001	Med-Tech (Ford) Type III	Good
1681	Ambulance	2009	Med-Tech (Ford) Type I	Very Good
Med-10	Ambulance	2003	Med-Tech (International)	Fair
1692	Chief's Car	2009	Ford Escape	Excellent
1693	Gator	2003	6 x 4 Wheel Drive Utility Cart	Very Good
1694	Rescue Raft	2006	14' Mercury Inflatable w/ 25 HP Outboard	Very Good
1695	Rescue Boat	2010	25.6' Steiger Craft Twin 150 HP Suzuki 4 stroke	Excellent
1696	SUV	2007	Ford Expedition	Fair
1697	Pick-up Truck	1995	GMC ¾ Ton Utility Truck	Fair
1698	Mini-pumper	2008	Pierce (Ford) – F550 150 GPM Pump, 250 Gal. Water Tank	Very Good
1699	Rescue Trailer	1993	14' Pace American	Good



# Training Report

The Training Bureau is managed by the Department Training Officer whose primary responsibility is to organize, develop and schedule training for all department members in compliance with requirements and industry standards. The training goal is to provide all employees with quality training that is specific to their job description and needs, providing them with the knowledge, skills and abilities to fulfill the mission of the department. Funding for training is provided by a budget line item that not only reflects the City's commitment to maintaining well trained employees, but the department's dedication to providing the best trained "customer-service" delivery force available.

Training is provided to all shifts on a Monday through Saturday basis by their respective Captain, Lieutenant or another carefully chosen "expert" in the topic. Much of the training information is taken from the International Fire Service Training Association (IFSTA) texts or based on NFPA standards and locally or nationally recognized best practices. Because of the unique cross-staffing format utilized by the department, members are cross trained in all aspects of every position.

Additional training activities take place at locations remote from the fire station utilizing outside resources. During 2012, the training listed below was conducted department-wide:

- Rescue boat operations and open water rescue training was conducted at the South Milwaukee Yacht Club and Lake Michigan.
- Additional open water rescue training at the South Milwaukee Middle School pool.
- Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) Confidence Course and Firefighter Survival training was conducted using our props.



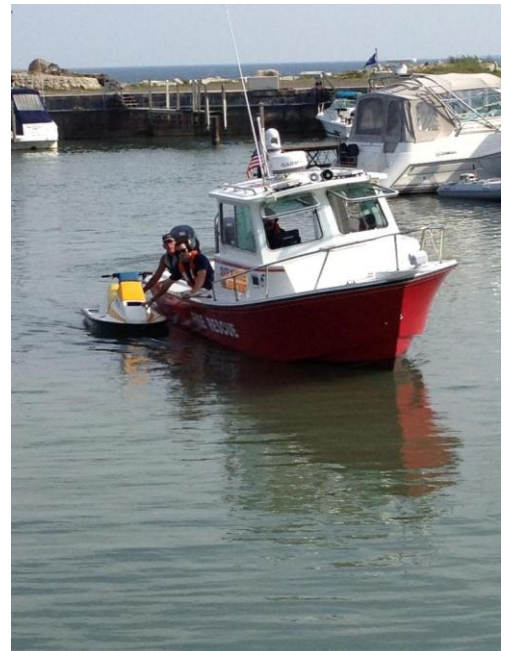
## South Milwaukee Rescue Boat

The South Milwaukee Fire Department operates a rescue boat kept ready to deploy with the cooperation of the South Milwaukee Yacht Club, who graciously provide a mooring slip. The boat, which was acquired with money from a Port Security Grant provided by the Urban Area Security Initiative, is for assisting people in emergencies and does not have firefighting capabilities. While the United States Coast Guard maintains the primary responsibility for safety on Lake Michigan, our boat provides for a much quicker response for persons in distress, especially considering the popularity of the South Milwaukee Yacht Club and the Bender Park Boat Launch.



Steiger 25' Rescue Boat equipped with state-of-the-art electronics including Forward Looking InfraRed (FLIR) and bottom and side-scan SONAR.

Members tow a distressed Personal Water Craft (PWC) back in to the harbor with the lone operator on board SMFD's 25' Steiger Rescue Boat.



# Fire Department Values Statement

1. **Customer Service** – We will be responsive to our customers needs, striving to provide high quality services in a respectful and courteous manner.
2. **Commitment to Excellence** – We continuously strive to improve our services and maintain a strong desire to serve the community with the courage to act.
3. **Integrity** – Our everyday actions and decisions reflect the highest standards of honesty, integrity and trustworthiness.
4. **Responsibility and Accountability** – Through innovation, conservation and cooperation, we use our resources to efficiently and effectively enhance our services. We are responsible for our actions and decisions.
5. **Teamwork** – We achieve common goals and solve problems through interaction with our internal and external customers.
6. **Safety** – While providing for the safety of our community, we work safely with an emphasis on safe practices, fitness, wellness and survival.
7. **Community Diversity** – We recognize the value of a diverse community in strengthening our organization and our service to the public.
8. **Professional Development** – Our personnel support and achieve high quality training and education on a daily basis, increasing efficiency and effectiveness by enhancing our professional potential and mentoring future leaders within the organization.
9. **Professionalism** – We strive to maintain a high level of professionalism and dedication in our service to the community, city, organization and ourselves through the development and adherence to recognized policies, rules and regulations.



# Public Education Report

The South Milwaukee Fire Department continues to pride itself on an interactive public education program.

Our philosophy is that fire safety starts early on; building strong foundations in education. Each fall, students in the local schools are visited by our firefighters. Elementary students in kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade are given fire safety programs during the annual National Fire Prevention Week. When students reach the 5<sup>th</sup> grade, they are given a more advanced Fire Safety Program that focuses on preparation for their adolescent years and the importance of home/fire safety. The 5<sup>th</sup> graders are assigned take home projects, where family involvement is encouraged. The students are also taught general home safety, such as general first aid and burn care, as many of the children are reaching babysitting age.

**608**

**K-4, K-5 & 1<sup>st</sup> Grade  
Students who took part in  
fire safety presentations**

**205**

**5<sup>th</sup> Graders who participated  
in the 6-week fire safety  
program**

**185**

**Fire Station Tour  
Participants**

**60**

**Fire Extinguisher  
Instruction Participants**

## **National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Emmitsburg, Maryland**

Constructed in 1981, the 7-foot stone monument features a sculpted Maltese Cross, the traditional symbol of the fire service. An engraved plaque on the monument bears a message from President Ronald W. Reagan. At the base of the monument an eternal flame symbolizes the spirit of all firefighters - past, present and future. Plaques encircling the monument list the names of the men and women of the fire service who have died in service to their communities since 1981. Whenever a firefighter dies in the line-of-duty, fire officials post a notice of the death at the monument and lower flags at the site to half-staff.





# Fire Inspection Report

Fire inspection duties are completed by shift members assigned to each of the three shifts and are conducted during the course of their regular duty day. This arrangement often presents a formidable scheduling challenge due to an increased call volume, ever-increasing training requirements and other obligations to our community.

Lt. John Frost, FF/P Brian Bieganski, FF/P Kurt Egner and FF/EMT Ryan Kurz, who are State of Wisconsin Certified Fire Inspectors, each conduct fire safety code inspections in accordance with Chapter 27 - *Fire Prevention, Protection, and Control* of the City's Municipal Code and the State of Wisconsin Administrative Code, Chapters 61 through 65, as overseen by the Department of Safety and Professional Services. The Inspection Bureau also works in close cooperation with the City's Building Inspection and Health Departments to mitigate other health and safety code violation matters that impact the quality of life for the residents of and visitors to the City of South Milwaukee. Also, upgrades, repairs and new sprinkler and alarm system installations are reviewed by a private consultant who often accompanies the Inspectors to the job-site for plan review and testing purposes.

**814**

**Bi-annual fire inspections conducted**

**34**

**Re-inspections conducted**

**331**

**Violations found**



## **Inspection Responsibilities**

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**FF/P Egner**

**Commercial**

**Residential attached to Commercial**

**Lt. Frost / FF/P Bieganski**

**Residential**

**City, County & Federally-owned properties**

**FF/EMT Kurz**

**Industrial**

**Manufacturing**

**Churches, Schools**

**Nursing Homes**

**Doctor / Dental Offices**

- ***Smoke & CO Detectors and Fire Sprinklers Save Lives*** •

***Please see our Web Site for information on Carbon Monoxide (CO) detectors.***

## Response Statistics

	2010	2011	2012	2013
<b>TOTAL CALLS</b>	<b>2985</b>	<b>2968</b>	<b>2931</b>	<b>2869</b>
<b>EMS Calls</b>	<b>2464</b>	<b>2426</b>	<b>2494</b>	<b>2523</b>
Basic Life Support Incidents	1029	1054	1225	1202
Advanced Life Support Incidents	821	872	959	775
ALS (requests) outside of So. Milw.	503	500	(440)	546
EMS other fire / support response	111		310	---
<b>Fire Incidents</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>47</b>
Building Fire	32	28	44	23
Cooking fire	7	7	9	5
Rubbish / Trash Fire / Dumpster	10	13	10	9
Grass / Brush Fire	14	13	10	2
Other		10	12	8
<b>Hazardous Conditions</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>92</b>
Vehicle Accident Clean-up	20	13	36	52
Carbon Monoxide Invest.	21	25	7	4
Electrical Problem / Power line	7	17	13	10
Chemical Leak / Spill	3	7	7	5
Natural Gas Leak	12	13	9	16
Other	-	6	1	5
<b>Service /Good Intent</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>152</b>
Smoke or Odor Removal	10	6	9	11
Unauthorized Burning	26	27	32	23
Smoke detector / Other / Invest	75	27	97	118
<b>False Alarms</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>47</b>
System Activation – Malfunction	14	19	24	18
System Activation – Unintentional	26	28	31	16
System Activation – Malicious	7	5	3	5
Systems - Other	21	21	16	8
<b>Other Incidents</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>8</b>

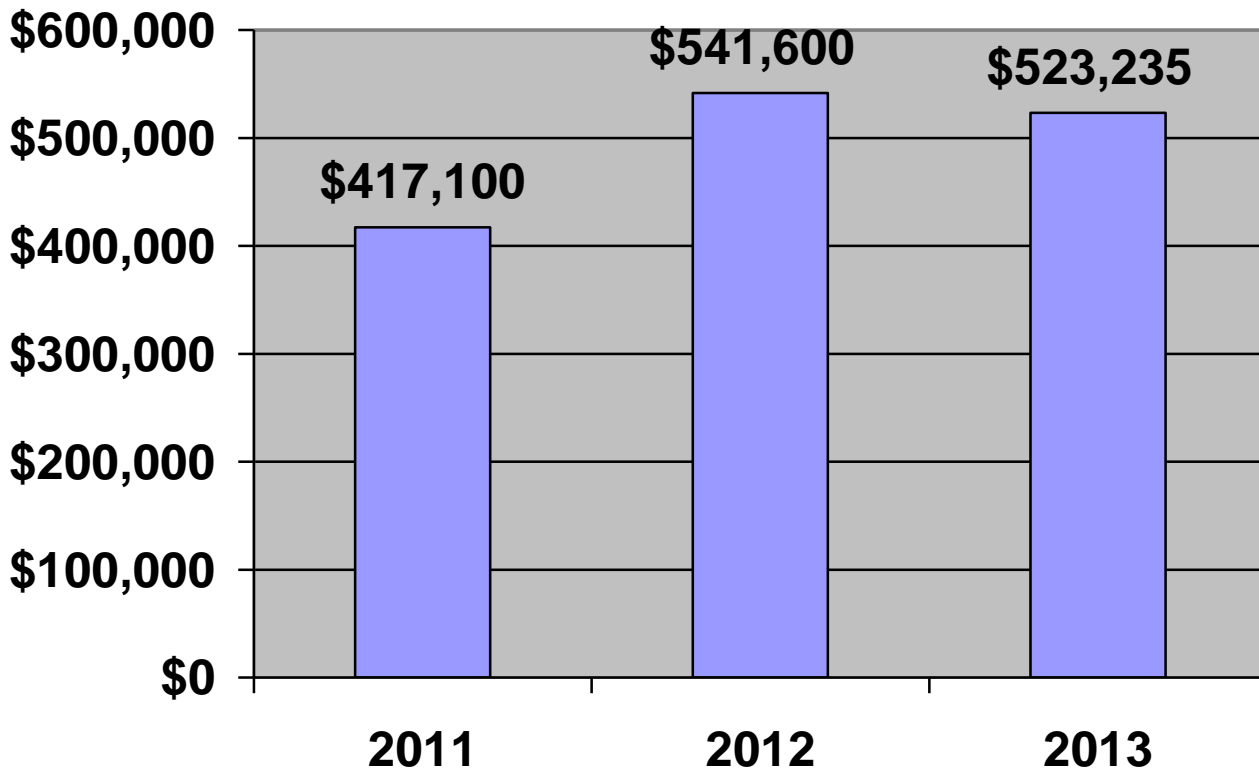
Note: Due to a change in statistic gathering methods, individual categories have been re-identified.

## Response Trends

To properly understand the statistics provided on this page, one must understand that the categorizing of incident responses is subject to both the efforts of the person writing the report and the methods used to identify the appropriate code assigned to an incident.

## Dollar Loss

In addition to the actual number of emergency and non-emergency incidents that our personnel respond to, one of the most sought after statistics is that of the dollar loss to physical property due to damage from fire. In the past, the justification for the existence of a fire department was based on how great this dollar loss was. Now, because of all of the ancillary responsibilities of our personnel, the effectiveness of a department is based on the amount of property that was saved through aggressive fire suppression and prevention efforts. In 2013, the City of South Milwaukee had a moderately busy year with a slight decrease in dollar loss from 2012 with a total dollar loss estimated at \$523,235. It must also be understood that this number is a very rough estimate as actual losses paid by insurance companies are considerably higher and involve other related expenses like replacement of furnishings and lodging, etc.



*Working*  
**Smoke Alarms**  
**Save lives !**



## Photos



Firefighters responded to a well-involved fire in a multi-family apartment building and encountered flames coming from these windows upon arrival.



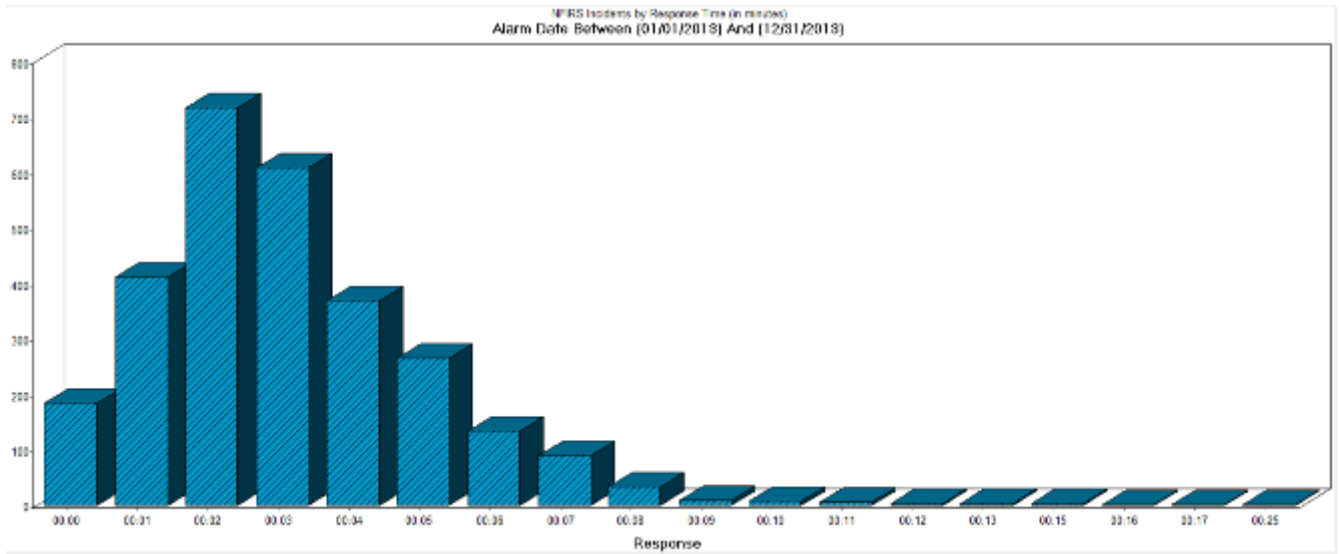
Interior view of a hallway leading past the fire apartment into a neighboring one.

Firefighter/Paramedic Mike Olson holding a dog rescued from a house fire. The dog was found hiding under a bed and was saved due to the thorough search methods of our personnel.



# Response Time Analysis

In 2001, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) released a standard for the *Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments*, known as NFPA 1710. In this standard, the NFPA established a minimum response time objective of four minutes or less for the arrival of the first arriving engine company at a fire suppression incident or the arrival of an emergency medical unit with first responder or higher level capability at an emergency medical incident 90% of the time. As is shown by the following graph, the South Milwaukee Fire Department is in compliance with this nationally-accepted performance standard. In 2013, the response time average was 3.02 minutes for the first responding apparatus to arrive on scene.



\*It is important to note that this graph reflects *ALL* responses, both emergency and non-emergency, and provides no means to account for the errant inputting of data or calls delayed because of absolute low priority. Additionally, with the Mutual Aid MABAS system, South Milwaukee resources can be requested to areas as far away as North Shore and beyond, thus reflecting some of the extended response times.



## A Lesson to be Learned

People often question why fire safety experts recommend that bedroom doors be kept closed when people are asleep. The picture below clearly demonstrates how the simple routine of sleeping with your bedroom door closed could save your life. By looking at the picture, you can clearly see how a closed door kept the dangerous smoke at bay, affording extra time to any occupants to shelter-in-place or exit through an available window. Take special note of the soot-laden walls, carpet and door in the outer hallway in comparison to the nearly pristine items inside the room.

