



# WHEELING FIRE DEPARTMENT



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## 2017 ANNUAL REPORT

**Wheeling Fire Department**  
2017 Annual Report

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Photo – Front cover

Jan. 2, 2017

Fire – Virginia Street



# WHEELING FIRE DEPARTMENT

2126 Market Street • Wheeling, WV 26003



Larry Helms, Chief of Department

Mr. Robert Herron, City Manager  
City of Wheeling  
1500 Chapline Street  
Wheeling WV 26003

Dear Mr. Herron,

Please review the 2017 Annual Report for the City of Wheeling Fire Department.

The Wheeling Fire Department continues to meet the level of service our citizens have become accustomed to. We have even accelerated some areas of our public service training programs. In 2017, the WFD responded to 6,648 calls for service. Of these, 63% were Rescue and Emergency Medical Service calls.

The City of Wheeling Fire Department continues to search for funding sources that will allow us to accomplish our goals. Our efforts in Training, Fire Prevention, Investigations, and Vehicle Maintenance keep our members sharp, the equipment ready, and make for a safer community. One exciting change was the implementation of electronic emergency medical reporting. This method saves time in the field, enhances our ability to keep more accurate records, and will boost our data return to assist in planning and trends.

Continued training, new technology, and the dedication of our personnel have proven to serve our department well. Once again, the Wheeling Fire Department has received recognition from the American Heart Association for outstanding services related to pre-hospital heart attack care. The WFD earned the Mission Lifeline Silver Plus rating – an award given to only four agencies in West Virginia. Statistically, it puts our department on track to be the first in West Virginia to receive the Gold rating in 2018.

Our members continue to assist with the expansion of our Wheeling Island Training Facility – adding props for skills training, as well as, expansion for storage. This facility has become a great asset to the Wheeling Fire Department's training program. It also benefits departments from the surrounding area. We continue to receive the support of West Virginia Public Service Training (formerly known as RESA) in our effort to provide up-to-the-minute training opportunities for firefighters.

With your support and that of the City Council, we realized the replacement of two much needed staff vehicles. 2018 Ford Police Utility vehicles replaced my 2004 Chevrolet Impala and the Duty Chief's 2012 Ford Expedition. Plans for future fleet improvements are being made as well.

I would be remiss to not recognize our firefighters for their behind-the-scenes dedication to the community. They are involved in fundraisers supporting the Muscular Dystrophy Association, Breast Cancer Awareness, Augusta Levy, and numerous other charitable projects. They actively promote firefighter and city legislative concerns; and they also participate in programs which directly benefit Wheeling's youth.

The City of Wheeling Fire Department is grateful for the continued support of your office and the City Council. We will continue to prepare ourselves for any emergency scenario, including Haz-Mat and Swift Water, that may arise. We will respond promptly to the needs of those who live in and visit our great city. And we will strive to provide the best possible care to all.

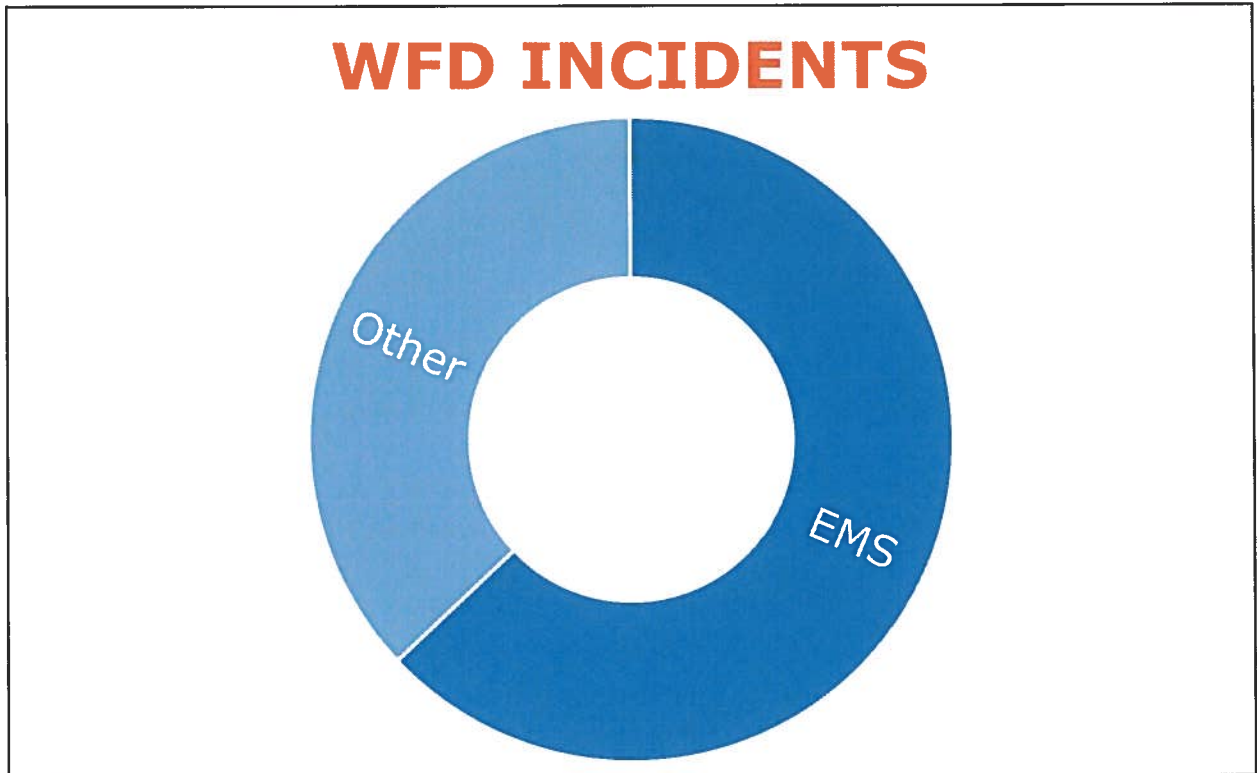
Respectfully yours,



Larry S. Helms  
Fire Chief, Wheeling Fire Department



**63%** of 2017 WFD calls were  
Rescue & Emergency Medical Services

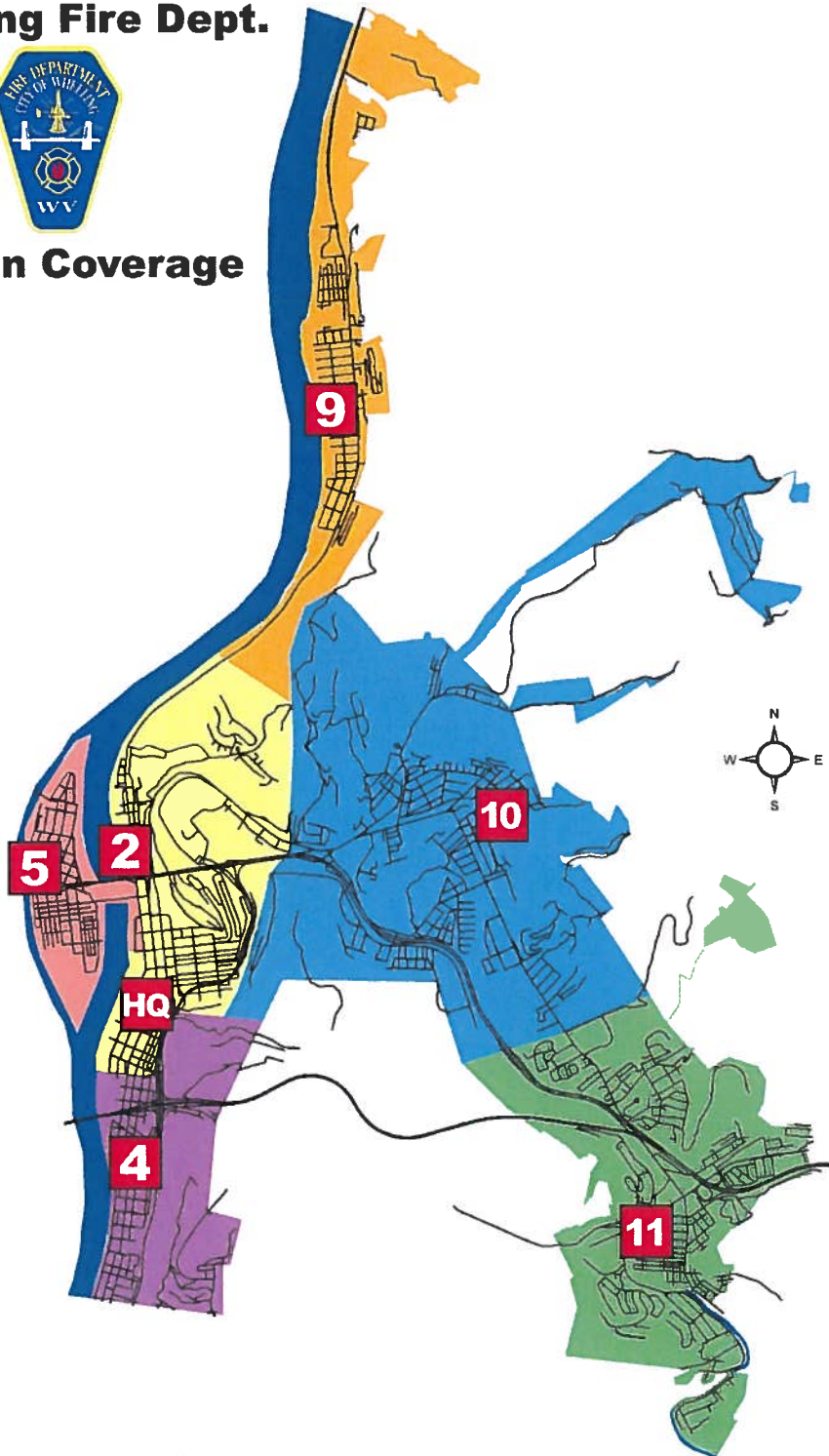


<b>CALLS</b>	<b>CATEGORY</b>
135	Fire
69	Explosion
258	Haz-Mat
761	Service
<b>4201</b>	<b>Rescue &amp; EMS</b>
543	Good Intent
662	False Alarm
14	Weather
3	Special

**Wheeling Fire Dept.**



**Station Coverage**



**WFD Headquarters is centrally located.**

**Its response district is the entire city.**

# WFD Mission Statement

To limit the loss of life and property resulting from fires, medical emergencies, and environmental disasters.



# WHEELING FIRE DEPARTMENT

## Headquarters

Chief of Department  
Administrative Assistant

Chief Larry Helms  
Margaret Yaeger

## Bureau of Fire Prevention

Chief Inspector  
Inspector

Assistant Chief Edward Geisel  
Captain Daniel Jamison

## Fire Investigation

Chief Investigator  
Investigator

Captain David Holeczy  
Lieutenant Bernard Davidson

## Training Division

Training Chief

Assistant Chief James Blazier

## Maintenance Division

Fire Equipment Manager  
Senior Equip. Manager

Clark Graham  
Gary Wiechman

## Public Information Officer

Fire and Police incidents

Philip Stahl





# WHEELING FIRE DEPARTMENT

## PERSONNEL ROSTER



### **Assistant Chiefs**

Murphy, Lawrence  
Campbell, Anthony  
Harto, Paul

### **Captains**

Barker, David  
Cianelli, Eric  
Fledderus, Thomas  
Francis, James  
Harmon, David  
McIntire, Paul  
McKenzie, Raymond  
Mueller, Carl  
Ulrich, William  
Wiethe, David

### **Lieutenants**

Anders, John  
Brown, Nicholas  
DeLuca, Tadd  
Fabrizio, Christopher  
Funari, Gregory  
Geisel, Jr., Edward  
Hinzey, John  
Joltes, Brian  
Koontz, Larry  
Landis, Clinton  
Milton, Jason  
Moore, Scott  
Moore, Steven  
Morris, James  
Saseen, Philip  
Wagner, William  
West, Winston

# WHEELING FIRE DEPARTMENT

## PERSONNEL ROSTER

### Fire Engineers

Ames, Thomas  
Bachman, Tobias  
Baker, Chad  
Bickler, Matthew  
Brown, Nolan  
Brown, Richard  
Carrington, James  
Cottrell, Alexander  
Darrow, Christopher  
Fedorko, William  
Haluscak, Thomas  
Haney, Michael  
Heldreth, Robert  
Johns, Joshua  
Kreitzer, Christopher  
Lawrence, Edward  
McGovern, Matthew  
McKenzie, Thomas  
Mowder, Seth  
Ransom, Charles  
Reineke, Eric  
Schaffer, David  
Shelek, Todd  
Shiple, Philip  
Stoffer, Tim  
Toepfer, Michael  
Touville, Eric  
Treiber, John  
Vankirk, Dennis  
Vapner, Nathan  
Yoho, Patrick  
Zambito, Francis

### Firefighters

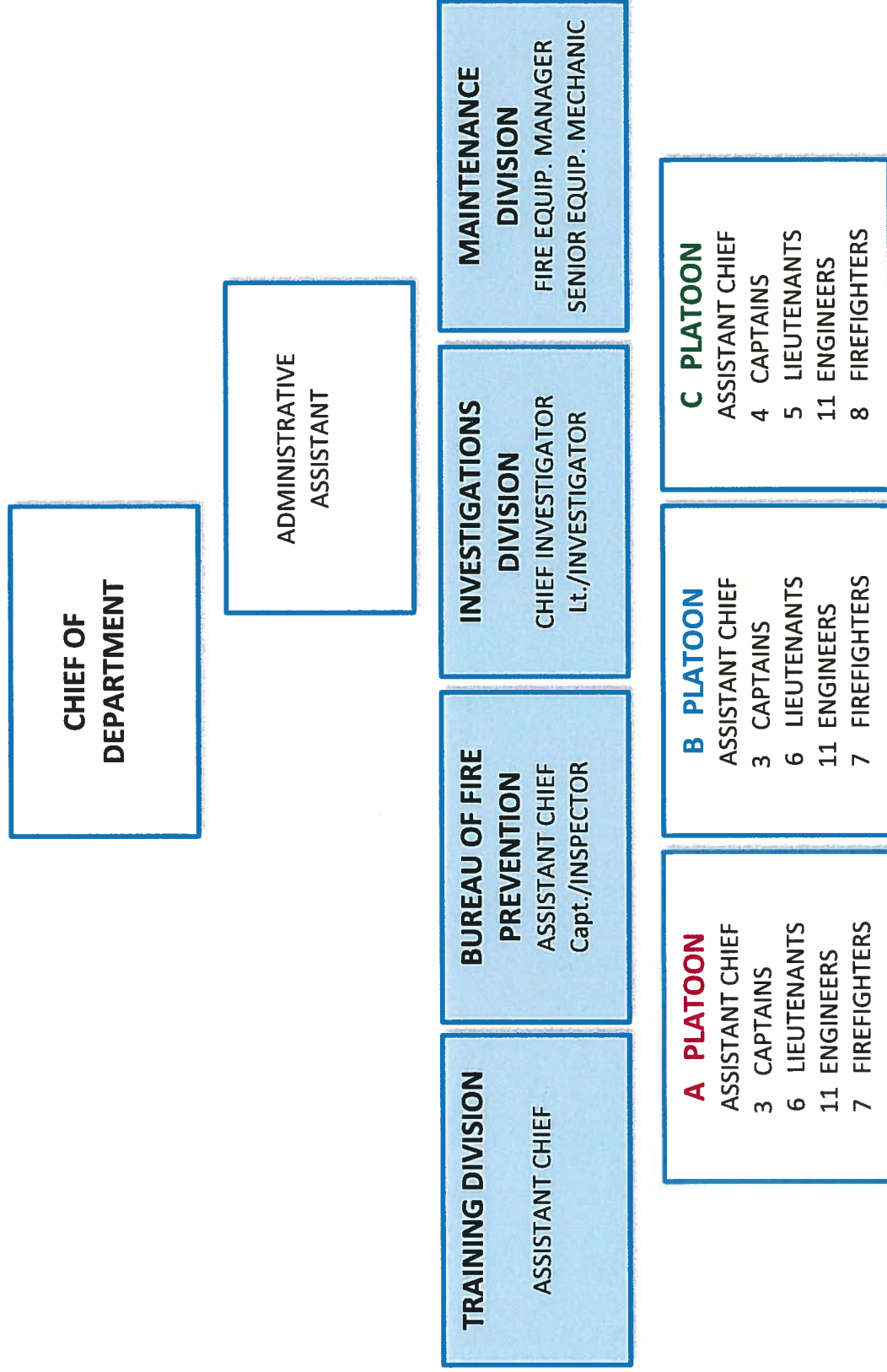
Becker, Cory  
Brown, Daniel  
Brown, Nolan  
Bryan, Audrey  
Carson, Nicholas  
Castello, Donald  
Clawson, Michael  
Dietrich, Clayton  
Haney, Christopher  
Howard, Jacob  
Hughes, Daniel  
Geisel, Kody  
Hicks, Samuel  
Hoffman, Brittany  
Jerome, Curtis  
Sebring, Trevor  
Twardoski, Adam  
Waldron, Robert  
Wodesky, Eric

### Probationary Firefighters

Barsch, Watson  
Schimnoski, Mark  
Teufel, Ryan

# WHEELING FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2017 ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



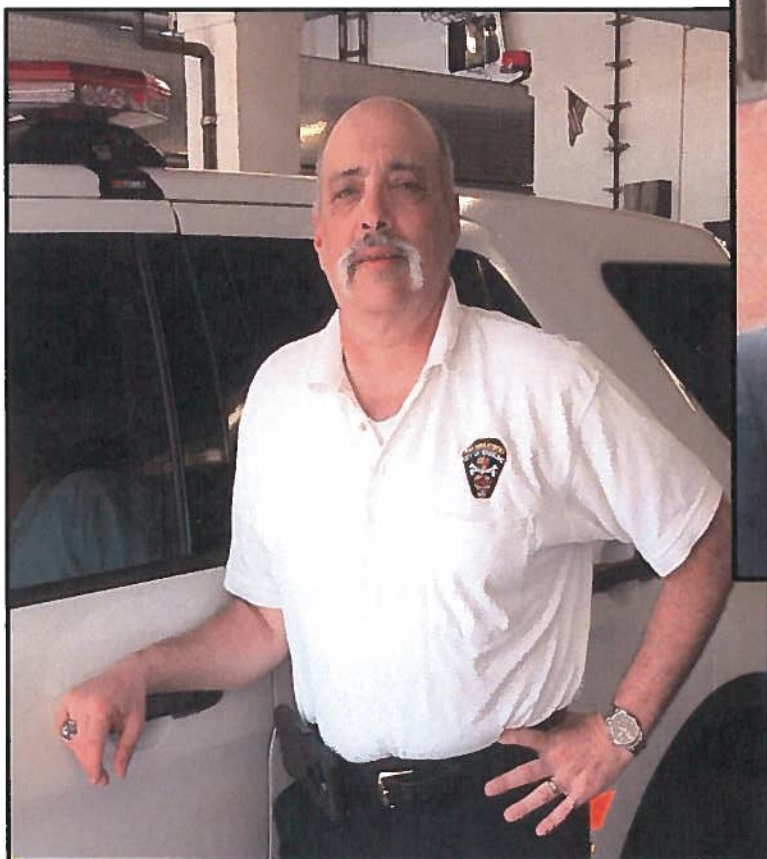


**Public Information  
Officer, Philip Stahl**



**Bureau of Fire Prevention  
Captain Jamison and Assistant Chief Ed Geisel**

**Assistant Chief Paul Harto  
Firefighter of the Year**



**Fire Engineer  
Michael Haney  
Paramedic of the Year**

# PERSONNEL CHANGES

## RETIRED

<b>Fire Engineer</b> <b>Bruce Sommers</b>	<b>Years of Service</b> <b>26</b>
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## PROMOTED

<b>Fire Engineer</b> <b>Nolan Brown</b>	<b>Effective</b> <b>June 10, 2017</b>
<b>Fire Engineer</b> <b>Thomas Ames</b>	<b>Effective</b> <b>December 31, 2017</b>

## HIRED

<b>Probationary Firefighters</b> <b>Mark Schimnoski</b>	<b>Effective</b> <b>January 30, 2017</b>
<b>Watson Barsch III</b>	<b>January 30, 2017</b>
<b>Ryan Teufel</b>	<b>July 31, 2017</b>

## MILESTONES

<b>Captain</b> <b>Carl Mueller</b>	<b>Years of Service</b> <b>35</b>
<b>Fire Engineer</b> <b>Christopher Kreitzer</b>	<b>Years of Service</b> <b>40</b>



**Fire Engineer Kreitzer**  
celebrated 40 years of service



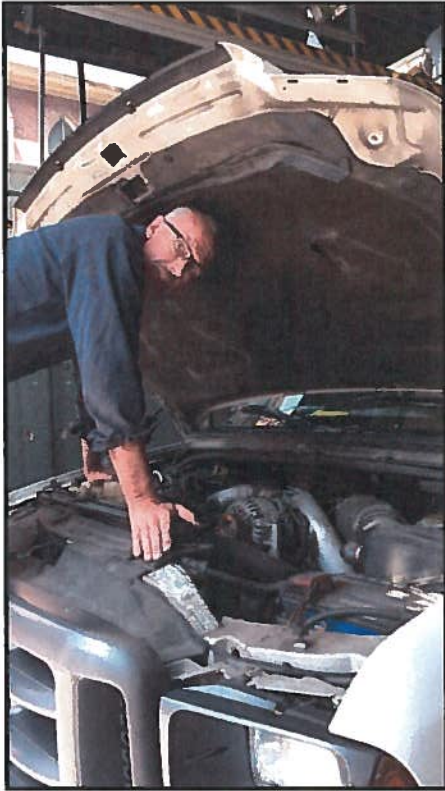
**Firefighter Hoffman** took first place in her class at the Mosel Firefighter Combat Challenge in Germany. Competition conditions simulate a structure fire.





**2017 MISSION LIFELINE AWARD – Silver Plus**

**Only four West Virginia agencies received this award for outstanding service to high-risk cardiac patients.**





# WHEELING FIRE DEPARTMENT TRAINING DIVISION



**Assistant Chief James Blazier**



**The fire service is a learning environment. WFD personnel regularly review their skills and knowledge in the classroom and in the field. Lives can depend upon their response to emergencies.**

## **MISSION LIFELINE SILVER PLUS AWARD**

WFD won a coveted Mission Lifeline Silver Plus Award from the American Heart Association.

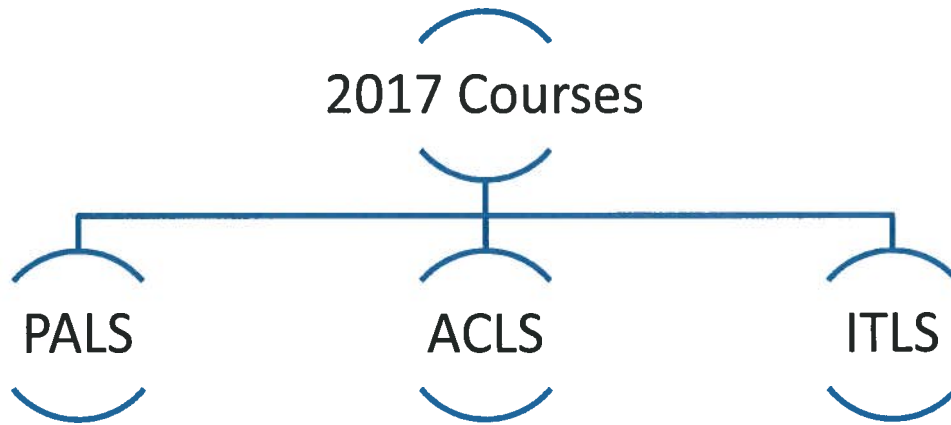
This award recognizes EMS providers for their response to heart attack, stroke, and cardiac arrest emergencies. Every minute counts for these high-risk patients. By working seamlessly with the hospital staff, EMS providers are boosting positive outcomes.

**Nearly 1000 people were trained in CPR in 2017.**

**CPR TRAINING** – available to the community throughout the year.

Attendees learn to correctly provide emergency CPR to infants, children, and adults.

# WHEELING FIRE DEPARTMENT TRAINING DIVISION



**PALS – Pediatric Advanced Life Support.** The primary goals are to recognize life-threatening pediatric emergencies and to provide prompt assessment and treatment during the initial minutes of the emergency.

- **Cardiac emergencies** including cardiac arrest and cardiac arrhythmias
- **Respiratory emergencies** including upper and lower airway obstructions, lung tissue disease, and disordered control of breathing.
- **Shock** including hypovolemic, obstructive, distributive, and cardiogenic shock.

**ACLS – Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support.** The primary goals are to recognize life-threatening cardiac problems and to provide prompt assessment and treatment during the initial minutes of the emergency.

- **Basics of CPR** – Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation
- **Advanced treatment options**
- **Conditions leading to cardiac arrest**
  - Respiratory arrest
  - Bradycardia
  - Tachycardia
  - Acute coronary syndrome
  - Stroke

**ITLS – International Trauma Life Support** is hands-on and intensive. Its purpose is to provide the fundamental knowledge and skills needed to **get the trauma patient from the scene to surgery in the best possible condition.**

# WHEELING FIRE DEPARTMENT

## BUREAU OF FIRE PREVENTION

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>
<b>Inspections</b> Number Conducted	314	272	369	377	387	342
<b>Tests</b> Hood Systems	5	5	5	9	11	5
Fire Alarm Systems	30	13	45	36	NA	NA
Sprinkler Systems	11	8	24	21	NA	NA
<b>Consultations</b>	55	42	45	70	68	NA
<b>Business Licenses</b>	67	71	66	66	60	56
<b>Plans Reviewed</b>	26	39	33	35	59	62
<b>Permits Issued</b>	115	107	151	187	141	173
<b>Investigations</b> Citizen Complaints	25	18	18	19	26	19
FOI Requests	3	1	5	6	8	NA
<b>Fire Safety House</b> Events	31	33	29	31	29	27
Attendees	3061	3113	2659	2593	2709	2628



**You have 2 minutes to escape from a burning building.**

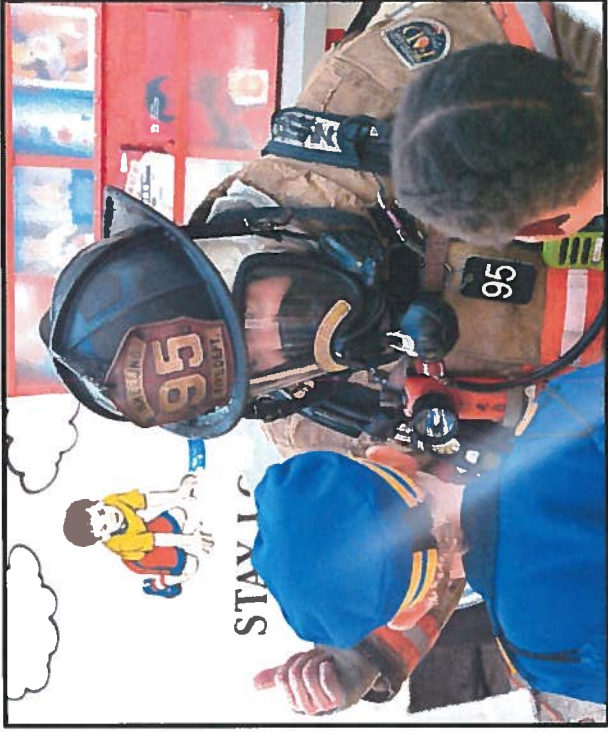
# WHEELING FIRE DEPARTMENT

## BUREAU OF FIRE PREVENTION

ACTION	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012
<b>Fire Safety</b>						
Lectures	24	25	22	22	27	9
Attendees	544	630	615	1160	986	233
<b>Fire Extinguisher Training</b>						
Events	32	27	23	32	25	16
Attendees	724	536	488	726	646	384
<b>Fire Drills</b>						
Witnessed	18	18	29	17	14	NA
Participants	1643	3633	1308	1922	1357	NA
Average Times:						
Evacuation	< 2 min	< 2 min	< 2 min	< 3 min	NA	NA
WFD Received Alarm	< 2 min	< 2.5 min	< 3 min	2 min	NA	NA
Of Accountability	< 3 min	< 3 min	< 3 min	< 3 min	NA	NA
<b>Additional Community Volunteer Hours</b>	93.5	26	79	NA	NA	NA

**Fundamentals of Fire Prevention**

- ✓ Engineering
- ✓ Education
- ✓ Enforcement



**People most at risk to die in a fire**

Children – under the age of 12

Adults – age 65 and above

# WHEELING FIRE DEPARTMENT

## FIRE INVESTIGATION



**Lieutenant Davidson and Captain Holeczy**

### **WFD RESPONDED TO 135 FIRE INCIDENTS IN 2017.**

**Every fire scene is different.** WFD Investigators undergo rigorous training at the National Fire Academy. They have a thorough knowledge of fire dynamics and excellent observation skills. At a fire scene, they follow a methodical process.

- Determine the area of origin
- Identify the ignition source
- Collect evidence
- Take eyewitness statements
- Photo documentation

The next steps are:

- Follow up interviews
- Send samples to lab for testing
- Write a report summarizing findings
- Follow case into the courts



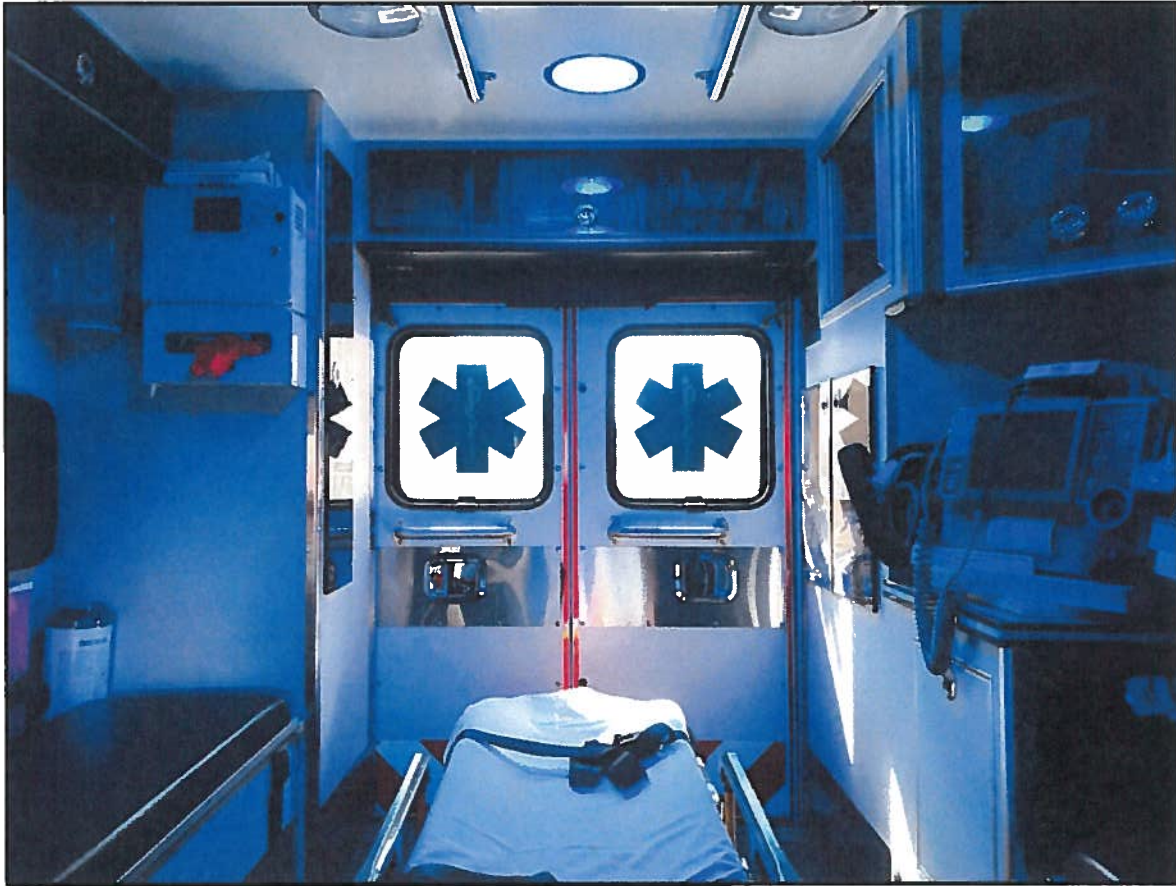
## IN THE NEWS – NOTABLE FIRES OF 2017

- JANUARY 2** A second-alarm fire destroyed several homes on Virginia Street. The Wheeling Island blaze was caused by a space heater. Fortunately, no one was injured.
- MARCH 12** Shortly after 11:30 PM, WFD responded to a vehicle fire on McColloch Street near the Lind Street intersection. Assistant Chief Paul Harto – off duty at the time – his son, Tyler, and Wheeling Police officers were able to pull the driver out of the burning car. No one was seriously hurt.
- AUGUST 24** Firefighters responded to a fire directly from a public safety ceremony. The fire broke out at a house on 13th Street in East Wheeling.
- OCTOBER 5** For the second time in 2017, the house at 105 South Huron Street caught on fire. This time, however, the Wheeling Island home was completely destroyed.
- OCTOBER 28** A house fire in Center Wheeling closed a number of ramps in the 26th Street area. The home's second floor was severely damaged, but the family escaped without injuries.





# The Well-equipped Squad



**Wheeling Fire Department squads respond to emergencies 24/7.**

Medical calls can be trauma, cardiac, airway, or other emergencies. Companies arrive in minutes to assist patients who are ill or injured. The paramedics communicate in real time with Emergency Room staff at the destination hospital – OVAC or Wheeling Hospital. This raises the level of patient care and boosts positive outcomes.

## **Trauma Emergencies**

- Wound management & bandaging
- Fluid replacement & blood loss management
- Splinting & immobilization

## **Cardiac Emergencies**

- Myocardial infarction (heart attack)
- Dysrhythmia (irregular heartbeat)
- Drug administration Ex. Epinephrine

## Respiratory Emergencies

- Supplemental oxygen
- Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP)
- Advanced Airway
  - Endotracheal tube
  - King airway
- Nebulized Medicine

## Other Medical Emergencies

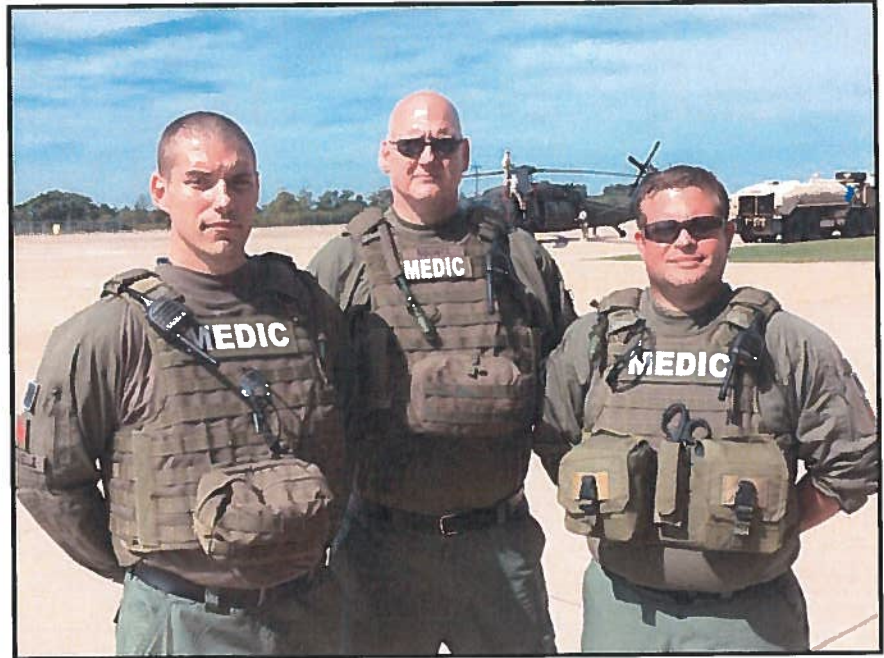
- Drug overdose
- Diabetic Emergency
- Allergic reaction



**The average squad response time is 3 minutes.**

## SWAT Medics

**Specialized  
medical supplies  
valued at \$5000  
were donated by  
Wheeling Hospital**

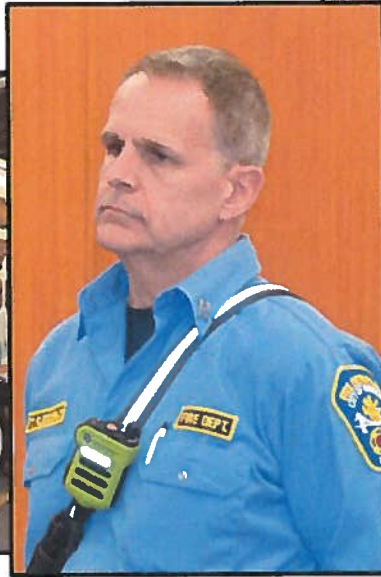


**Wheeling Fire Department SWAT Medics** train alongside their counterparts in the City's Police Department. They are trained to the level of a basic SWAT operator, and fulfil a specific role on tactical missions.

They are in the field to provide medical support to casualties – injured team members, innocent bystanders, and suspects. Immediate treatment will dramatically impact patient outcomes and save lives.

- Skilled paramedics
- Military-type uniforms and protective gear
- Carry specialized medical supplies
- Intensive hands-on training





**WFD squads  
respond from  
Fire Stations  
2, 4, and 10.**



**Severe weather caused widespread flash flooding in February and July.**

Both floods were caused by two consecutive weekends of heavy rainfall. Sections of National Road became a turbulent lake. Entire neighborhoods filled with flood water, mud, and debris. Vehicles stalled and basements flooded.

Fire Department personnel rescued people trapped in stalled vehicles, moved people out of flooded homes, assessed neighborhood damage, and pumped out basements once the water subsided.



**Powerful flood waters swept two people into the creek near Browns Run on July 23.**

The first victim was found downstream clinging to a guard rail. An active search continued along the length of the creek, around the bridges, and through heavy debris.

The WFD Swift Water team joined multiple agencies – the Ohio County Sheriff’s office, Wheeling Police Department, Tyler County Search and Rescue, the National Guard, Civil Air Patrol – and dozens of civilian volunteers searching for the second victim. The search ended five days later; and the Ohio Valley mourned the loss of its two young people.

# WHEELING FIRE DEPARTMENT

## DIVE TEAM & SWIFT WATER RESCUE

### Dive Team

Anders, J.  
Barker, D.  
Brown, R.  
Castello, D.  
Cianelli, E.  
Davidson, B.  
Darrow, C.  
Fabrizio, C.  
Fledderus, T.  
Haney, C.  
Haney, M.  
Heldreth, R.  
Moore, S.  
Sebring, T.  
Vankirk, D.  
Waldron, R.

### Swift Water Rescue

Ames, T.	Haney, C.
Anders, J.	Haney, M.
Bachman, T.	Hoffman, B.
Barsch, W.	Howard, J.
Brown, R.	Koontz, L.
Cianelli, E.	Milton, J.
DeLuca, T.	Moore, Steve
Fabrizio, C.	Touville, E.
Fledderus, T.	Treiber, J.
Geisel, Jr., E.	Vankirk, D.
Haluscak, T.	Vapner, N.



# Community Outreach

Firefighters have a strong community service record. They participate in a variety of events to promote fire safety, education, and health. Here is a sampling:

**Smoke detectors.** A working smoke detector can double your likelihood of surviving a house fire. Firefighters teamed up with the Red Cross, Ohio County Schools, and other volunteers to install smoke detectors in Wheeling homes. Families could sign up for the free smoke detectors provided by the Red Cross. The program honors the memory of the Daugherty family – they perished in a fire in October 2016.

**A working smoke detector can double your chance of surviving a house fire.**





**Virtual Dementia Tour.** Firefighters and Sheriff's deputies met at WFD headquarters to experience the everyday challenges that Alzheimer's and dementia patients face. The tour was initiated by the Right At Home organization. Volunteers wore devices that altered their vision, hearing, touch, and depth perception. They learned that simple tasks – such as eating – were no longer so simple.

### **FILL THE BOOT**

Firefighters held two Fill the Boot drives in 2017 to benefit children diagnosed with Muscular Dystrophy.

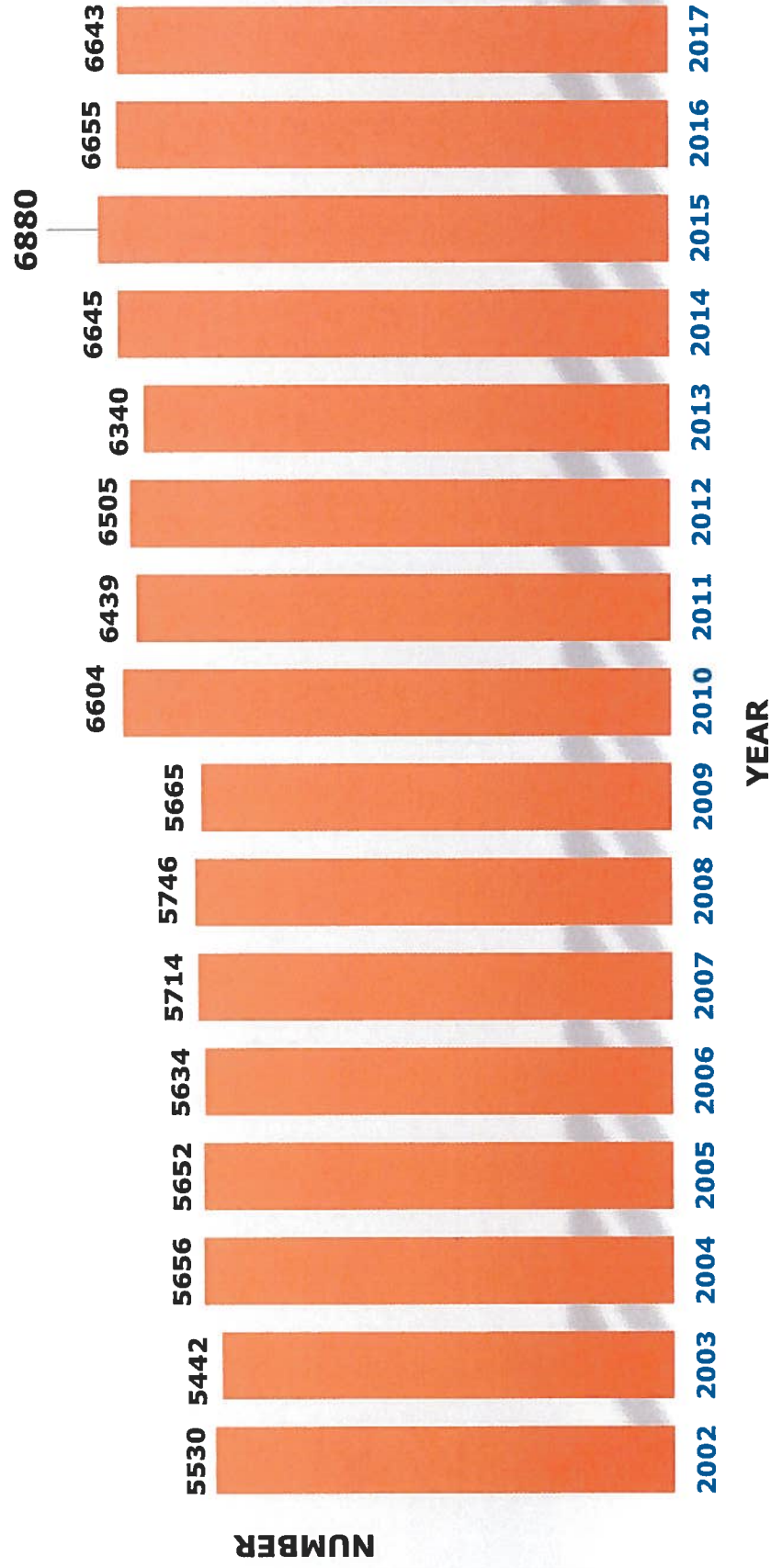


**Breast Cancer Awareness.** On duty firefighters wear these colorful shirts throughout the month of October.

An annual sale of T-shirts and hoodies benefits breast cancer research. The public can purchase shirts at any fire station.



# WFD INCIDENTS 2002 - 2017



# Thank you. It is a privilege to serve our people in Wheeling, West Virginia.



“As with everything we do in the fire service, we achieve success not when we arrive, but in the hours, days, weeks, months, and years before the fire call comes in.”

Chris Langlois

# 100 Years ago...

**One of the largest fires in Wheeling's history** took place on December 9, 1917.

The House & Herrmann department store, a six-story structure at 14th and Market Streets, was a total loss.

- **Caused by a natural gas explosion**
  - A stove lit by the night watchman had a slow leak.
  - Flames traveled through the elevator shaft.
- **Firefighters** responded from: Wheeling, Bellaire, Bridgeport, Martins Ferry
- **No injuries or fatalities**
- Loss was a staggering **\$500,000**
  - That equals \$10,406,552 in 2017.
  - The business did not recover.
- **Weather was a factor** – single digit temperatures and gusty winds
- **The modern WFD ladder truck was crushed** when the building collapsed.





**House & Herrmann  
Department store**

Before – a prosperous  
downtown business

After – an empty shell



Courtesy of Ohio County Public Library, Wheeling WV

Special thanks to the Ohio County Public Library, Robert Weide, Jim Thornton, and the Wheeling Intelligencer for their generous assistance.



# WHEELING FIRE DEPARTMENT



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## 2017 ANNUAL REPORT