

# Wooster Division of Fire 2012 Annual Report

Robert N. Eyler, Fire Chief



Fire OPS Class Photo, 2012

March 15th, 2013

The Honorable Robert Breneman  
Mayor, City of Wooster  
538 North Market Street  
Wooster, Ohio 44691

Mayor Breneman:

I respectfully submit the 2012 Annual Report for the Wooster Division of Fire. I trust that the information herein pertaining to fire suppression and prevention, emergency medical service, training and public relation activities shall prove informative and useful.

I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the City of Wooster Administration, to all of the personnel in all the City of Wooster departments and divisions, to the members of the Wooster City Council, and to the citizens of the City of Wooster for their support and assistance in the past year.

Robert N. Eyler, Fire Chief  
Wooster Division of Fire

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## 2012 Personnel Roster

### Administration:

Robert N. Eyler, Fire Chief  
Roger Brenneman, Assistant Fire Chief  
Vacant, Fire Inspector  
Douglas C. Myers, Clerk/Typist

### “A” Shift:

Ted Elder, Captain  
Thomas E. Etter, Lieutenant  
Michael A. Maag, Lieutenant

Jeffrey D. Aukerman, Firefighter  
Ronald J. Balas, Firefighter  
Michael D. Berry, Firefighter, Inspector  
Scott E. Bertsch, Firefighter  
Patrick H. Christie, Firefighter  
Mathew R. Cudlip, Firefighter  
Christopher M. Hawkins, Firefighter  
Patrick J. Kermode, Firefighter  
Keith R. Rickett, Firefighter  
Michael A. Springer, Firefighter

### “B” Shift:

Thomas M. Graf, Captain  
Stanley A. Brown, Lieutenant  
Joseph L. Linz, Lieutenant

Jeffrey L. Buzzard, Firefighter  
Eddie J. Edgell, Firefighter  
Brandon J. Hewitt, Firefighter  
R. Scott, Iannarelli, Firefighter  
Joseph M. Kiefer, Firefighter  
Mark A. Lindsay, Firefighter  
David P. Shaffer, Firefighter  
John B. Sherrick, Firefighter  
Bradley T. Stull, Firefighter  
Brad D. Welty, Firefighter

### “C” Shift:

Rhodes Walter, Captain  
Christopher F. Green, Lieutenant  
Barry M. Saley, Lieutenant

Joshua L. Brownson, Firefighter  
John H. Cutlip, Firefighter  
Donald J. Keller, Firefighter  
Scott R. Kiper, Firefighter  
Scott M. Meshew, Firefighter  
Nathan A. Murphy, Firefighter  
Michael D. Priest, Firefighter  
Michael D. Sherrick, Firefighter  
Leslie E. Teichmer, Firefighter  
Greg T. Thompson, Firefighter

## **HIGHLIGHTS**

### **Wooster Division of Fire Annual Report**

The Wooster Division of Fire is composed of 2 administrative personnel and 39 shift members.

Administrative offices are located in the #1 Fire Station at 510 N. Market St.; regular business hours are Monday - Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. The Fire Chief and Assistant Fire Chief alternate weekly on 24-hour call for emergency incidents.

Shift personnel respond from both the #1 Fire Station and the #2 Fire Station, located at 433 E. Highland Ave. Each shift operates on a 24-hour work shift with a new tour of duty beginning at 7:00 a.m. each day – the equivalent of 51.7 hour work week. The minimum on-duty shift strength is 10 members (5 at each station). Both stations provide fire suppression and emergency medical services.

The Wooster Division of Fire responded to a total of 3,870 calls for service in 2012. This call volume would average 10.6 calls per day. This is an increase from the 3,806 total responses in 2011 of 1.7%. The run numbers equate to 3,206 EMS calls (83%) and 664 Fire runs (17%). The Wooster Fire Division also responded to 106 calls for service via automatic aid with Wooster Twp. Fire Department.

### **Personnel - Retirement, Resignations and Promotions**

In 2012 there were no changes in personnel. It is still important to note that the position of Fire Inspector was filled in 2011 but was not assigned to the regular 40 hour week. This position was left on shift to replace the firefighter position that was not replaced in a personnel action to reduce overall city costs. In essence we do not have a fulltime dedicated Fire Inspector/Educator for the division.

It is also important to note that our minimum staffing levels are the same as they were in 1997 when we responded to 3,415 total calls. The significant increase in calls is solely attributed to the increase in squad calls. When comparing 1997 to 2012 there were 2,439 squad calls in 1997 compared to 3,207 in 2012; this is an increase of 25%. The inability to respond to all city calls put a burden on surrounding department to provide mutual and automatic aid to the city 57 times in 2012.

In 2012 the City of Wooster completed a performance audit that was conducted by the state of Auditor of the State of Ohio. The peer cities used for the purpose of the audit were Ashland, Sidney and Findlay. The audit benchmarking shows we have slightly less personnel per peer cities and also respond to more calls for service as the same peer departments. See Table 1.1 and 1.2 for audit benchmarking. The peer cities also had an ISO rating of 4.

Table 1.1

<u>Evaluated Area</u>	<u>Wooster Division of Fire</u>	<u>Peer Average</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Staffing *	41 personnel	45.6 personnel	(-1.14%)
Requests for service	3594 responses	3004.5 responses	+ 19.6%
Operating cost per resident	\$178.00	\$162.73	+5.7%
Training hour's	3967 hours	4346 hrs. (Ashland)	(-1.09%) (-9.24 hrs. per ff)

\* It should be noted that the State Audit report compared Wooster's total FTE's to peer cities firemen only. The Actual peer city FTE's, including officers, is 45.6, not 33 as indicated in the report. Information is based on 2010 and 2011 reports.

Table 1.2

Master Bench Mark  
 All Information Provided by the State of Ohio  
 January 24th,2013

2010 Ratios

<b>Ratios comparison</b>	<b>Wooster</b>	<b>Wooster</b>	<b>Peer average</b>	<b>% difference</b>
Expenditures/FF	113,213.72	123,189.30	<b>105,848.24</b>	<b>16.38%</b>
Expenditures per EMS call	1,493.97	1,679.67	<b>3,021.06</b>	<b>-44.40%</b>
Expenditures per Fire call	8,485.85	8,648.56	<b>8,335.51</b>	<b>3.76%</b>
Expenditures per Total Calls	1,270.32	1,406.51	<b>4,062.22</b>	<b>-65.38%</b>
FF/Officer (Span of Control)	2.73	2.64	<b>2.57</b>	2.70%
Sworn/Station	20.50	20.50	<b>21.42</b>	<b>-4.28%</b>
FF/1,000 pop	1.57	1.57	<b>1.57</b>	0.19%
FF/Sq. Mile	2.51	2.51	<b>2.99</b>	<b>-16.02%</b>
# of EMS calls/FF	75.78	73.34	<b>57.82</b>	<b>26.84%</b>
# of Fire calls/FF	13.34	14.24	<b>12.79</b>	<b>11.37%</b>
# CFS/FF	89.12	87.59	<b>64.69</b>	<b>35.40%</b>
# of sq miles/station	8.16	8.16	<b>7.32</b>	11.39%
Expenditures/station	2,320,881.28	2,525,380.74	<b>2,183,054.77</b>	15.68%

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## **Budget**

I have included 2 tables that describe the division inputs and outputs related to our budget. Table 1.2 includes budgetary costs minus revenue and tables 1.3 and 1.4 include reports for our squad revenue. It is important to note that our squad revenue is based on the collection date, not necessarily the date of the squad call.

Table 1.3

	Year	
	2011	2012
<b>Personal Services Actual as of 12/31</b>	4,305,030.07	4,502,312.87
<b>Operating Costs Actual 12/31</b>	309,230.12	248,804.48
<b>365 operating days/year</b>	365	365
<b>Cost per day (actual/365)</b>	12,641.81	13,016.76
<b>Total Budget Actual as of 12/31</b>	4,614,260.10	4,751,117.20
<b>Less: Associated Revenue</b>		
<b>EMS Services (net of refunds)</b>	811,004.32	731,325.59
<b>Inspection Fees</b>	1,200.00	5,143.00
<b>Subtotal Revenue</b>	812,204.32	736,468.59
<b>Personal Services cost less Revenue</b>	3,802,055.80	4,014,464.70
<b>365 operating days/year</b>	365	365
<b>Net Cost per Day</b>	<b>10,416.59</b>	<b>10,998.53</b>
<b>Source: City of Wooster Finance</b>		

Table 1.4 – Source MBI Solutions Inc.

City of Wooster							
Report for January 2012 through December 2012							
Month	Charges	Gross Charges	Average Charge	Contractual Adj.	Bad Debt Write-Off	Call Credits	Ave. Collection
January	230	169,639.30	737.56	83,993.64	593.6	75,208.78	326.99
February	195	143,559.45	736.2	71,525.25	2,200.02	61,122.49	313.45
March	202	150,317.42	744.15	66,241.63	2,747.75	60,646.66	300.23
April	215	157,175.65	731.05	77,988.13	664.46	64,369.97	299.4
May	203	148,881.13	733.4	72,963.77	1,131.71	56,206.41	276.88
June	229	168,177.59	734.4	87,310.02	0	61,832.72	270.01
July	200	145,408.00	727.04	70,368.80	1,328.27	55,510.77	277.55
August	224	164,541.04	734.56	76,535.37	663.61	61,389.10	274.06
September	220	163,570.49	743.5	78,918.07	777.71	65,129.23	296.04
October	198	147,158.58	743.23	73,421.06	0	55,726.67	281.45
November	117	86,900.07	742.74	39,365.80	0	34,173.36	292.08
December	169	122,426.99	724.42	43,344.49	0	35,059.59	207.45
<b>Totals:</b>							
	2,402	1,767,755.71	735.95	841,976.03	10,107.13	686,375.75	285.75
<b>Gross Charges</b> - This column displays the charges for runs that occurred during each month reported.							
<b>Average Charge</b> - The average charge for calls done for the month reported.							
<b>Contractual Write-Off</b> - This column displays the amount contractually adjusted during this month, for past runs due to the difference between the actual charges and the amounts that Medicare, Medicaid or any other payer you are Contracted with pay.							
<b>Bad Debt Write-Off</b> - This column displays the amount written off, during this month, for past runs due to the “soft Billing” approach of not pursuing self pay, private pay accounts beyond 3 invoices. This column also includes OIG write off accounts for the fire departments that do not send bills to their residents.							

## **Training**

The Wooster Fire Division personnel serve dual roles within the community, working as both firefighters and emergency medical technicians. Extensive training is required by state mandate to stay abreast of the latest techniques in both fields. A Firefighter/Paramedic is required to complete an average of 51 hours annual in continual education. Members of the division who have other certifications, such as fire inspector and/or instructors, must also complete additional hours to retain their state cards.

Drills and training are a continuous part of a firefighter's daily activity. Training is completed in such fields as hazardous materials, confined space rescue, hydraulics, victim care, rapid intervention teams and preplanning to name a few. This training is accomplished by lecture, online education and practical application. In 2012 the division now has at least 2 firefighters certified to be firefighter instructors on each shift. We will be working an annual training calendar starting in 2013.

## **Special Projects**

In 2012 numerous special projects were completed or worked on throughout the year. Although this is not a complete list, as some will be referenced in the other sections of the report, the following is a brief snapshot of the 2012 projects.

Prior to scheduled demolition in March 2013, the property at 3319 Burbank Rd. that will be used for the replacement of the current fire station #2 was used for numerous training and educational events such as RIT Team training and Fire OPS.

The Fire Division with the cooperation of IAFF Local #764 organized and presented a Fire OPS 101 class that was presented to the Wooster City Council and administration. This educational experience allowed the City Administration and Council to "step in the shoes" of a firefighter and EMT for the day. This program was a great success from the feedback of both the participants and the firefighters.

With the assistance of the Wayne County EMA in securing a 50/50 grant, funds were secured to add a new weather siren to the city as well as update the current sirens. This update will allow the city to monitor the sirens on a daily basis so

we are assured they will work when needed. We were also able to reduce costs of the software by agreeing to monitor the 4 new Wayne Twp. Sirens that were installed in 2011. The sirens project should be completed by March 2013.

The Fire division completed the FCC- mandated narrow banding project with the assistance of our communications vendor. This project required the replacement of older style radios as well the reprogramming of current equipment as required by the FCC.

The Division of Fire applied for a received a federal grant to install a new diesel extraction system in both fire stations in 2012. This grant saved the division about \$70,000 in needed equipment purchased. The equipment was installed in 2012.

In 2012 the division also purchased and put into service equipment as specified in a 2011 grant. This grant also saved the city approximately \$115,000 in needed equipment and training costs. This would include, a compressed air station, on- scene accountability system and thermal imaging cameras.

A request for services was instituted in 2012 for division and citywide communications to allow for a cost savings in our annual communications maintenance.

EMS refresher training was completed in 2012. This was a 6 month process to allow training hours as required by the State for division members' EMT certification. This was completed using, lecture, online education as well written testing and practical testing.

The Division also assisted the Wayne County EMA, to secure the materials and funding to assist the Medway Agency in specifying and ordering new personal protective equipment for their office during drug lab investigations and evidence collection.

All annual 3<sup>rd</sup> party testing on PPE and fire apparatus was completed in 2012.

The members of the division have had ongoing training throughout the year as a Rapid Intervention Team. This team allows the division to assemble a team for on scene safety in the event of a mayday incident within the city as well as reciprocate the service to our neighboring departments. In 2013 this team should be trained and ready to respond.

The fire and police division worked together throughout the year to find solutions to better our emergency dispatching as well as ways to find cost savings. This work has been in conjunction with the feasibility study completed in 2011 by Cleveland State University. Other local/regional municipalities are involved in this project.

The division's fire and EMS data base was reconfigured at the end of the year to meet new federal and state mandated reporting requirements. This project did not have any real costs, but did require a large amount of time to reconfigure the system and work with a new coding structure.

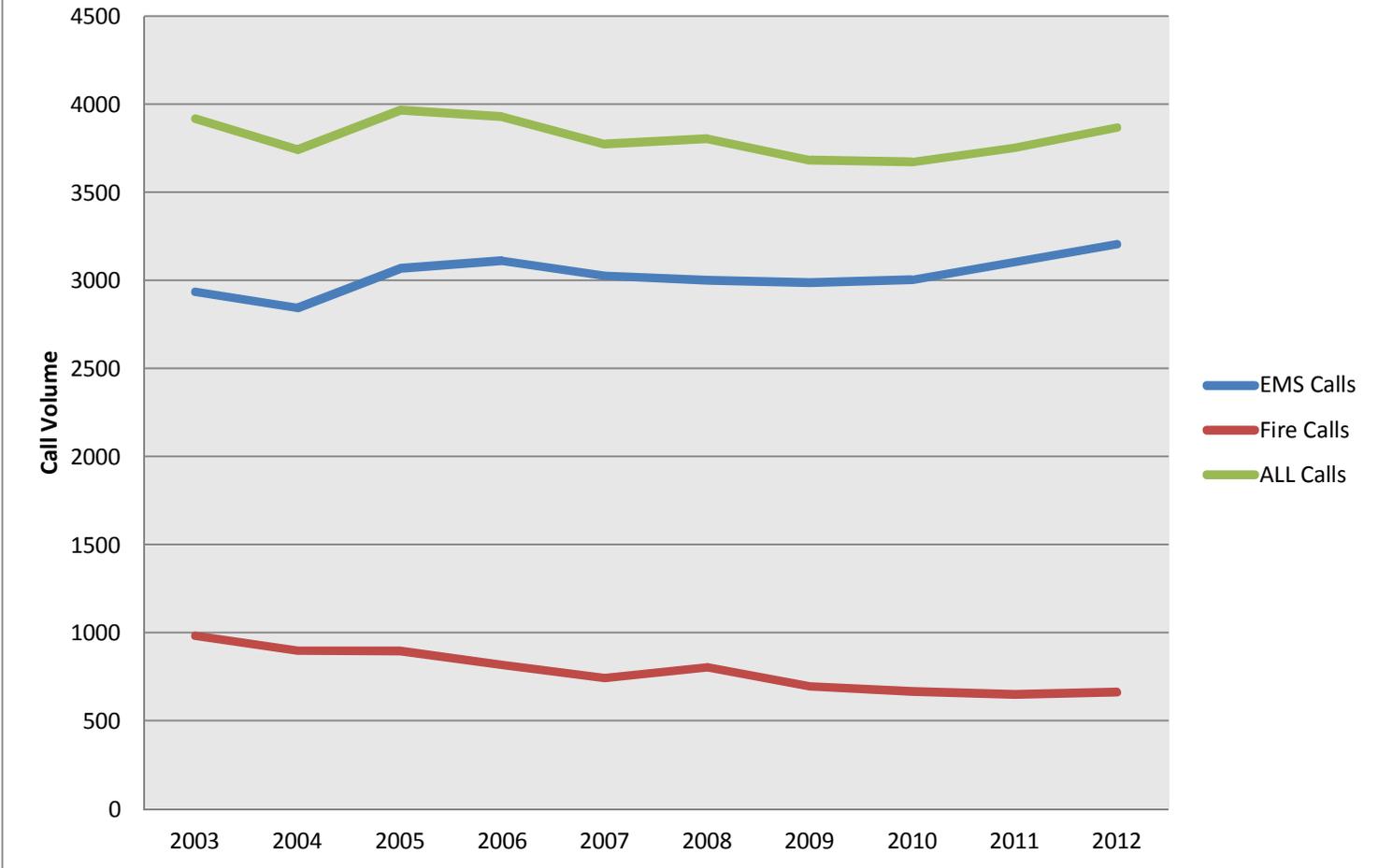
The division also planned for and entered into the Wayne County MABAS system in 2012. This system stands for the Mutual Aid Box Alarm System. This system is a pre-defined set of response needs depending on the type, size and location of the incident involved. This is based on pre-defined vehicle and manpower response during an event that needs more than what we can mitigate with our current manning and or equipment.

Members of the division also participated in the annual muscular dystrophy Fill the Boot Drive and replaced over 100 smoke detector batteries in October as part of Fire Prevention Week. Each of these projects were completed on each members own time.

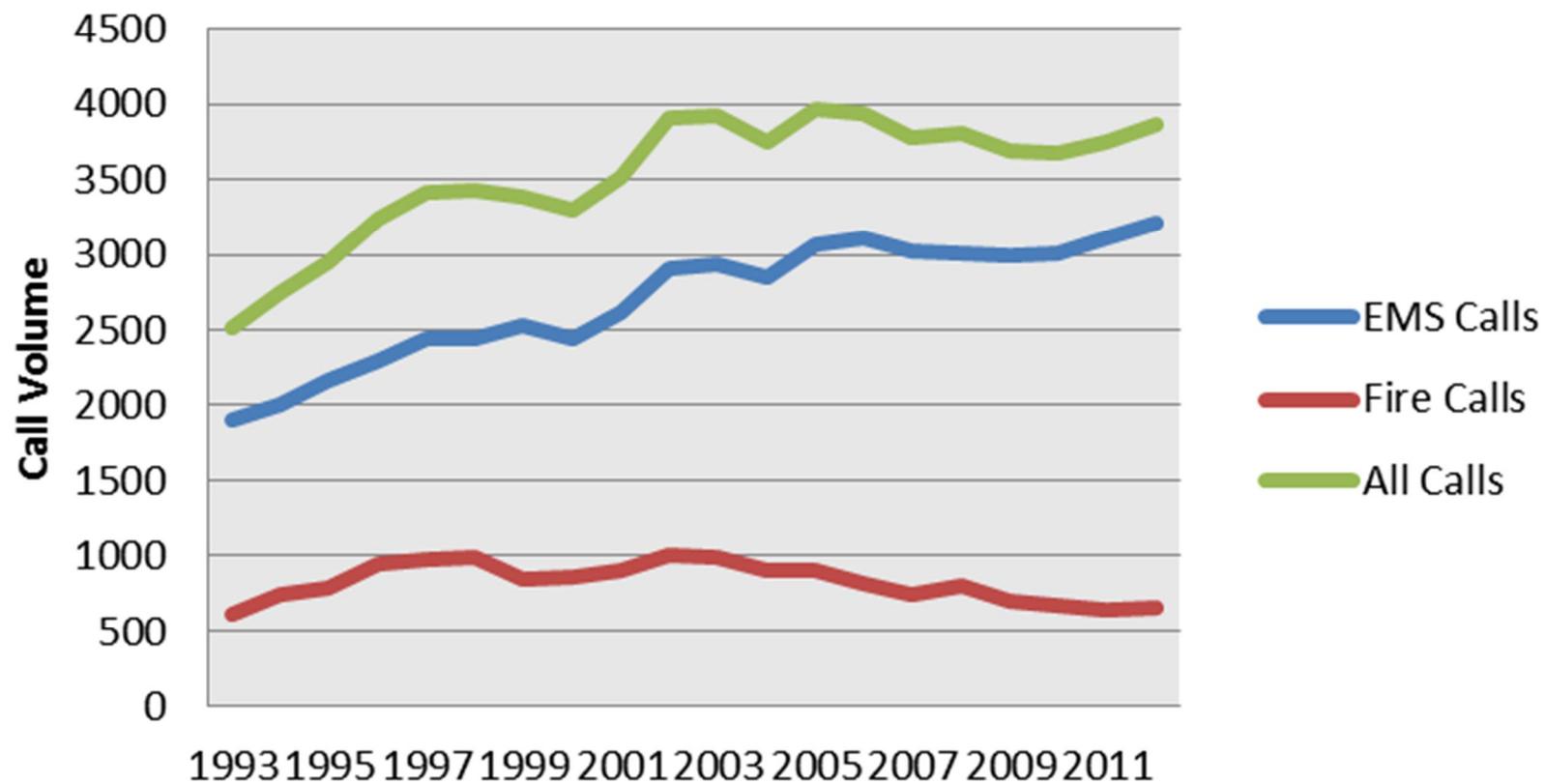
The following four pages show graphical representation of comparative response call data of fire and EMS.

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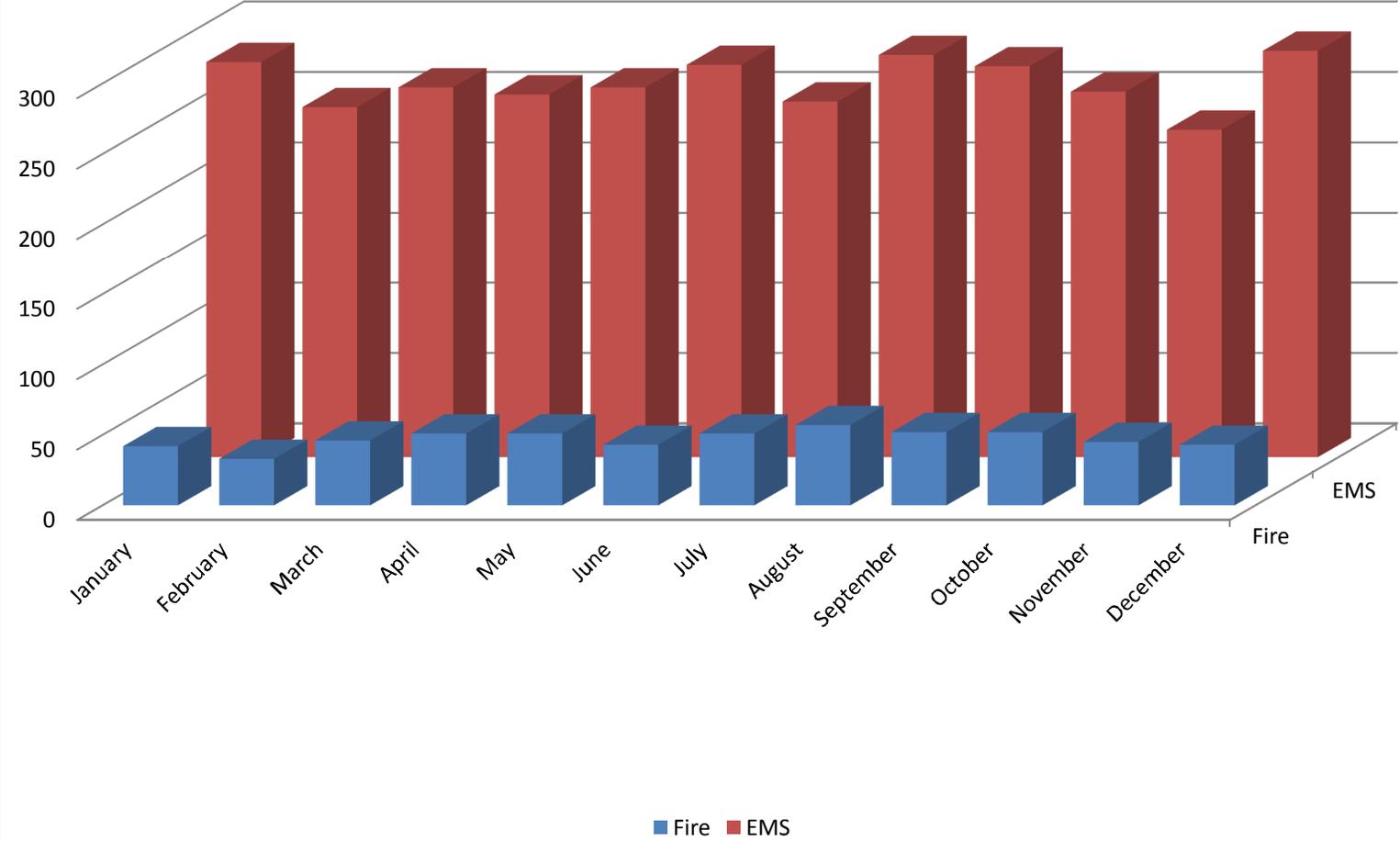
### 10 Year Fire Vs. EMS Calls

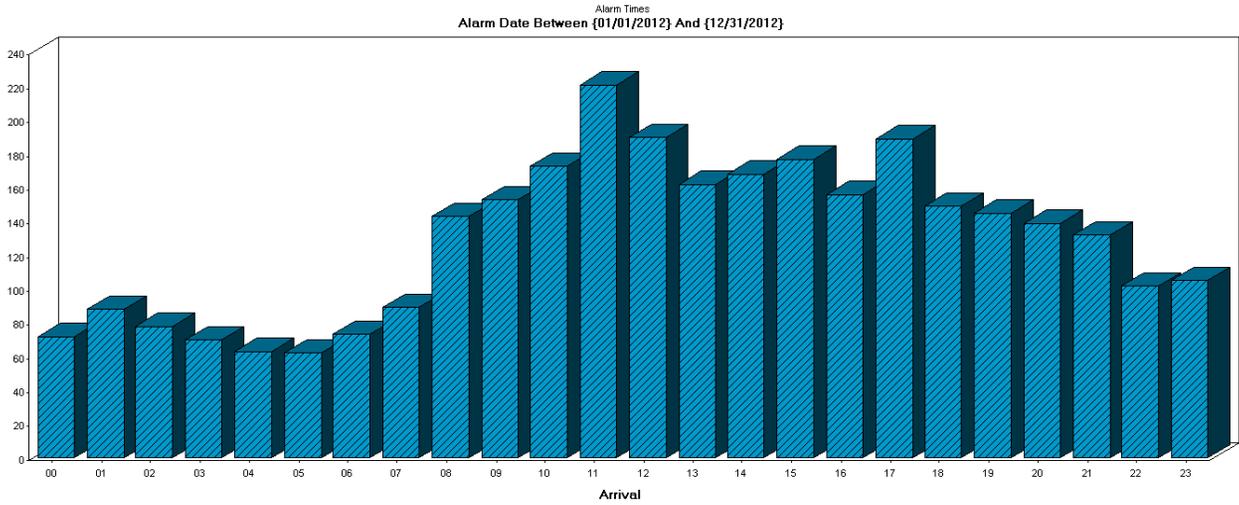
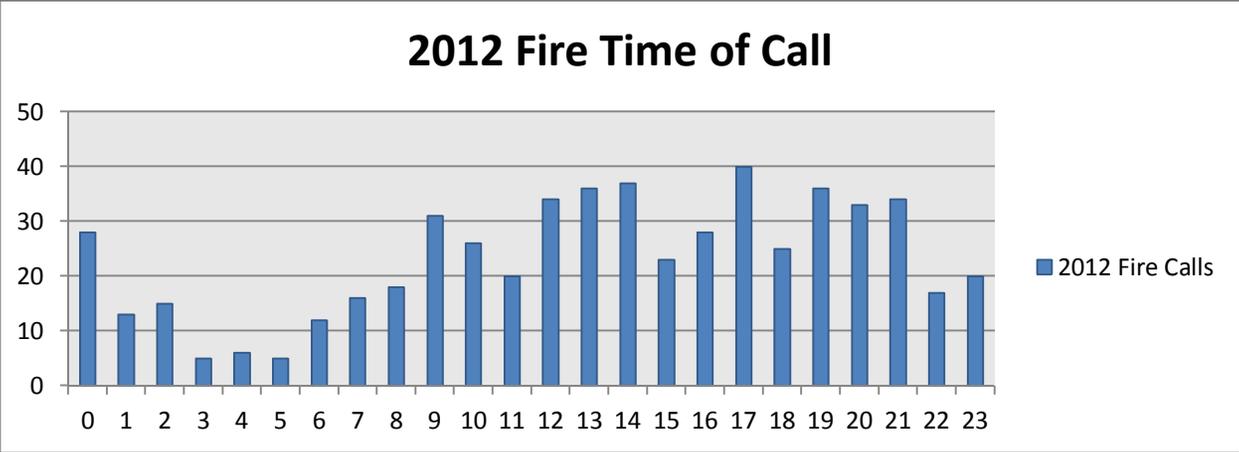


## 20 Year Fire Vs. EMS Calls



# 2012 Fire EMS Month





**SUPPRESSION**  
Wooster Division of Fire 2012 Annual Report



In 2012 the Wooster Division of Fire responded to 664 fire call for service, including 106 fire calls that we responded to as part of the automatic aid agreement with the Wooster Twp. Fire Department. The 558 calls for service within the city increased 2% over the 2011 number of 547.

The fire loss ratio volume indicates what percentage of each property involved in a fire was destroyed or not destroyed by fire. The total value of properties that sustained loss in 2012 was \$4,471,110. The fire loss [loss to value percentage] was \$305,135 the fire loss ratio for 2012 was .07%.

	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>Change</b>
Total Fire Calls	547	558	2.0%
Fire Calls w/dollar loss	37	31	-16.3%
Total Property value	\$4,218,680	\$4,417,110	\$198,430
Total Fire Loss	\$425,350	\$305,135	-\$120,215
Fire Loss Ratio	.10%	.07%	-.03%
Fire Loss average	\$11,496	\$9,843	-\$1,653

The Wooster Fire Division uses the *estimated* total dollar values of properties [of structure and contents] and the *estimated* total dollar loss as a statistical basis.

Numerous variables affect fire loss: pre-existing structural conditions which facilitate the spread of fire; lack of internal fire protection [sprinkler systems]; available water supply; poor housekeeping; alarm delay by occupants; fire division response time, are examples of such variables. Factoring in one or more of these variables into a firefighting operation creates the potential for greater increased fire loss.

**Major Loss Fires:**

The Wooster Fire Division defines a major fire loss as being a loss of \$100,000 or more. There were no major fire losses in 2012.

### Fire Calls by Type

Fire Call Type	2011	2012
<b>Fire</b>	92	80
<b>Overpressure, Explosion</b>	4	2
<b>Rescue and Medical</b>	85	81
<b>Hazardous Condition</b>	60	66
<b>Service Calls</b>	66	90
<b>Good Intent</b>	47	52
<b>False Alarm Activation</b>	185	180
<b>Severe Weather and Special</b>	8	7
<b>Wooster Twp Response</b>	101	106

#### **Fire Injury and Deaths:**

There was one (1) fatality and three (3) injuries to civilians in the City of Wooster due to fire in 2012.

##### **Fatality:**

A 65 year old female died at a residential fire on August 7<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Cause of death was exposed to fire products.

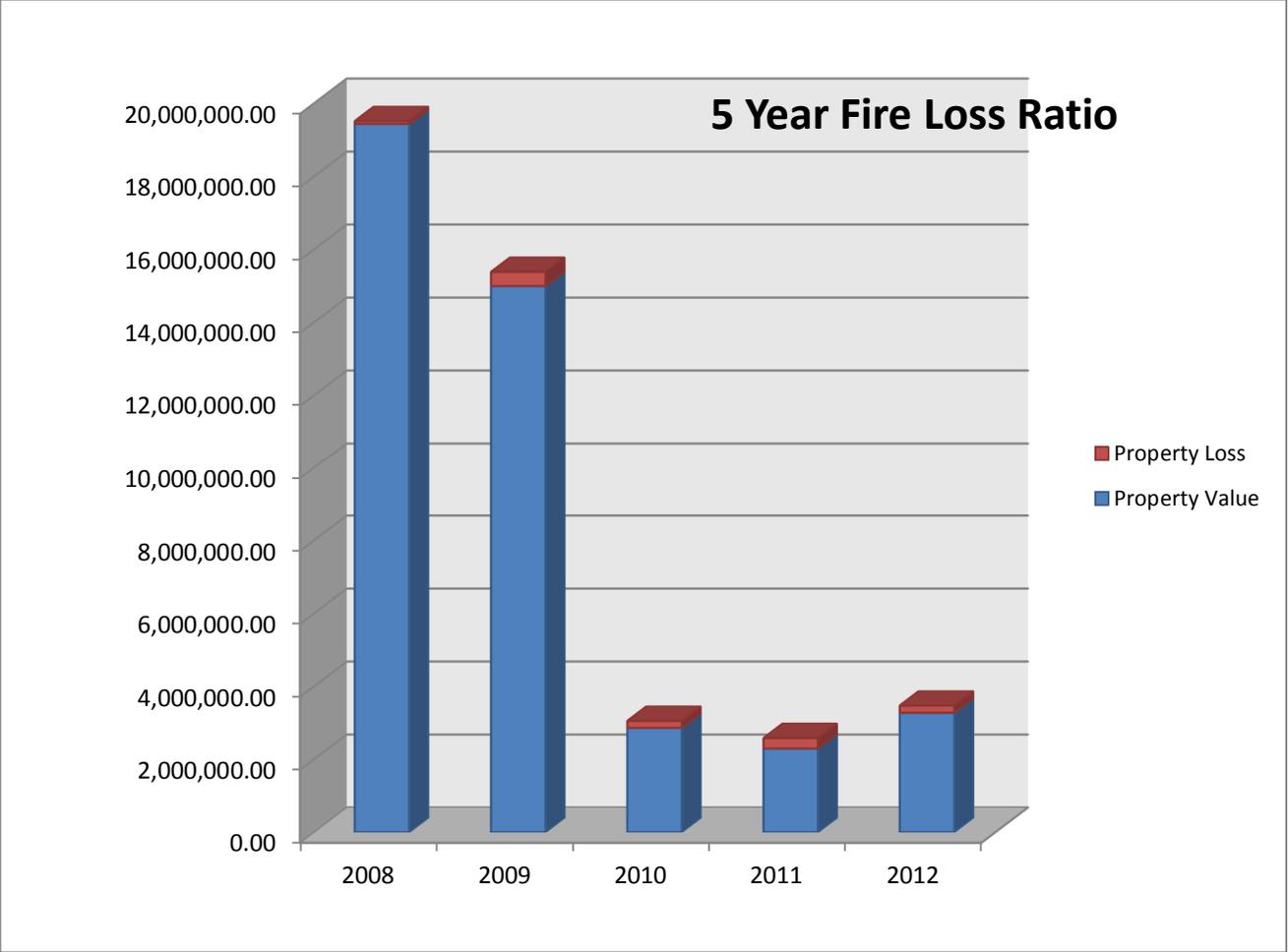
##### **Injuries:**

Three injuries were reported in 3 separate fires. These injuries were classified as:

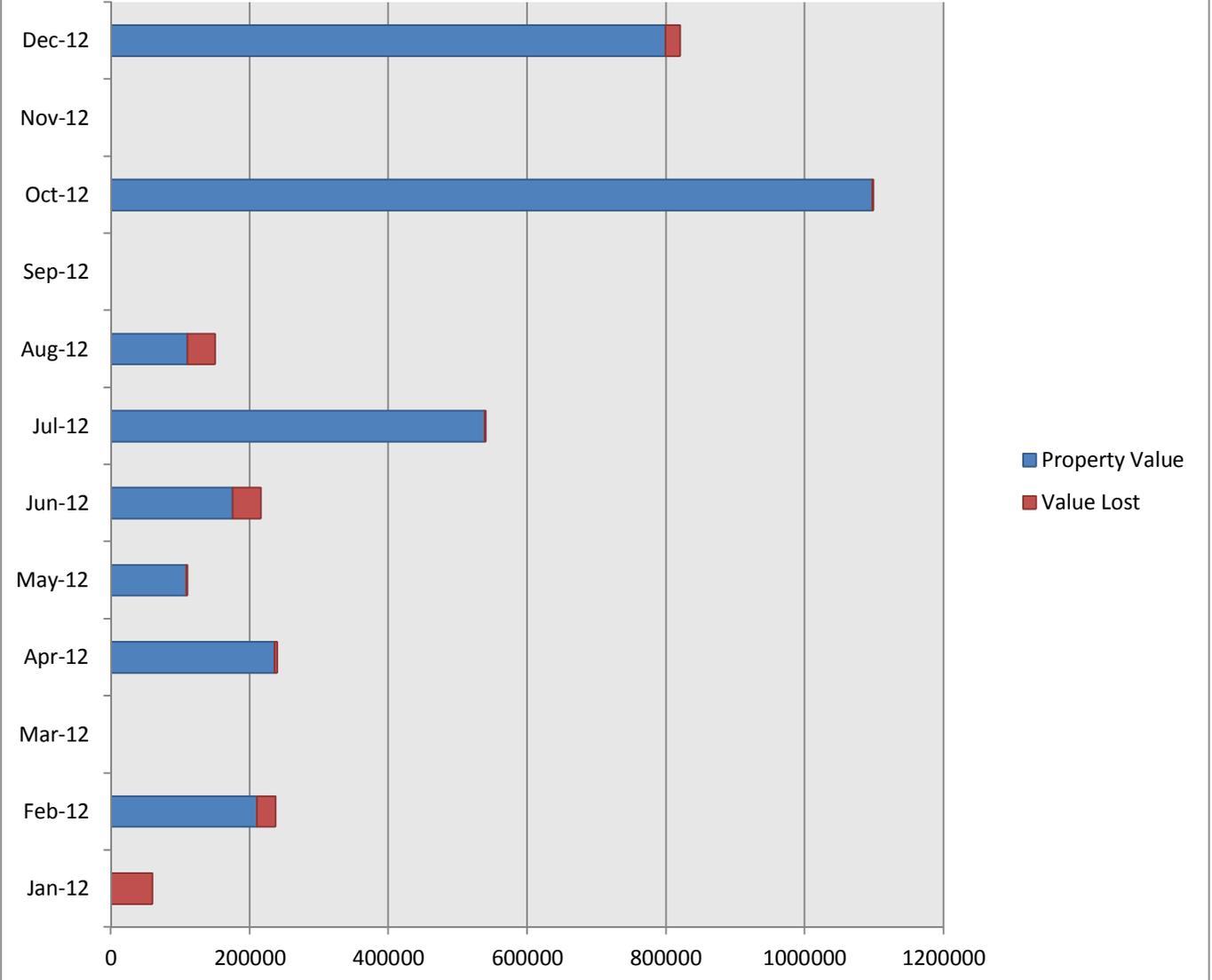
1 –Severe, due to improper use of a flammable liquid.

1 –Moderate, exposed to fire products

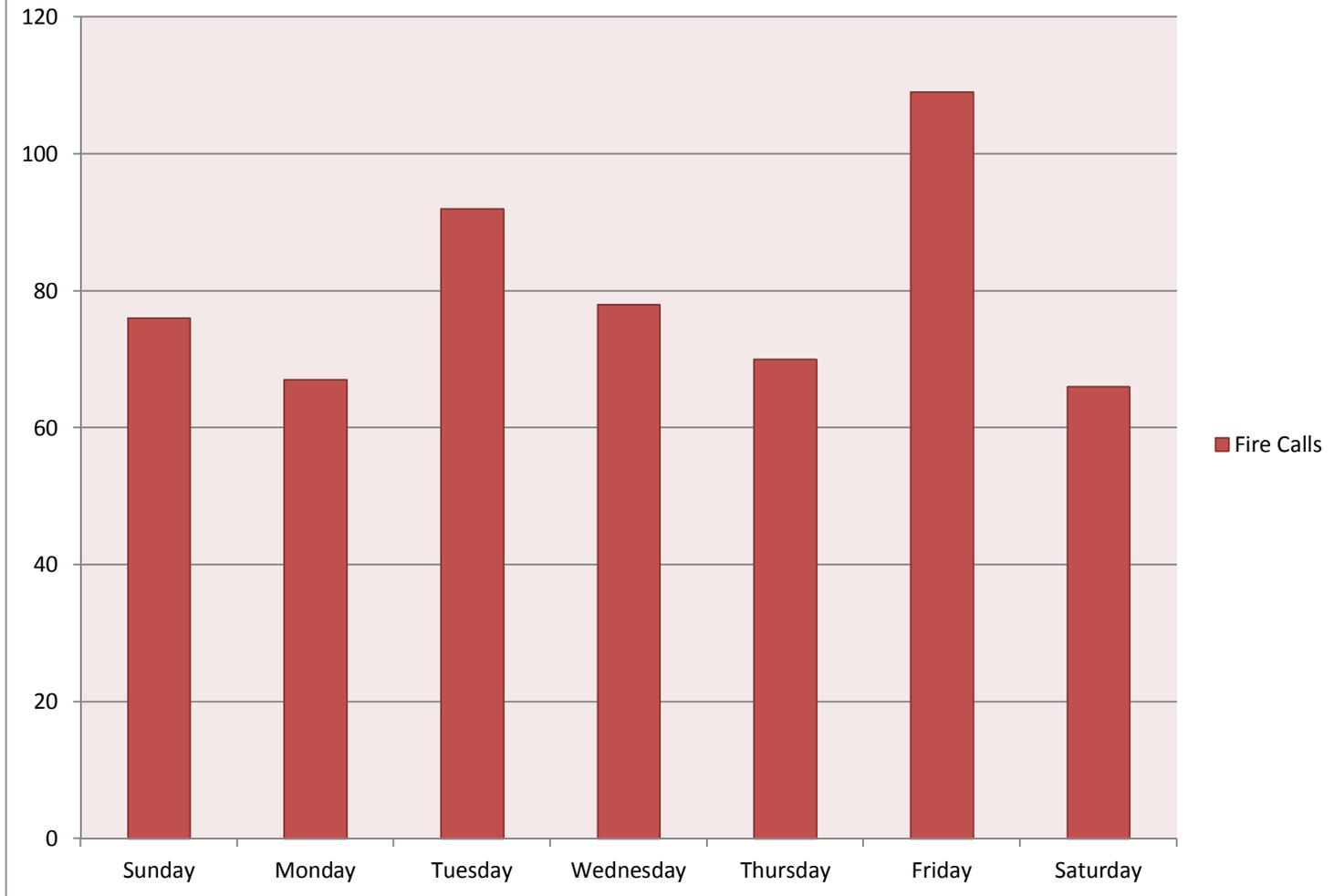
1 – Minor, exposed to fire products



# 2012 Fire Loss Ratio Per Month

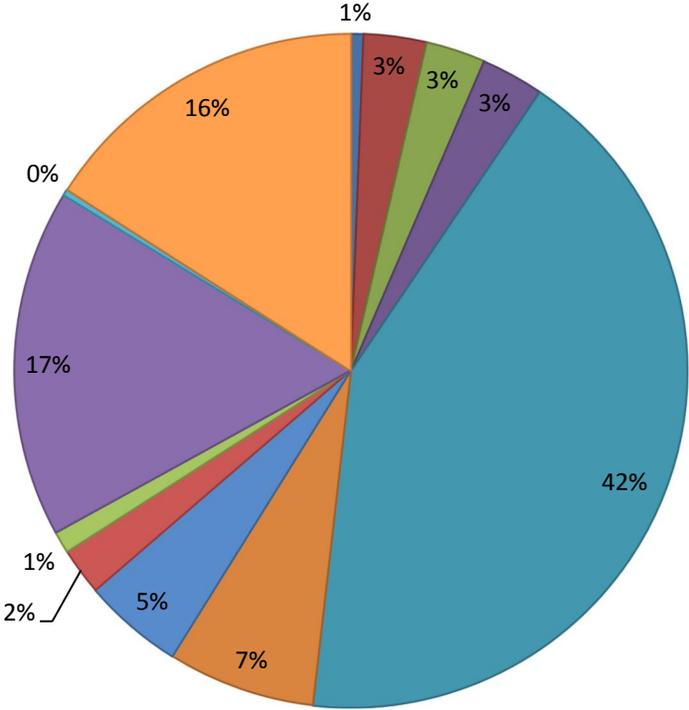


## 2012 Fire Calls By Day



## 2012 Calls by Property Use

- |               |                      |                 |                         |
|---------------|----------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| ■ No Reported | ■ Assembly           | ■ Educational   | ■ Health Care Detention |
| ■ Residential | ■ Mercantile         | ■ Manufacturing | ■ Industrial,Utility    |
| ■ Storage     | ■ Outside or Special | ■ None          | ■ WTFD                  |



**EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES**  
Wooster Division of Fire 2012 Annual Report



The Wooster Division of Fire has (3) three Advanced Life Support units staffed by 34 EMT-Paramedics and 5 EMT-Basics. All fire division personnel are crossed trained as Firefighter/EMTS. In 2012 the Wooster Fire Division responded to 3,206 patient needs. The squad responses are an increase of 3.1% over the 2011 call volume of 3,107 responses.

The increase of squad calls annually for the past 15 years is a concern for the current service we provide and our ability to respond in a rapid manner. This also creates a duplicate call issue that was 30.8% in 2011 as well as 2012. A duplicate call situation occurs when one or more squads are on a call at the same time. The duplicate calls also put pressure on surrounding fire departments to provide service to the City. This is evident in the 5 year average 62.2 responses fire and EMS responses by Wooster Twp. Fire Department. The assistance provided by that department in 5 years from 2000-2005 of 27.4 calls annually.

The fire division responds with an average response time of 5:09. National standard for response time are 4minutes for the arrival of EMT-Basic and 6 minutes for Paramedic assistance.

Supplies, materials and equipment are purchased from the general fund. The city is also very fortunate to have the assistance of the Beaverson Fund, administered through the Wooster Community Hospital, to offset the costs of EMS supplies and materials. This funding has benefitted the division for the past 20 years.

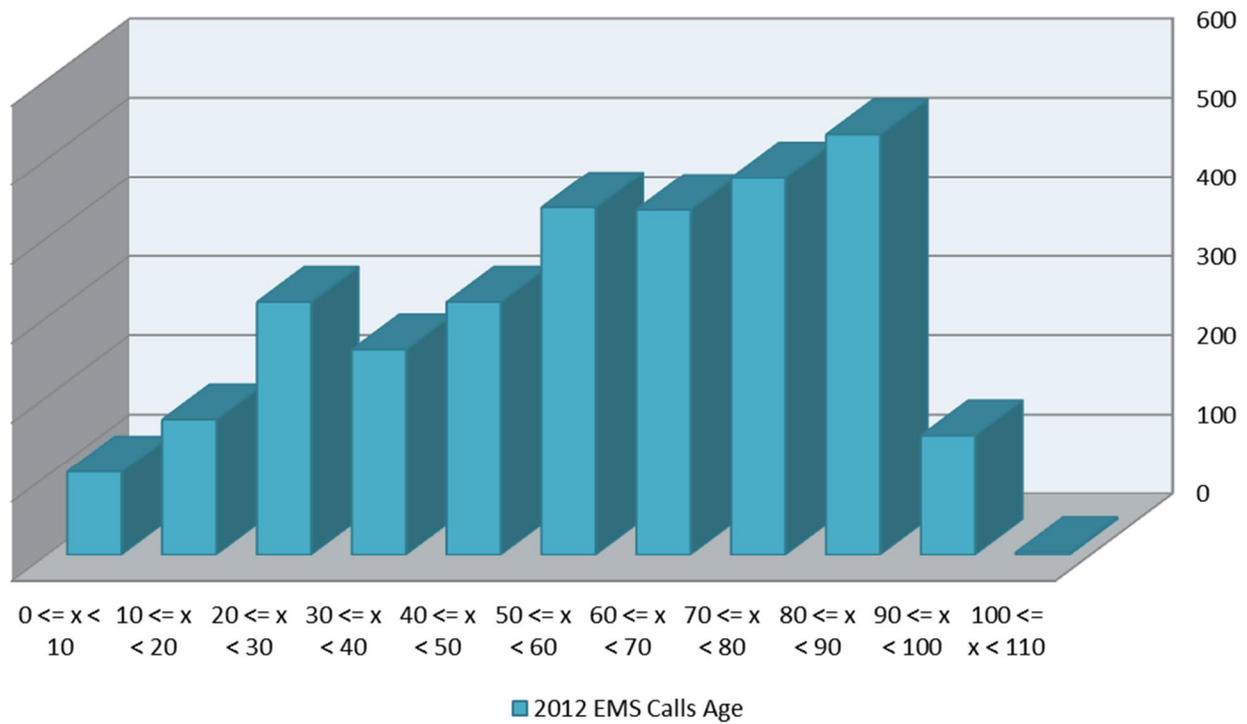
The EMS personnel are required by the State of Ohio to complete at least 92 hours of continuous education over a three year period. This is accomplished within the division by establishing timely training both in house and with online services to provide the hours needed for each member of the division. Members are also trained in Advanced Cardiac Life Support, Pediatric Life Support and Trauma Life Support. Members are also mandated by the state to receive hours the treatment of geriatrics and pediatrics within the 3 year certification period. This training in 2012 equated to over 1,500 hours of training in EMS.

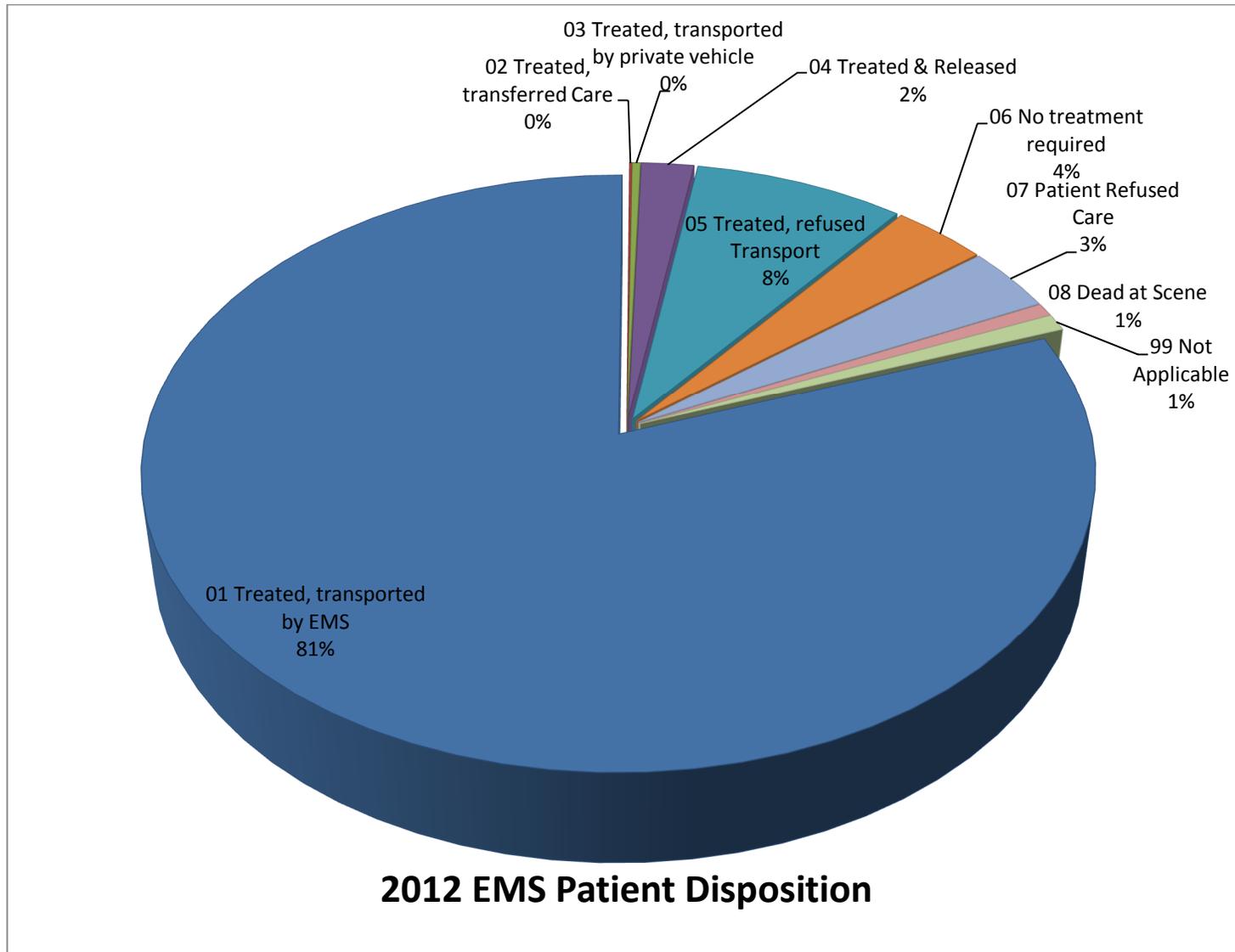
The fire division responds to all types of emergency care needs. The following charts describe the types and number of EMS calls to which we respond to:

### 2012 EMS Provider Impression

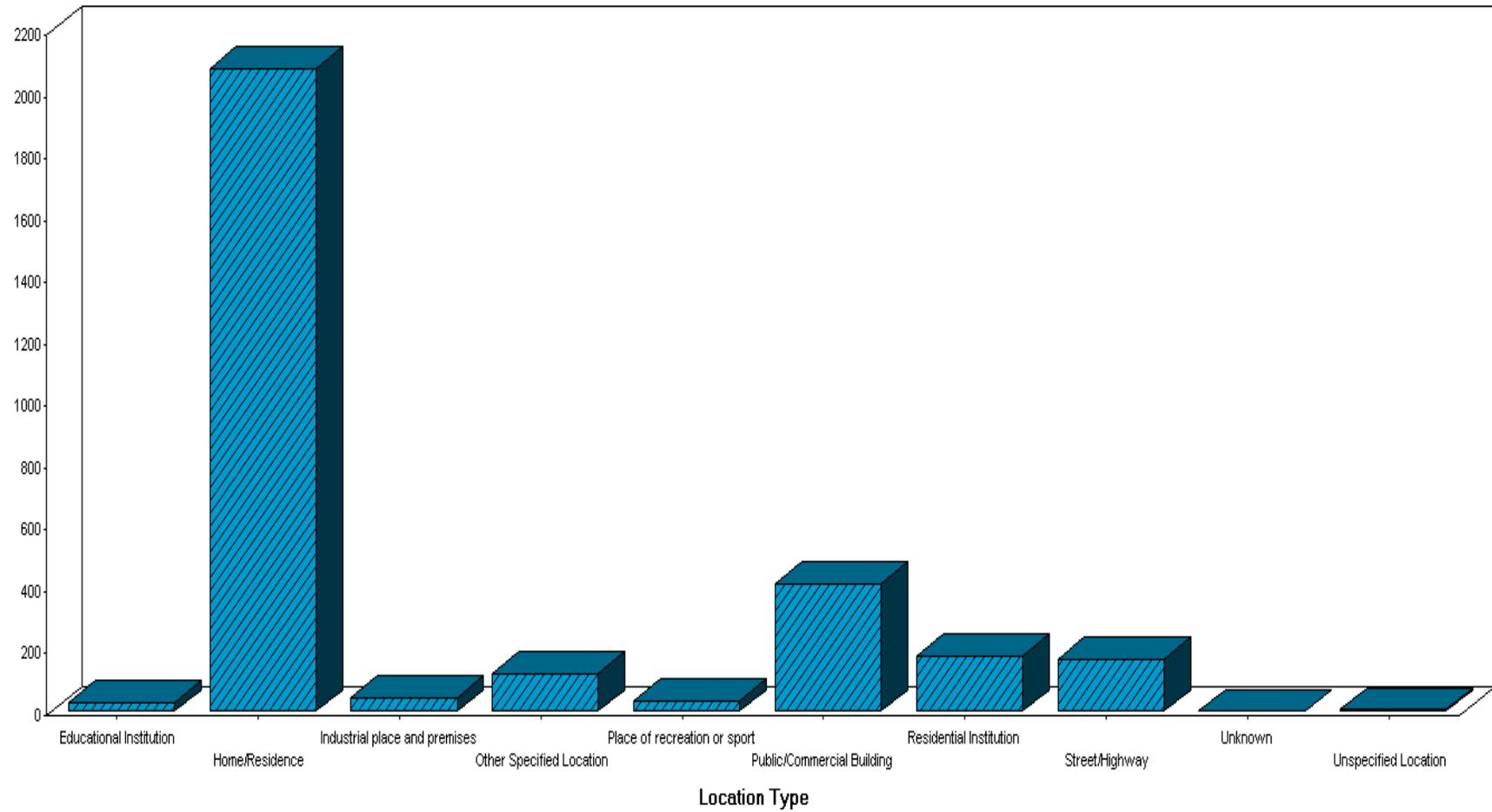
<b>Provider Impression</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>
<b>General Illness</b>	<b>490</b>	<b>681</b>
<b>Allergic Reaction</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Circulatory/Chest Pain</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>332</b>
<b>Cerebral/Neurovascular</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>257</b>
<b>OB/GYN</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Cancer</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Digestive</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>102</b>
<b>Emotional/Mental</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>165</b>
<b>Renal</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Hematological</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Infectious Disease</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Metabolic</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>97</b>
<b>Musculoskeletal</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>354</b>
<b>Respiratory</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>248</b>
<b>Environmental</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>117</b>
<b>Injury/Trauma</b>	<b>407</b>	<b>509</b>
<b>Poisoning</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Arrest</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>680</b>	<b>231</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,107</b>	<b>3,206</b>

### 2012 EMS Calls Age





Location Type  
Alarm Date Between {01/01/2012} And {12/31/2012}



**FIRE PREVENTION**  
Wooster Division of Fire 2012 Annual Report

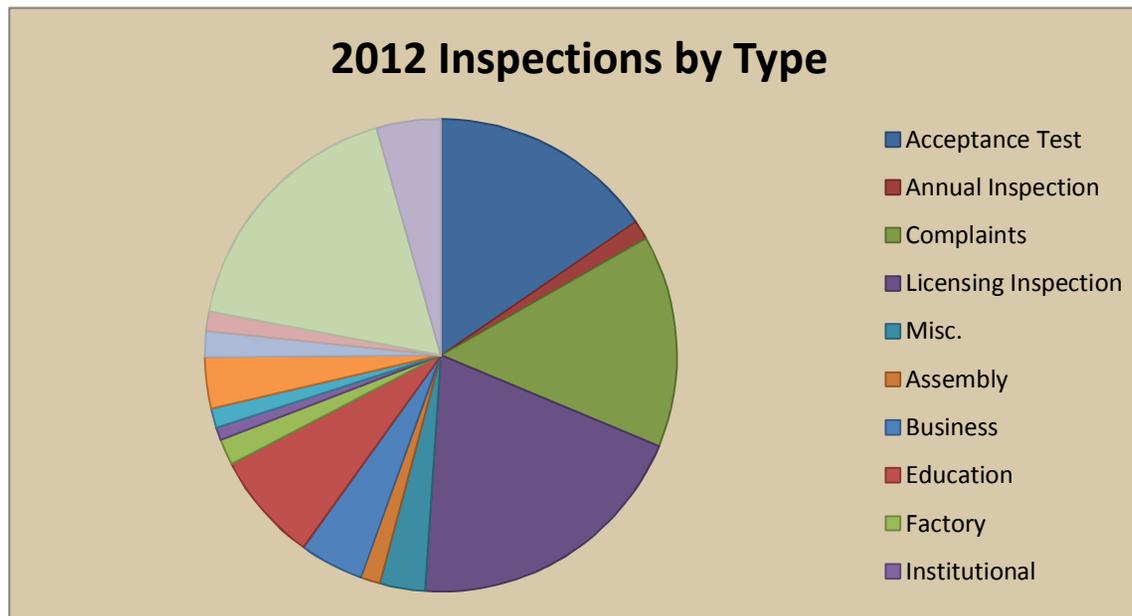


## Fire Prevention and Education

The Fire Prevention Bureau is tasked with several different responsibilities which support the mission of the Division of Fire: Fire Code enforcement, or inspections, public education and working with the Building Department to review new buildings under construction. The mission is, “To save lives and protect property through fire prevention education, inspections and engineering efforts”.

This mission within the division is handled by Assistant Chief Roger Brenneman and Inspector Mike Berry. At the current time Inspector Berry is working on shift and only available to provide support within this bureau for an average of 8 to 16 hours a week. This is not sufficient to provide the safety to the community and the employees of the division that this position requires. I would **strongly** recommend that this position be filled and placed back into the 40 hour week as soon as possible. This position has not been filled fulltime since 2010.

The prevention bureau conducted 227 inspections in 2012. This is slightly below the 232 conducted in 2011. The following graph is a list of the type of inspections.



The inspection numbers are the lowest amount of inspections since the inception of the inspector's position in 1987. The standard of the fire code is to inspect each inspect able property on an annual basis. The City of Wooster has over 1,200 of these properties within our jurisdiction.

The inspection bureau also completed 69 public education programs this year; contacting 556 adults and 1,457 children. This included:

Station Tours	13
Educational Talks	20
Fire Extinguisher Training	16 (320 trained)
Elementary School programs – Fire Prevention Week	20

The inspection bureau also reviewed 74 building plans and submitted to the building department with comment. This is a 32.1% increase from the 51 plans reviewed in 2011. Also within the fire prevention bureau, Lt. Chris Green conducted six (6) Juvenile Fire setter classes in 2012.

**TRAINING**  
Wooster Division of Fire 2012 Annual Report



**Training:**

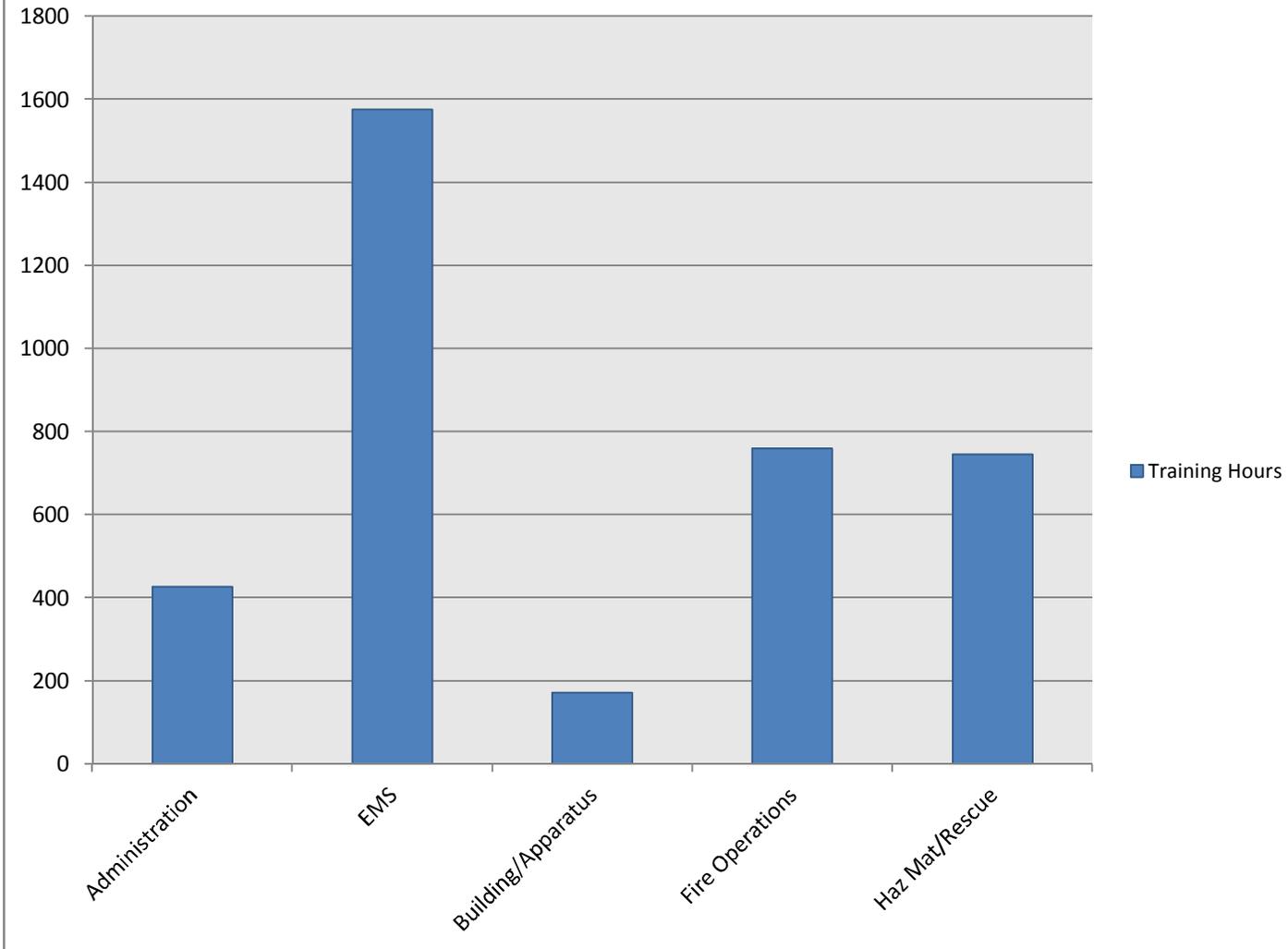
As mentioned in the EMS Bureau information, the State of Ohio requires a mandated number of hours to keep state certification to work as an EMT. This is also true on the fire side of operations as well. The State of Ohio has recently implemented mandated training hours on the member's fire certifications. This not only includes the firefighter certification but those of members who have Fire Safety Inspector, Fire and EMS Instructors certifications.

A certified Career Firefighter is required to have 54 hours of continuous education over a 3 year period. Fire Inspectors and Instructors are required to have those hours plus additional hours during that time span. The division also has annual Hazardous Materials, Confined Space Rescue and are looking toward the possibility of forming a division wide Rapid Intervention Team, which in the future would require at least annual training. Also in 2012 two divisional officers completed NFPA Certification for Fire Officer III.

In 2011 and 2012 we have invested to send an additional 7 members to be educated as Fire Instructors by the State of Ohio. This will allow us to have at least instructor per shift and to put together a measurable instruction program within the division in 2013. At the Current time the Wooster Fire Division has 11 Certified Fire Instructors and 1 EMS Instructor.

In 2012 we entered 3,679.75 hours of training. This is a 17.2% increase over 2011 hours of 3,049. 2012 training hours also consisted of, annual certifications in both confined space rescue and hazardous materials at the operational level as well as blood borne pathogen. The division also completed a Paramedic/Basic EMT refresher (including ACLS and BLS), Fire Ops 101 class and a divisional Rapid Intervention Team training.

## 2012 Training Hours By Category



**FIRE DIVISION APPARATUS**  
 Wooster Division of Fire 2012 Annual Report

Wooster Fire Division, in cooperation with the Wooster PPM Division, are responsible for performing maintenance inspections and repairs on all vehicles on a daily, weekly, monthly and annual basis to maintain the vehicles in running and safe order for optimum efficiency. Both divisions work diligently to keep these vehicles in great shape.

<b>EMS</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Make Model</b>	<b>Fire/EMS</b>	<b>Unit Number</b>
Squad	2007	Medtec	EMS	1305
Squad	2010	Horton	EMS	1306
Squad	2012	Horton	EMS	1307

<b>Fire</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Make Model</b>	<b>Fire/EMS</b>	<b>Unit Number</b>
Engine	1990	Pierce Dash	Fire	135
Quint	2004	Seagrave	Fire	136
Engine	2000	Pierce Dash	Fire	137
Ladder	1997	Pierce Dash	Fire	138
Engine	2008	Pierce Dash	Fire	134
Brush	1989	Ford F-250	Fire	132
Rescue	1999	Horton	Fire	1311

<b>Auxiliary</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Make Model</b>	<b>Fire/EMS</b>	<b>Unit Number</b>
Pickup	1999	Chevy Cheyenne	Fire	1304
Trailer	2006	Scotty Safety	Prevention	1314
Command	2002	Ford Crown Vic	Fire	1309
Pickup	2006	Chevy Silverado	Prevention	1313

<b>Response</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Make Model</b>	<b>Fire/EMS</b>	<b>Unit Number</b>
Command	2008	Chevy Tahoe	Fire	1308
Command	2010	Chevy Colorado	Fire	1310

## **FIRE DIVISION STATIONS**

### Wooster Division of Fire 2012 Annual Report



Fire division personnel take great pride in our equipment and facilities. In 2012 no major renovations were completed at either facility. In 2008 and 2009 a station feasibility study was contracted and completed. The study described both facilities as having no redeeming qualities in both form and function. The study also recommended the replacement of station #2 as well as provided a location to better service response times for the growing city. Since the reduction of city wide budgets in 2008 through today, the station #2 replacement planning has been put on hold. The divisions budget, at the current time, has been very judicious in the monies we have spent on the properties knowing there is a plan in place. If the economic conditions for the city do not improve, another plan for the facilities should be discussed in 2013.

## **SPECIAL UNITS**

### Wooster Division of Fire 2012 Annual Report

The following special units were created to assure the continued efficiency of the various operations within the Wooster Division of Fire. All unit members perform firefighting and emergency medical service duties in addition to their special unit assignments.

#### **Air Pack Maintenance Unit**

This unit ensures that all self-contained breathing apparatus [air packs] are maintained and fully operational at all times. This is accomplished by conducting monthly inspections and annual bench tests on all of the Fire Division's air packs. Routine repairs and part replacements are completed by unit personnel. Major repairs are done by certified professionals due to liability constraints.

#### **Building Supply Procurement Unit**

This unit is responsible for the inventory and ordering of daily station supplies and materials.

#### **Communication Unit**

This unit keeps track of all communications-related equipment within the Fire Division – inventories of base, vehicle and portable radios as well as the routine maintenance and repair of same.

#### **Computer Information Unit**

This unit was created to assist all WFD personnel in working with and becoming proficient in all computer software used in the Fire Division. This unit was created in January 2007 and training of all personnel centered on the new Fire House software for fire and emergency medical service reports.

### **Confined Space Rescue Unit**

This unit was developed in response to the need for local industry to become OSHA compliant. The Wooster Division of Fire has personnel that are trained and equipped to mitigate emergencies in confined spaces; this unit is comprised of a member from each of the three shifts who may be called upon to participate in extra training and who may be called upon to take a leadership role in the event of an actual emergency. The Wooster Division of Fire is the only fire department in the county that provides this service and therefore could be called to respond to an emergency incident anywhere in the county.

### **EMS Equipment Procurement Unit**

This unit is responsible for inventory control, equipment inspection, stock re-supply and proposed new supply, equipment assessment and evaluation, and training on emergency medical service equipment. This is done on a continuing basis to ensure that all Fire Division equipment and supplies are readily available and in the best condition.

### **EMS Training & Rectification Unit**

This unit is responsible for the creating and scheduling of EMS education as well as assisting each member in the 3 year State recertification process.

### **Fire Investigation Unit**

This unit is responsible for the cause and origin of each fire under a threshold and to provide assistance with the State Fire Marshall and the Wooster Police Department in the case of incendiary fires.

### **Fire Investigation Photography Unit**

This unit provides photographic support to the Fire Investigation Unit and is active at fire investigations and at all other incidents requiring photo-documentation utilizing digital photography. This unit is also active in the preparation of training programs and documentary photography for pre-plans.

### **Fuel Powered Equipment Maintenance Unit**

This unit maintains all fuel powered equipment to ensure their best possible condition for immediate use during emergency tactical operations as well as for the daily use of non-tactical appliances.

### **Hazardous Materials Unit**

The Hazmat Unit is responsible for maintaining records of hazardous materials located in facilities within the City of Wooster, filing SARA reports from local businesses, updating resources and assisting with policies and procedures pertaining to hazmat responses.

### **Map Information and Emergency Entry Unit**

This unit is responsible for updating the divisional maps that are on board each response unit as well as the collection and monitoring of keys and or Knox Box locations within the city.

### **Quartermaster Unit**

This unit was established in 2006 and assigned the responsibility of clothing all Fire Division personnel with regular uniforms, dress uniforms and protective turnout uniforms and gear. The unit inspects and orders all new clothing items as well as safety gear worn and/or carried by personnel at emergency scenes.

### **Training Unit**

This unit is responsible for overseeing both fire and emergency medical service training for all personnel.

### **CPR Unit**

This unit is responsible for the recertification of all division members in CPR.

### **Vehicle Information Unit**

This unit is responsible for the design and purchase of new vehicles and fire apparatus for the Wooster Division of Fire. This unit also tracks the maintenance and repair of existing Fire Division vehicles.

## **2013 GOALS and OBJECTIVES**

1. Update and establish new divisional handbook
2. Create core markers that lists Inputs, Outputs and Outcomes to use as a Standard of Cover
3. Research other database software for fire and EMS reporting
4. Complete updated job descriptions
5. Replace Firefighter/Paramedic position that was left vacant in 2010 and put Fire Inspector back in office
6. Review and implement ways to reduce overtime liability
7. Increase fire training in the division by 20% of annual hours
8. Move forward with the station #2 replacement project
9. Move forward with establishing a regional dispatch center

## Wooster Division of Fire

2013

### Business Plan

#### 1.0 Executive Summary

This business plan is based on the current and projected needs based on our two priorities of the Wooster City Division of Fire that consist of responding and planning of emergencies as well as public fire prevention and education. Although a majority of the dated goals are in 2013 and 2014, the reality of emergencies in progress and other needs of the community and administration will affect the true completion dates of the some of the planning projects. Also annual needs that are based on budget approval for specific fiscal years are not included in the document. Once the annual budgets are approved other planning items will be included on that year's basis for completion.

The Fire Divisions' first responsibility is responding to and planning for emergencies. There has been a steady growth in calls for service over the years most notably in Emergency Medical calls. This is not only a local but national trend. This increased calls for service puts pressure on our workforce that has not increased staffing since the early 1990's and in fact since 1998, we have one less member per shift. The State Auditors Performance report in 2012 also shows that compared to other departments we run more calls per population and per employee. See 2012 Year End Report and State of Ohio Performance Audit 2012. It is apparent that we need to start planning for the increasing of staff to assist in the response for calls for service as well as decrease the overtime liability of members who are scheduled to work a 51.7 hour work week but are in fact working close to a 56 hour work week per employee.

This priority is also being met with the planning established in analysis of service and asset management of the business plan. Completing these goals will give us the information to be more efficient, safe and prepared to handle emergency situation when they occur by given the members the tools, education and information to complete essential job functions.

Another priority for the division is to provide fire prevention and education for the community. Since 2010 we have not had a dedicated Fire Safety Inspector in office. This had led to the lowest number of fire inspections since the position was created in 1987. We have also reduced the amount of public safety education within the community because of the vacant position. It is a short term priority to fund the

firefighter position and fill the Fire Inspectors office to meet this priority and to accomplish what we are mandated to do by the State and City Ordinances.

The priorities and objectives, as well as the information learned from benchmarking like cities, are built into the business plan as objectives that need to be complete in the short and long term planning for moving the fire division forward.

## **2.0 Missions, Values and Goals**

### 2.1 New Standard SOP

2.1.1 Establish Mission, values and goals – November 2013

New City Mission, Values and Goals – Spring 2013

2.1.1 New City Employee Handbook – July 2013

2.2.2 Establish or update policy based on Handbook

### 2.2 Rules and Regulations

2.2.1 New Rules and Regulation – November 2013

2.2.2 New Rules roll out January 2014

## **3.0 Analysis of Service**

3.1 Create a List of Inputs, Outputs, and Outcomes – December 2013

3.1.1 Used as a divisional grade card annually

3.1.2 Create Master Spreadsheet for Annual Account and Availability of Info

3.2 Create Standardized Information for Year End Reports

## **4.0 Information Technology**

4.1 EMS Electronic Reporting – January 2014

4.1.1 Resource replacement software for Firehouse Software – October 2013

4.2 MDT's

4.3 Annual Update of COOP Plan – August 2013

## **5.0 Human Resources**

5.1 Inspector Position off Shift - 2014

5.2 Complete New Job Descriptions – August 2013

5.3 Complete New Evaluation Forms – January 2014

5.4 Work to Establish HR Training for Supervisors

- 5.4.1 Evaluations
- 5.4.2 Discipline
- 5.4.3 City Mission and Goals
- 5.5 Hire Firefighter to fill the vacant position created in 2010 – 2014
- 5.6 Hire 3 additional Fire Fighters to reduce overtime liability – 2014, 2015
- 5.7 Assist in the establishment of regional dispatch operation and manning

## **6.0 Asset Management**

- 6.1 Complete Station Replacement – 2014-2018
  - 6.1.1 Establish Costs and Program Station Upgrades
- 6.2 Training Program – January 2013
  - 6.2.1 – Increase Training by 20% and create records as need by ISO Standards
- 6.3 Career Ladder

## **7.0 Finance**

- 7.1 Continue to apply for available grants to offset budget expenses via FEMA
- 7.2 Research new grant sources for city wide and regional dispatch communications

## **8.0 Performance Measurements**

- 8.1 Establish Core Markers for an annual Measurement
  - 8.1.1 Arrest/Viability, Confined to room, Response Times
  - 8.1.2 Based on 5 Objectives – Approval of Administration 2013/2014

## **9.0 Marketing and Information**

- 9.1 Presence on City Website
- 9.2 Facebook/Twitter?

## **CONCLUSION**

As you have read the report, it is evident that we do much more than just respond to fires. The Wooster Division of Fire is a full service, well trained and dedicated department that mitigates the numerous types of emergency situation we respond to. The citizens of Wooster call us when they are in need of immediate assistance and we try our best daily to assist them in their time of need and hopefully we are able to mitigate the circumstances each and every time.

We respond to not only fire calls but calls involving numerous types of medical and injury emergencies. We respond to various types of rescues, hazardous materials, and natural made disasters. We spend time planning and training for each type of response that is needed within the city. This includes maintaining and repairing all of our equipment and apparatus to assure they are in working order when needed.

I have included at the end of this report some frequently asked questions that have posed to the fire division during the end of 2012.

If you need any clarification or more information concerning this report, feel free to contact the Wooster Division of Fire at any time. I and the members of the Wooster Division of Fire would like to thank the community and the administration for their continued support of our division.

**END**

**Wooster Division of Fire 2012 Annual Report**

**Frequently Asked Questions**  
Wooster Division of Fire 2012 Annual Report

**1. How does the Wooster Division of Fire compare in Staffing, Productivity, Annual Cost and Training Hours to other municipalities.**

***Staffing:***

Utilizing 2010/2011 as a statistical starting point, the Wooster Fire Division employs 42 full time department personnel deployed into three shifts of 13 firefighters (39 total), 2 administrators, and one civilian employee clerk/typist. The position of Fire Inspector was vacated by attrition and has remained empty for the last 25 months, the duties absorbed by on-shift personnel. The Wooster Division of Fire currently operates with an administrative and operating staffing level below the average of our peer cities, as defined by the State of Ohio Performance Audit.

The Wooster Division of Fire shift employees work a 51.7 hour work week, 2688.4 hours annually. This cumulative total is paid at a straight hourly rate, exempt from overtime by FLSA guidelines. Administrative personnel work a 40 hour work week, 2080 hours annually, salary based.

***Productivity:***

The Wooster Division of Fire staffs a minimum of 10 personnel at all times, available to respond 24 hours a day within nationally recognized time constraints, arriving with a fully operational force for immediate mitigation of the emergency. The Wooster Division of Fire is the only fire department in the county able to meet the requirements as set forth by the pre-defined national organizations. The scope of practice encompassed by the Division exceeds Fire and EMS calls for service. Daily work duties inclusive of building, vehicle and equipment maintenance, fire inspections, building pre-planning, fire prevention activities, training and continuing education, hose and hydrant testing, and medical instruction for WCH compliment the additional calls for service. Hazardous Materials response, rescue calls (confined space, high angle, trench), public requests for assistance, and the inspection and replacement of home smoke detection equipment are requests for service that are supplied by the Division of Fire that are classified as productive time, but not acknowledged in the query.

***Annual cost of service and associated performance:***

The State of Ohio Performance Audit, inclusive of 2010/2011 data, defines three like communities deemed comparable to the City of Wooster; Ashland, Sidney, and Findley. These cities were chosen based on demographics, organizational structure, and service provided. The State of Ohio acknowledged several important operational facts; the Wooster Division of Fire operates with fewer personnel than our peer cities, to more calls for service. Due to this imbalance, our operating cost is slightly higher per resident; however, the City of Findley does not provide EMS service and does not incur associated costs into its overall budget, altering the accuracy of the cost per resident for the peer average. The higher rate of requests for service with limited staffing reduces the Division's ability to fit mandated training into the daily schedule, reflected in the small hourly training deficit per employee.

Of note is the occurrence of concurrent calls in progress. A study completed by the Wooster Division of Fire analyzing 2008 – 2010 run volumes concluded that there are approximately 500 instances of two ambulances assigned to response during the same period of time, reducing available emergency manpower by 60%. An average of 55 times each year, all three ambulances and an assisting engine company are assigned concurrently, exhausting all on duty manpower. During these occurrences, call back personnel and mutual aid agreements with neighboring departments are relied upon to provide further protection for the citizens of Wooster. The final year of the study, mutual aid from Wooster Township (a combination full time/part time department) was utilized to assist with a fourth request for service 64 times, as all on duty resources had been exhausted. To date, the number of requests for mutual aid continues to rise. These requests for service handled by mutual aid departments are not tabulated into the Wooster Division of Fire's total run volume, affirming that the current staffing model is insufficient to handle the growing rate of requests.

***Training:***

The minimal educational requirement for a Wooster Division of Fire employee, to be completed within their probationary period, includes the completion of the State of Ohio Professional Firefighter course, State of Ohio Paramedic certification, Advanced Cardiac Life Support, Pediatric Advanced Life Support, American Heart Basic Life Support, Hazardous Materials Awareness and Operations, Confined Space Awareness and Rescue, State of Ohio Trauma Triage, Rapid Intervention Team training, Blood borne Pathogen training, and an in house testing/evaluation program on department equipment and the infrastructure of the City of Wooster.

This education is typically achieved through collegiate course work, often part of a 2-4 year degree program at a state or regional education facility.

Many candidates complete these requirements prior to application for employment, reducing financial liability to the City of Wooster.

Once employed on a career department, the State of Ohio requires a minimum of 51 hours per year for each firefighter/medic, a total of 2091 annual training hours for the Wooster Division of Fire. The Division of Fire consistently exceeds this hourly training mandate, maximizing fiscal savings by utilizing in house instructors, grant monies for training aids and materials, and exchange of teaching services to Wooster Community Hospital personnel in exchange for medical liaison services. The Wooster Division of Fire strives to attain the highest level of professional education and proficiency.

The State of Ohio peer cities are held to the same standard; whereas the education and training requirements for our surrounding county departments are less stringent in content, achievement level, and mandated hours.

## **2. Do you consider personnel staffing by anticipating time of calls as it relates to staffing?**

The Wooster Division of Fire does mirror national request for service chronologic time of call averages. Sixty Six percent (66%) of EMS calls for service are between 8am and 8pm, as reported in 2012 National Run Statistics. We do not vary staffing during the late night and early morning hours, as nationally, 71% of the reported home structure fires and 84% of the fatal residential fire injuries occurred in one- or two-family homes, the majority between the hours of 11 pm and 7 am\*. To increase the probability of victim survival and to continue to offer the level of service required for minimal property loss, maintaining 24 hour minimum staffing of 10 fire fighters is a necessity. Each of the State of Ohio 2012 Performance Audit Peer Cities staff evening and early morning hours in the same manner.

The consideration of part time personnel to *supplement* the current minimum staffing has been considered by administration. The disadvantages of part time staffing are a complex hurdle for the minimal fiscal value returned; recruiting/retaining a sufficient number of properly trained staff who are available to be scheduled, equipping each member with required personal protective equipment(\$2500-\$3500 each), the additional costs of employees to the workers compensation pool and related benefit expenses, and allocating administrative responsibilities to scheduling, tracking of payroll, training, and state required certifications cumulatively would overwhelm the two administrative staff currently employed. Advantages include adding personnel during probable high frequency call periods to cover more of our own calls, eliminating mutual aid requests that burden our neighboring departments and the ability to evaluate performance and hire from the part time staff. I feel it is also important to advise, that some of the local departments that have, in the past, used an entire part-time staffing model have begun to add full-time personnel to supplement the coverage needs of their communities. This would include, Central Fire, Wooster Twp. and Chippewa Twp. to name several. Due to the current budget restraints, the startup cost of the program is prohibitive.

### **3. Can Wayne County provide EMS services in the City of Wooster?**

County run EMS is currently being employed throughout the nation. This organizational structure is successful in areas where the level of service demand is shared equally across the populace/area and has developed as an initial response configuration. In Ohio, the Ohio Revised Code does not require the County government to provide for fire and EMS service, so this would be a financial expenditure that would need to be evaluated, determined to be a financial savings to all entities within the service area, accepted by the populace, and then funded through a new tax/levy initiative. The unfortunate reality is that the City of Wooster generates a request for service volume that dwarfs many of the outlying areas demands in Wayne County, even when combined. The reliance on mutual aid from neighboring departments already taxes others resources to our benefit, is it fair to ask the entire county to carry our burden?

### **4. Is the current staffing model efficient and fiscally prudent?**

The recognition that the Division's staffing has changed very little since the early 1970's is correct; we are operating with similar staff numbers today as we did 40 years ago despite the escalating call volume, expanding scope of practice, and advanced educational requirements and state mandates. It can be argued that like most successful business, we have become leaner as an organization and more efficient in operation, demanding more from our employees. To increase productivity 168% in call volume alone, while utilizing the same number of employees, is an envious business model, especially for a service based industry such as public safety.

Nationally, the 24 hour shift is the most prominent schedule with the fire service as it directly reduces public costs by limiting staff personnel and associated financial requirements while providing greater value for each hour worked.

As previously noted, The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) exempts firefighter and other employees from certain overtime rules. These exemptions allow firefighters to work their 24 hour shift at straight time wage. Other professions receive overtime after an 8 hour work day or a 40 hour work week. A firefighter who works 2,688.4 hours a year, as our department does, is working on "straight time". Someone working a 2080 hour year would receive 608.4 hours of overtime to be at work for the same period.

In closing, I hope that I have conveyed that for several years we have been walking the line between being proactive versus reactive, based on the increase of calls for service and the related expenses. At this time we have become a total reaction related service. I hope you can use the information provided to educate as well as facilitate meaningful dialog reference the inquiry presented. I hope we have addressed the goal of providing transparent information that can be used effectively by the administration and other community member's.

**Addendum** –

To facilitate continued research and to insure accurate information, all year end reports are available by request through the Division of Fire records office. The contact number is (330) 263-5266 or may be requested in person at Station #1, 510 North Market Street.

\*These estimates are based on data from the U.S. Fire Administration's (USFA's) National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) and the National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA's) annual fire department experience survey.  
<http://www.nfpa.org/assets/files/pdf/os.homes.pdf>





## **Position Evaluation/Justification**

### **3 Members to Overstaff**

The following is a description of the justification for the addition of three (3) firefighter/paramedics within the ranks of the Wooster Fire Division will allow for the ability to meet the demands for calls of service, mandated benefits with our collective bargaining agreements as well as increase our ability to provide a better service for the members and the citizens by being more proactive in our planning for emergencies. Please review the State of Ohio Performance Audit 2012, reference our call volume as compared to other cities. Additional members will also allow us to decrease our overtime liability to the general fund. The loudest argument concerning our staffing in the last 6 months has not been that we have too many members, it has been that we pay too much overtime to the members we have.

The use of three (3) extra members within the division will allow us to be proactive in response and planning. The extra members would be assigned to the engine which will give us a 4 member crew as recommended by NFPA/ICMA and ISO standards on the fire side. This extra member per shift will also allow us to have all three (3) squads fully staffed and reduce our need for assistance from surrounding fire departments and reduce the pressure to meet their own demands for calls for service and planning. In the planning process we would have members available to complete projects such as pre planning, tours of facilities, and public relations and education to name a few.

As we have discussed as several occasions concerning staffing, there are two staffing models commonly used within the fire service as well as private business. With the increase in call volume and our actual minimum manning below that of the mid 1990's we have come to a point in which our ability to respond to calls for service is becoming difficult. That is apparent in the increased calls for assistance from Wooster Township Fire Department. In 2006 the WTFD calls for mutual was 27, since then, they have averaged 59.8 calls over the past 6 years.

A study also completed to look at concurrent calls for service from 2008 to 2010 concluded there were about 500 instances in which both squads were out of service on a call. This situation does not allow the staffing of a third squad. During the same time period we had 55 instances when all members were tied up on concurrent calls leaving no other vehicles to respond. This study did not count fires in which all units were on a scene and we received another emergency call.

To better understand the need for personnel based on budget alone, it is important to identify the fiscal results, non-monetary costs and unintended consequences of implementing the constant-staffing model which is the model we currently use. In tight or emergency budget conditions, constant staffing has some advantages, but its consequences have been slow to appear, but are real nonetheless.

**Constant staffing** means staffing an operation with just enough positions to cover all seats — leaves or vacancies are covered with overtime assignments for off-duty employees. At the current time we have 13 members per shift. With time off benefits such as vacation and Kelly days we must allow at least 3 members off on a given day. This means that any time someone is off duty for unscheduled time such as sick or injury leave, we need to bring in a member on overtime to fill the manning of 10. In the 2013 study we are showing with the constant staffing model we have paid an average of \$331,311.55 a year and within that amount 80% is toward keeping manning.

**Overstaffing** also is a common staffing model. As the name implies, overstaffing means carrying enough personnel to cover leaves without incurring overtime expenses. Both models assume a base staffing for necessary operational coverage. The request for 3 additional firefighters, or 1 member per each shift and keeping minimum manning at 10, would allow for a member to be off duty and we would not need to call a member back for overtime. In the study completed in 2013 we used 8 years' worth of data to show the overtime savings if one member per shift was available to fill a manpower need. The study shows that in 2013 to 2015 we could see a saving of \$98,000, \$86,000 and \$39,000 over the upcoming years. Included in the calculation are the costs of each firefighter/paramedic minus the overtime saved to cover the manning.

To get the division back to full manning and reduce the overtime liability, the division would need to hire four (4) additional members. Under this scenario we would see an increase to our line item over the same three (3) year period. By the end of 2015 we would see an increase to the personal service budget of \$59,617. This would not include the revenue created by the fire inspector for inspection fees.

By switching this department to overstaffing, the fiscal savings would come from the cost difference between 3 full-time employees and annual overtime liability for operational staffing. In the example department, a fully loaded employee (salary plus benefits) costs 163%. Overtime costs are 178%. Therefore the savings equals the 3 full-time employees multiplied by the annual salary savings of a fully loaded employee less overtime costs. The savings come because extra employees and they bring their own leave liability to the equation.

So, what are some of problems of staying in the constant staffing model? Since 1997 we have been in this model as means for manning. This was created when the bargaining agreement moved the work week from 56 hours to 51.7 hours. During this hour decrease no other employees were hired to fill the known 1 less member per shift with not decrease in manning. There is a re-allocation of the cost of overstaff employees, less the savings, to all the remaining employees in the form of overtime.

There is a lot of discussion in the firehouse about value of overtime compensation. These topics can include firefighters not raising their standard of living to the extra pay, that it's great, to not always count on it, some wanting to work overtime at one station but not another, and complaints of unfairly losing a place on the overtime list. On the up side, employees can earn more money on their primary occupation. On the down side, there is administrative, labor and contractual energy invested to ensure equity and

reduce or prevent grievances as well as finding members available to fill vacancies. Questions regarding what to do about those who choose not to work overtime and how to address those that work a bulk of the time need to be addressed.

This overtime compensation increase has other impacts as well. While base salary compaction doesn't occur, annual earnings compaction does. And while that's not a factor between ranks that can earn overtime, it matters greatly for ranks that do not. For example an Assistant Chief, who is exempt from overtime earnings, may earn 8% more than a captain. But that Captain can earn more actual money than the Assistant Chief by working overtime shifts. The increase amount of overtime also has an effect on the members who work the overtime. Since the reduction of weekly hours, the members on actual average work close to 56 hours a week. The bulk of the overtime is worked by about 20% of the members.

There evolves a new disincentive to promote to an overtime-exempt position. An officer may ask why move to Chief or Assistant Chief, when he or she earns more money as a captain or Lieutenant. The reasons are personal and understandable, but combining these consequences shrinks the pool of qualified internal candidates who want a promotion to the chief officer levels and of those who can be called back in an emergency.

The greater availability of overtime allows employees to be more discriminating in choosing to not work overtime during the day, take department-driven special assignments. Rational self-interest results in people turning down overtime in favor knowing that they will call for an overtime turn, usually in the same pay period.

One consequence of a constant staffing is more operational challenges. Some departments have seen an increase in mandatory hiring for short-duration overtime to accomplish critical department business. One college fire academy routinely has instructors not showing up because they've accepted or been forced into an overtime shift.

There is also the loss of the added capacity that overstaffing provides. On the days when the extra positions were available, coverage for things like special details and meetings was easy. In the constant staffing model, it is an overtime cost that is often unachievable. Mid-shift vacancies, due to emergency leave or department business, could be covered more easily in the overstaff model. In the constant-staffing environment, special consideration and arrangements must be made for reliable, quick coverage. On a number of occasions, we have ordered members back to shift or ran short manning for a period of time.

The inclusion of Compensatory Time also increased our need to call back off duty members and it is increasingly difficult to fill those positions. Fundamentally, in the constant staffing model every single vacancy — hourly, daily or longer — requires a personnel move that may include hiring. That could mean rank-for-rank hiring of relief or moving qualified reliefs into the vacancy and backfilling the source with overtime.

Health and wellness also can be affected. More 12-hour overtime shifts means fewer nights at home. This topic has been studied in numerous publications for both public and private sector employee application. The reality is that I can tell in attitude and work performance who has worked numerous overtime hours within the division. If this attitude is prevalent at work, their personal lives must also be affected.

Nonetheless, careful contemplation of the pros and cons of staffing strategies, and an explicit understanding of the why's and how's help departments operate efficiently, safely, and with satisfied employees, elected officials, and citizens.

I believe the hiring of three (3) additional firefighter/paramedics will have huge impact on our delivery of service and safety as well as decreasing our overtime liability. It is apparent, the assumption of saving budget dollars by an increased overtime cost is really effective in either cost control or job functions. The overtime rate is still higher than the salary and benefit rates and with each overtime hour paid, we are still paying a portion of some of the benefits at a higher rate.