



PARKSVILLE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

ANNUAL REPORT



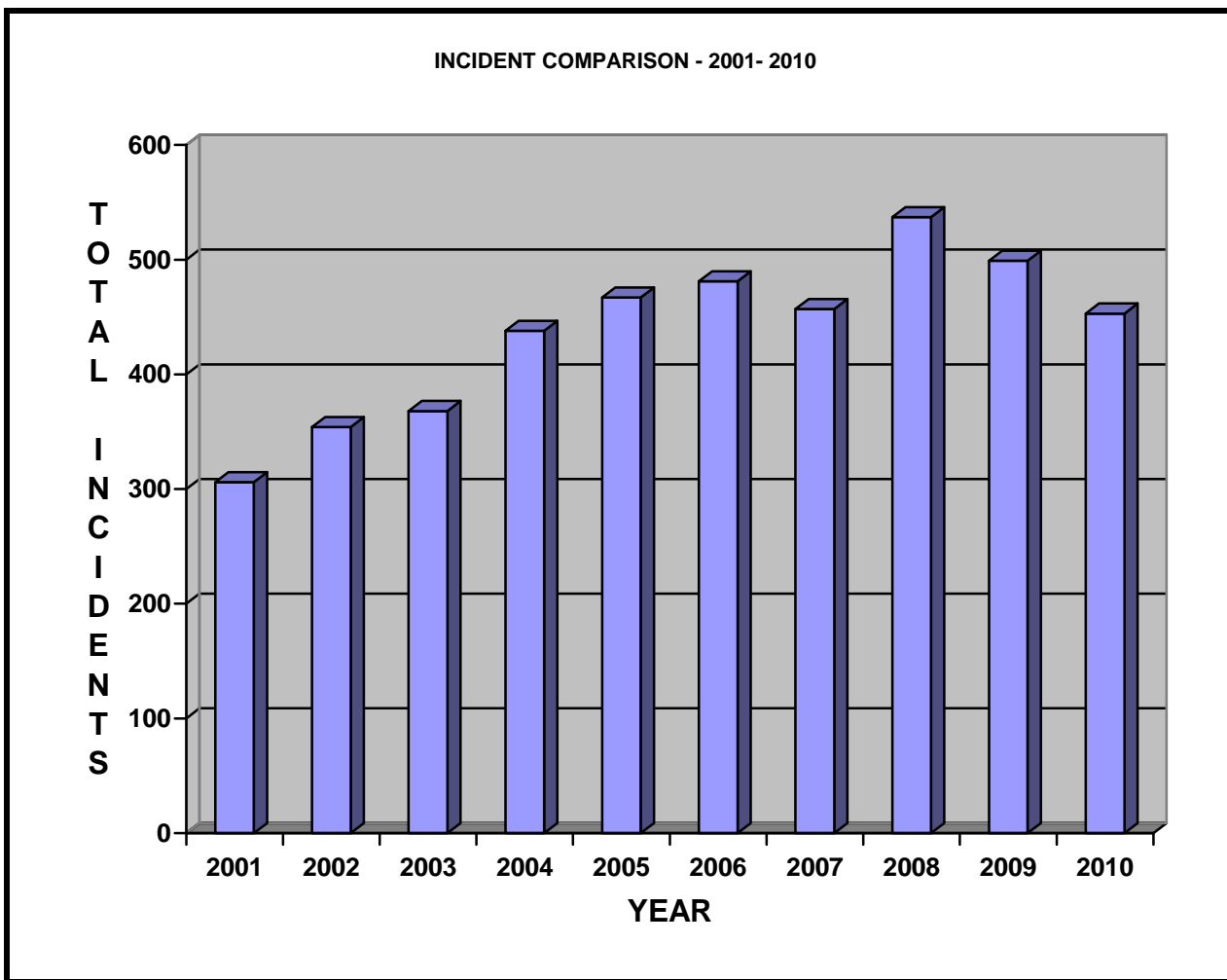
2010



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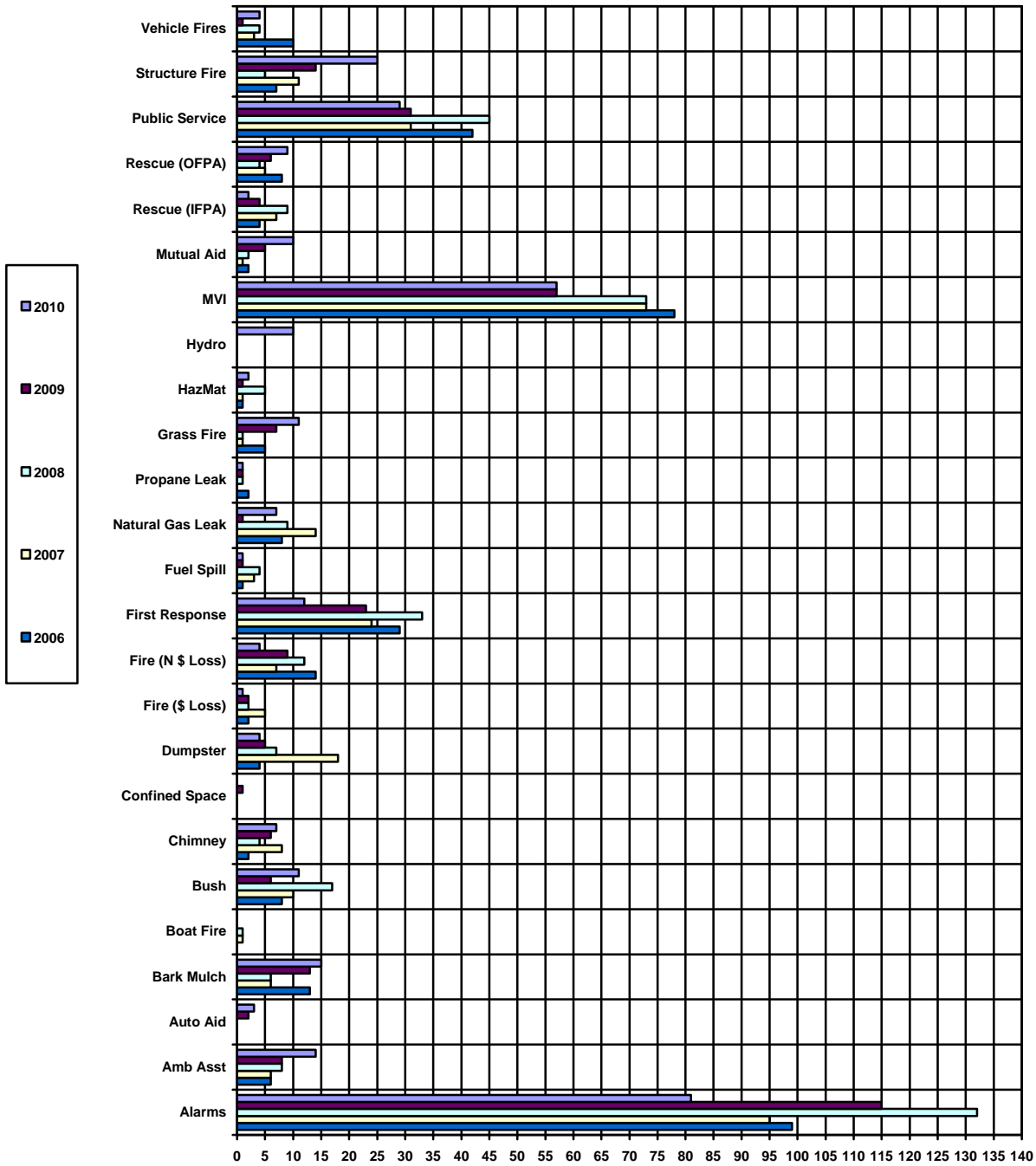
This department responded to 324 emergency calls during 2010 with another 129 recorded incidents including public education events, burning complaints, and equipment maintenance totaling 2746.7 man-hours. The total number of recorded incidents actually decreased for the second year in a row by 46 incidents from 2009. Accordingly, the number of man-hours required to deal with these incidents decreased as well. On average, incidents required approximately 6.06 person hours in 2010 versus 7.14 person hours in 2009.

The following chart shows the trends of the total incidents that the department has dealt with on an annual basis. While the total number of incidents has dropped slightly for 2009, there appears to be an overall continued upward trend of both emergency and non-emergency incidents.



The chart on the following page is a comparison of the number and type of calls responded to for the period 2006 – 2010.

5 YEAR EMERGENCY CALL COMPARISON
2006 - 2010



The following is a brief description of the most common incidents that the department typically deals with on a day to day basis.

ALARMS (Accidental and Malicious)

While the number of calls for Alarms has dropped for the second year in a row, calls for Alarms ringing or False Alarms continue to be the largest part of the department's call volume (17.9%). Calls for alarms decreased from 113 in 2009 to 81 in 2010. As calls for alarms ringing may be considered "nuisance" calls, it is important that this department still responds as it does to any other type of call. The department responded to a couple of Alarms calls in 2010 where the alarms notified the fire department early and significant damage was averted due to the early notification.

It is anticipated that these type of calls will continue to be a significant percentage of calls for the department due to the fact that more and more homeowners are installing residential alarm systems to help protect their property as well as an increase in the number of systems installed in commercial properties. The vast majority of the calls for alarms ringing are to residential occupancies. In most cases, the homeowner is unaware of steps to be taken to prevent these types of calls and in most cases the fire department does not have to respond to the same residence. In these cases, the department provides the homeowner with some tips on how to prevent the false alarms from occurring in the future.

MOTOR VEHICLE INCIDENTS

Response to Motor Vehicle Incidents (MVI's) account for 12.6% of the department's call volume. The number of Motor Vehicle Incidents that the department responded to in 2010 remains similar to the 2009 level, 57 calls. In most cases, the Duty Officer responded to the incidents and was able to deal with the situation without calling out a crew for further assistance. The fire department is requested to attend these type of incidents to provide scene safety for other responding emergency agencies.



RESCUE/EXTRICATION CALLS

The number of rescue/extrication calls in 2010 remained similar to 2009 volumes (11 in 2009 and 11 in 2009). PVFD provides rescue/extrication services outside of our Fire Protection area, typically the Inland Hwy and the Errington FPA, and has done so since the mid 1970's. In particular, the department is dealing with scenes that are a result of higher speeds with vehicles going off the road. These type of incidents result in significantly more damage to the vehicle and making rescue of the occupant more challenging. As traffic volumes continue to rise within the area, the potential for continued increases for extrication calls is very real.



MEDICAL AID/FIRST RESPONSE/AMBULANCE ASSIST CALLS

The number of requests for First Response/Medical calls in 2010 decreased slightly. The department was requested by BCAS to respond to 26 First Response/Medical/Assist calls down from 31 in 2009. Presently, the fire department only responds to these calls when an ambulance will be delayed for more than 15 minutes. In 2009, the City of Parksville signed an agreement with the Emergency Health Service Commission to provide both the authority and indemnification for the department to respond to these type of calls. While the call volume for this type of incident is relatively low (5.7% of total incident volume,) it is critically important that the department maintain the necessary skills required to aid in these calls. Not only does it allow us to serve the public, it is also for the protection of the membership who respond to all types of emergency calls.

DOLLAR LOSS FIRES/STRUCTURE FIRES

Fires with a dollar loss totaled \$541,574.00 for 2010 compared to \$748,240.00 for 2009. These type of incidents represent 3.7% of the total call volume of the department. Incidents at SFD's remains to be the largest number of this call type. Even with the low incident rate for these type of calls, it is the type of incident that the department must prepare for in order to reduce the impact of the fire and also to provide members with the necessary skills to perform their required duties in a safe and efficient manner.

It is this type of high profile incident that the department is measured against in determining how efficient and skilled the members are.



PUBLIC SERVICE

The Public Service category covers a wide variety of incidents. These would typically include Duty Officer responses to enquiries or concerns from the public such as problems with smoke detectors, smoke odours, etc. While the nature of these calls is typically minor in nature, the expectation from the public is that a representative of the Fire Department will be able to come out and assist them with their concern. These type of calls provide the department with an opportunity to educate the public on the particular issue.

AUTOMATIC AID

The department entered into an Automatic Aid Agreement with the Town of Qualicum, Errington Fire Dept, and Coombs/Hilliers Fire Dept. This Agreement was established to ensure sufficient resources are initially dispatched to pre-determined buildings in each area. In particular, this agreement is used to ensure the potentially needed resources are sent to Care facilities, High-Rise buildings, and other buildings considered to be high risk for the particular fire department. As this was the first full year that the Agreement has been in place, it appears that the it is working as intended. Parksville responded to 2 separate incidents in Qualicum, while Qualicum and Errington responded to 4 separate incidents in Parksville. While each of these calls were minor in nature, the additional initial response would have a significant impact on the overall outcome should there be an event that turns out to be more than "alarms ringing".

MUTUAL AID

The department responded to 10 requests for Mutual Aid from other departments in 2010 versus 5 requests in 2009. While the calls that were responded to had significant potential, the overlying reason for the requests are for additional manpower to properly deal with the situation. This is due to the fact that all fire departments in the area are feeling the "crunch" when it comes to the attraction and retention of volunteers. The availability of members, particularly during daytime hours is a strain on all departments in the event of a significant event in the community.

EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE

Weekly equipment checks continued throughout the year in order to ensure that all equipment was checked on a regular basis. This requires extra effort and time by all the department members to ensure that equipment is in good working order and is put away properly.

RESPONSE TIMES

The average response time for an emergency call in the Fire Protection District was 5 minutes 23 seconds. This is the time from the initial page until the arrival of the first unit, -- the Duty Officer in most cases. This time varies slightly depending on the location of the incidents responded to. The muster time for a crew to respond to the fire hall, crew the apparatus, and begin a response is an average of 6 minutes 43 seconds. The driving time to an incident is totally dependant on its location. The only variable in the driving time is the traffic or weather conditions. These times are consistant with past years and seem to be acceptable for the type of operations that the department is currently able to provide.

MEMBERSHIP/STAFFING

Membership changes continue to happen within the department. The department again had to bring in a new recruit class to fill vacant spots created by the departure of members. A total of 8 members left the department in late 2008 and 2009 creating the need to bring in additional members to fill the vacancies.

In May of 2009, the department brought in our largest recruit class to date. A total of 9 new members were brought in to bring the roster up to a full complement. As of the end of 2009, 6 of these members are still with the department. As is usually the case, some of the members left the department due to moving from the area, or lack of available time to commit.

The department currently has 33 members (not including the Fire Chief, Deputy and Assistant Chiefs.) Currently, 57% of the membership has less than 5 years experience. This has a significant impact on the department's ability to respond to certain situations. While the experience level is low, the willingness and effort is high. In order to combat the lack of experience level in the newest members, an aggressive training program has been implemented that has proven to be successful in bringing the newest members up to a level where they can perform their required duties in a safe and efficient manner.

These new members, along with the current members, continually display a keen interest in taking any and all training made available to them in order to improve their skill levels.

The following chart gives a breakdown of the current experience level of the department:

	Less than 1 year	1 – 5 Years	5 – 10 Years	10 – 20 Years	20 Years +
2010	6	12	10	5	2
2009	6	13	11	5	1
2008	6	16	10	5	1
2007	8	12	7	5	1
2006	5	14	5	4	4

FIRE HALL EXPANSION PROJECT

Construction of the expanded fire hall began in the summer of 2010. Work is progressing at a satisfactory pace and portions of the building should be useable early in 2011. As of the end of December, 2010, the project is on time and under the budget. This is also taking into account the additional costs incurred as a result of the potential Telus facility that was considered to be part of the facility and finally rejected.

According to Liberty Contract Management, the anticipated date for the final works to be completed and occupancy to be granted is August of 2011. Having said this, there is real potential for the project to be completed earlier than this date.

TRAINING

THE TRAINING OF FIREFIGHTERS IS CRITICAL IN PROVIDING EFFECTIVE CUSTOMER SERVICE, SATISFACTORY JOB PERFORMANCE AND SAFETY.

The Parksville Volunteer Fire Department has an intensive training program which includes a wide range of emergency service delivery related subjects.

There are multiple levels of fire, medical and specialized training delivered and/or attended throughout the year. Training includes items such as, education to obtain or maintain a license or credential, recruit training, new response concepts, skills maintenance, special technical rescue training, and other training as necessary.



Training occurs at regular weekly practices held each Monday night and at extra training sessions offered on weekdays/weekends, both locally and non-local, throughout the year. The focus of training continues to be firefighter and public safety in turn providing for a professional and effective fire service for the citizens and visitors served by the Parksville Fire Department.



2010 Training Comments:

Despite hall renovations that caused some nuisance in terms of training, 2010 was yet another productive and successful training year. Members of the Parksville Volunteer Fire Department continued to show dedication through their commitment to participation in training.

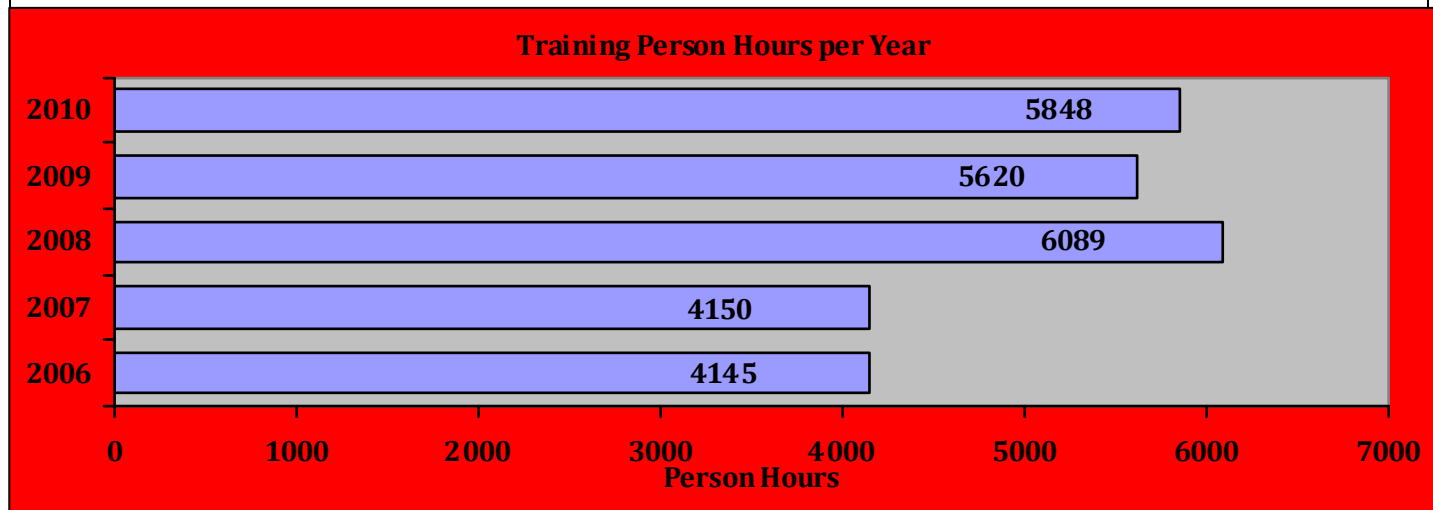
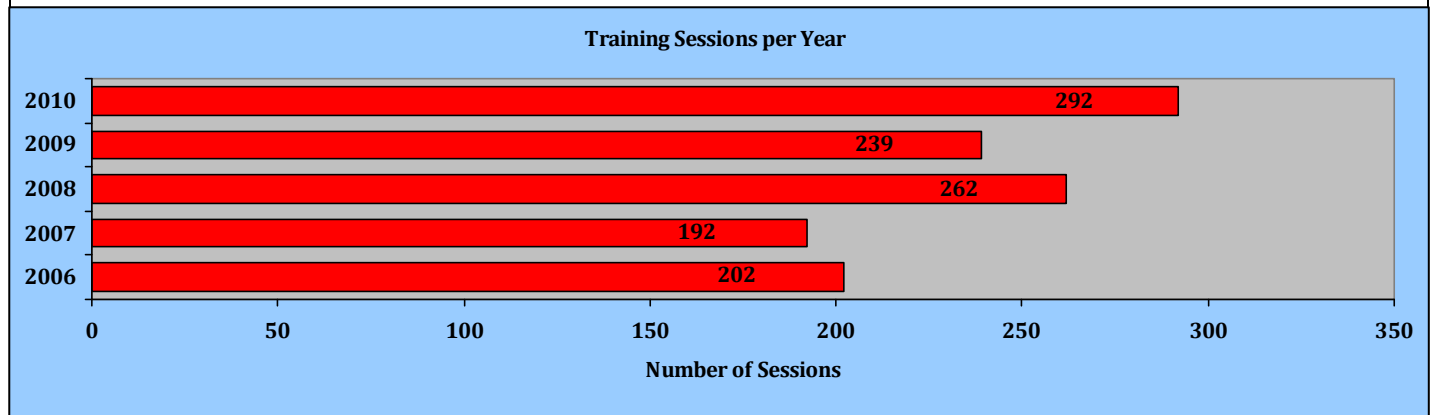
2010 Training Highlights:

- 👤 **Six (6)** firefighters completed recruit training.
- 👤 **Two (2)** members completed technical rope rescue training.
- 👤 **An Automatic-Aid** practice scenario was held jointly with Qualicum Beach Fire Rescue.
- 👤 **High-rise Operation** training day was held at the Nanaimo Fire Training Centre and was attended by **fourteen (14) members**.
- 👤 **Eight (8)** members started the recruit training program in May of 2010.
- 👤 **Training** Centre improvements included preparation for the modular Technical Rescue/SCBA Maze training prop.
- 👤 **Driver** training evaluations were completed for **three (3)** members.
- 👤 **First Responder Program** medical training certification or recertification was completed by **Nine (9) members**.
- 👤 **Five (5)** technical rescue practices were completed.
- 👤 **One (1)** members completed the BC Evaluator program (2 days).
- 👤 **Four (4)** members completed the 4-day **Hazmat Operations** course.
- 👤 **Ten (10)** members completed the **Auto Extrication Operations** course over 2.5 days.
- 👤 **Ten (10)** firefighters completed their **Pumps & Pumping** course over 2.5 days.
- 👤 **Company Officer** certificate program courses were completed by 4 of seven PVFD company officers.
- 👤 **Two (2) Officer Training Days** were conducted over the course of the year.
- 👤 **One (1)** member completed **First Responder Instructor** training.

2010 Training Statistics

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Person Hours	334	698.5	399	385.5	710.5	551.75	296.5	362	560	762	568.5	219.25	5847.5
Sessions	15	24	29	17	36	24	28	22	31	26	25	15	292

Historical Training Statistics



FIRE INSPECTION AND PREVENTION PROGRAM

2010 saw 36 total public education events for the year. This number included 4 fire extinguisher demonstrations. Total person hours dedicated to public education was 290 hours. The largest group of attendants continues to be the Preschool to Grade 3 age group. We have however, seen an increase in the diversity of groups that are asking for fire safety information and fire safety talks; from offices and senior's groups to special interest groups. As outlined in the 2009 Fire Prevention report, our efforts to raise funds for an environmentally friendly extinguisher training system have proven to be slow. We are still working with some of the insurance companies to try to raise funds for the program through public safety initiatives put out by the insurance companies.

NEW PROGRAMS

This year saw us bring in new programs as well. As mentioned earlier, we have been approached by several new groups that have asked for education in fire safety. We will continue to be promoting these programs in the New Year. Over the 2011 Year, we will be introducing a "Mail-Back" program for strata developments in order to make sure that servicing of private hydrants is being carried out on an annual basis. We will also use this opportunity to make sure that contact information for strata development

2009 FIRE INSPECTION PROGRAM

Inspection Program	2010	2009	2008	2007
Inspectable Occupancies (Approx.)	769	742	725	710
Inspections Due (Approx.)	458	335	287	258
Inspections Completed	369	407	438	452

As the chart above indicates, the number of inspectable properties has increased again in 2010, while the total number of inspections decreased slightly. This was due to some issues with the integration of our inspection software as well as the frequency required to inspect some occupancies. We are also continuing to inspect properties at the business license phase in order to make sure these properties are in compliance before the business opens. These inspections were only tracked for part of the year in FDM so the actual number of inspections does not show up in the inspection total. These inspections totaled 158 in 2010. Inspections required by VIHA for licensing of daycares and new in home care are also untracked in certain cases. The total number of satisfactory inspections is decreasing during life safety inspections. Unsatisfactory inspections are still mostly due to overloaded electrical circuits, damaged fire separations, improper door lock hardware or extinguishers that are either missing or are past due for servicing. Continued efforts to bring unsatisfactory properties into compliance are ongoing and many of the inspections that were previously unsatisfactory have been brought into full compliance. I have also spent more time "dropping by" businesses that have been previously unsatisfactory. This has proven to be successful in gaining compliance as it serves a reminder that we are watching for progress on unsatisfactory reports.

FIRE CAUSE and DETERMINATION

The Assistant Chief / Fire inspector has completed his Advanced Arson Investigator's program as well as the Fire Officer III Program and The Fire Inspector II Certification.

EMERGENCY PLANNING

Time permitting, work continues on the development of the City's Emergency Program. The Emergency Response Plan used by the City is the same Plan used by all local governments from Duncan to Port Hardy and was updated by the Mid Island Emergency Coordinators and Managers (MIECM) in 2010. The updated Plan was printed and distributed to senior Emergency Operations Centre(EOC) staff with the intention of bringing everyone together in 2011 to review changes and refresh memories. With construction of the new Fire Hall underway, development of the Emergency Program continued with the purchase of a Smart Board for installation when the Hall is complete. This will be the third Smart Board for the City with the first located in City Hall and the second at Public Works which will allow for better communication between Public Works, City Hall and the Fire Hall when coordinating resources during an emergency situation.

The training of Staff for working in the Emergency Operations Centre continued in 2010. The majority of planned training is nearing completion allowing for development of a plan to regularly exercise the EOC. Training will continue on a smaller scale to update Staff on any changes and to bring any new Staff through the training program.

Although the Emergency Act requires all local governments to have their own Emergency Programs, nothing stops local governments from joining force where it can be identified that a joint approach can better serve a region. The Emergency Program Coordinators from Parksville, Qualicum Beach and the RDN began working on an initiative to jointly address large scale emergencies and disasters as it has been recognized that due to a lack of resources in the region, a joint approach will serve the area better than 3 singular approaches. This is a long term project due to the scale and complexity of what is required along with the time constraints of each local government. The first goal of this initiative was achieved in 2010. The region now has an agreement to fund one group of trained and skilled Emergency Social Services (ESS) volunteers and one group of trained and skilled Emergency Communication Team (ECT) volunteers for the region rather than 3 single groups for each function that would be understaffed and lack the training and experience to be as effective.

A plan was also developed by the 3 Emergency Program Coordinators and the ECT to enhance emergency communications by proposing the construction of a mobile communications trailer. The cost is to be shared equally by the 3 local governments for a resource that can serve the entire region as a shared resource. Plans for this trailer are being finalized for construction in 2011.



CONCLUSION

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Parksville Volunteer Fire Department for their continued support to myself and staff. Their dedication to ensuring the citizens of the City of Parksville are assisted in times of need, and the professionalism in which they carry out their duties, are qualities the community and they themselves can be proud of. Special thanks to the Officers of the P.V.F.D., who have worked tirelessly throughout the year. We are fortunate to have a core of Officers whose commitment, skills and dedication are the cement of this department.

Respectively Submitted

Doug Banks, Fire Chief