

To: Mayor Glenn Johnson and City Council

From: Mike Heston, Fire Chief

Date: June 25, 2015

Ref: 2014 Fire Department Annual Report

### Overview

2014 was another busy and exciting year for the fire department. Call volume increased by over 14 percent, more staffing changes, the arrival of a new fire engine and a financially improved service contract with Washington State University.

### Staffing

There were several staffing changes. Two firefighter paramedic positions were filled and sent to the state fire academy early January. A reserve was temporarily hired to help fill the void until July. A three-quarter time administrative assistant was increased to full time and the training officer position was finally filled.

### Total Responses

The department responded to 2381 individual calls which included 3339 total station responses where both stations were needed to respond to the call. Of the total station responses, station 1 responded 1926 times (58%) while station 2 responded 1413 times (42%). Concurrent or back-to-back station response calls continued to be highly impactful to our available resources. The average response travel time in the city is just under 3:05.

### Emergency Medical Services

The department responded to 1647 individual medical responses in 2014 which included 2493 station responses totaling 75% of the total call volume. Patient transports happened 67% of the time with 43% of the responses dispatched as Advanced Life Support. Medical response percentage breakdowns were: WSU Campus – 24%, College Hill – 21%, Pioneer Hill – 22%, Military Hill – 12%, Sunnyside Hill – 10%, Pullman Regional Hospital transports (121) – 7%, WCFD 4/Palouse – 3%, WCFD 12 – 1%. Highlights for 2014 included handling over 40 calls during the Apple Cup game alone, certifying a Child Car Seat Technician, increasing our paramedics on staff by 4, and the successful delivery of a baby in the back of an ambulance.

### Fire Suppression

The department responded to 670 individual fire related responses in 2014 which included 750 station responses totaling 28% of the total call volume. Of the 670 calls, 162 (24%) involved smoke and/or fire or hazardous conditions for an estimated fire loss of \$100,625. There was no single incident creating significant dollar loss in the community, but rather a small handful of fires that caused up to \$25,000 in damage. The month of April contained the highest dollar loss to structures and contents from the effects of fire.

There were 568 (85%) non-emergent fire situations (e.g., false fire alarms, system malfunctions, accidental/unintentional activations, malicious alarms or good intent/service calls). Fire response percentage breakdowns were: College Hill - 44%, WSU Campus – 29%, Pioneer Hill – 12%, Military Hill – 10%, and Sunnyside Hill – 5%. Highlights for 2014 were a wildland fire on Hwy 270 requiring 5 agencies to control the burn, assisting the City of Palouse on a large structure fire, and placing our new engine into service at station 2.

## Fire Prevention

In 2014, Fire Prevention office activities increased over the previous year with several large construction projects consuming most of the time. The office reviewed 21 site plans and 25 building plans. Fire appliance inspections increased from 129 to 154 inspections consisting of 108 fire suppression systems, 42 fire detection systems, 4 kitchen hood suppression systems, and 12 miscellaneous inspections. Permit fees for 2014 totaled \$5960 a \$1500 drop from last year. The drop in fees and increase in inspections is due to several projects being permitted in 2013 but the majority of the inspections were done in 2014. Occupancy inspections, hydrant maintenance and pre-fire plans continued to be performed by the duty crews throughout the city.

## Public Education

The department conducted 19 First Aid and/or CPR classes in 2013 improving the skill level and awareness of over 175 citizens and bringing in approximately \$6,500. A new program added was car seat fitting. The department continued to provide public education through tours at the fire station, ride-alongs, fire extinguisher classes, fire alarm drills and safety talks at Washington State University residence halls, apartment complexes, academic buildings and Greek housing.

The department participated in numerous community activities including the National Emergency Medical Services Week, 4<sup>th</sup> of July, Lentil Festival, Fire Prevention Week, Holiday tree lighting, Egg Hunt, Pullman Family Fair, Schweitzer Engineering Health Fair, Neill Public Library book reading and the Pullman High School football games. Scheduled visits by fire trucks to local raffle winners at community fund raisers continue to be very popular.

## Training

Operations Officer Ryan Scharnhorst continued to perform both training and operational duties for the department. In June the department conducted a Training Officer assessment center but were unable to find a qualified applicant. The department again attempted to find a qualified Training Officer candidate in November and this time they were successful. Deputy Chief Gabriel Benmoussa was extended an offer of employment and began duties on January 26, 2015.

The department's Technical Rescue Team diversified their capabilities by hosting a class for rescues from towers and trees. The course was well attended and helped to identify areas of exposure that were previously not known. This training subsequently helped to direct the 2015 budgeting process for the technical rescue team

In July Reserve recruit class 2013-01 completed their live fire training in North Bend. Each of these recruits put in over 300 hours of training and countless hours of studying outside of their regular school work and/or work load.

In November the department hired another class of Reserve Firefighters and trained all 9 of them to the EMT-Basic level utilizing our in-house instructor Andrew Chiavaras. By keeping our training levels above the required minimums these new members will be more efficient in service delivery as well as expands the department capabilities for meeting customer needs.

The training division continued to support department members by sending them to various trainings such as Paramedic conferences, SWAT trainings, fire investigator classes, social media classes, emergency planning for higher education institutes, NIMS instructor, and many more.

## Grants

After many hard and long hours the new fire engine was delivered to the department in late August. After initial crew training the apparatus was returned to the manufacture for warranty repairs and was finally place into service on October 16<sup>th</sup>. The department's technology committee successfully completed all purchases for the mobile computers and software in late October. The increased capabilities are realized by the crews on a daily basis with more to come in future months.

## Other Department Highlights

The department began talks with the City of Lewiston in merging the hazardous materials team with the North Idaho Response Team. Washington State University increased the funding for two more positions and the city authorized a third to be hired in 2015. The department participated in seven fire mobilizations throughout the state during the fire season. The Honor Guard was asked to perform the opening ceremony at the Idaho State Fire Chiefs Conference in Moscow. Annual donations amounted to \$966 and were used to purchase stone pavers to improve the landscape areas around the flag pole and flower bed area at station 1.