

2016



report **TO THE** ***community***

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Your
Community,
Our Community.



West Ridge Fire Department volunteer, Jerry Hickin, places a sign at the McCarthy house in Love Farms.

A Sign of Your Support.

As part of this year's fund drive, donors could opt to have a sign placed in their front yard. And so far, West Ridge Fire Department volunteers have distributed hundreds of signs to donors who have requested them.

WRFD yard signs are a testament to the commitment of our benefactors and their belief in the value of WRFD. They show friends and neighbors that you support our mission and the enormous undertaking required to respond to accidents, medical emergencies and fires. The yard signs also have a tremendous effect on our volunteers' morale and sense of mission. They show that you appreciate what we do ... and few things compare to that feeling of gratefulness.

Wendy Fraley has donated to WRFD since she moved to Millcreek 10 years ago, and this year added a yard sign to show her support. "The costs of our firefighting and emergency services aren't included in taxes or paid for by any source, so private donations are absolutely vital," she says. "The sign is a good reminder for people to support our volunteers."

Mrs. Robert McCarthy, whose son was a junior volunteer at WRFD and is now a full-time firefighter in North Charleston, S.C., is also a long-time supporter and proudly displays a sign at her Millcreek home. "Firefighting is like a second job. It takes tremendous time and effort," she says. "Volunteers leave the comfort of their homes at nights and on weekends and put their lives on the line for the community. And they do it to protect the most important things we have — our lives and our families."

"Firefighting is like a second job. It takes tremendous time and effort."

— MRS. ROBERT McCARTHY

Where do your contributions go?

EXPENSES

2010	\$347,212
2011	\$391,534
2012	\$409,053
2013	\$412,379
2014	\$482,673
2015	\$540,984



We are primarily funded by community contributions. Property tax dollars are not used to support our operation.

How much should you contribute?



Homeowners
1/10 of 1% of your home's value
 (Example: \$100,000 home value = \$100 annual contribution)



Renters
5% of your monthly rent
 (Example: \$600 home monthly rent = \$30 annual contribution)



Businesses
5 cents per square foot of occupied space
 (Example: 5000-square-foot building = \$250 annual contribution)



Custom Pumper Now Here!

WRFD strives to remain on the leading edge of firefighting technology. That's why a new pumper was added to our fleet in August, replacing a 23-year old pumper that was sold to a fire department in Arkansas. The pumper was custom built by Sutphen, a leading manufacturer of firefighting equipment.

Custom designed according to WRFD specifications, the new unit has the capacity for six firefighters in the enclosed cab. It will feature a 750-gallon booster tank, and a flow rate of 2,000 GPM from a mid-ship-mounted pump/tank. Valves are mounted directly to the pump behind the pump panel, and a recessed pump panel design keeps suction accessories from protruding.

"By custom designing this pumper, it should be able to serve our community for the next 25 years."

— DAN OUELLET
Chief

Body compartments are spacious and full depth, providing ample storage space for rescue tools and equipment. Compartment interiors are maintenance free and made from reflective material for optimal visibility. The new pumper features a double frame rail the entire length of the chassis — the heaviest rear body substructure in the industry.

According to Chief Dan Ouellet, this equipment keeps WRFD in step with the changing needs of the community. Equally important, no loan was incurred to purchase the \$500,000 pumper. "We're able manage our financial resources to pay cash for this pumper," he says. "Through careful planning and the generosity of our supporters, we're able to continue to acquire advanced equipment, reduce our maintenance costs, and ensure the community access to the technology we need."



The Heart of a Volunteer Firefighter.

Following in his father's footsteps, Rob Gilbert became a junior firefighter in Washington County, Pa., at the age of 16. "I was constantly hanging out at the station as a kid," says Rob. "The allure of the shiny red engines and the heroism of the firefighters made a big impression on me. What I was told long ago is that when someone calls the fire department, it's because he or she is having one of the worst days of their life. Sometimes you can do a lot, other times only a little. But the important thing is to be there and try to make a difference."

Rob moved to Erie in September of 2002 to attend Mercyhurst University where he earned a bachelor's degree in management information systems. He currently works for Signal-Tech as an application developer and is pursuing a master's degree in software engineering from Gannon University. He has remained a volunteer firefighter, and for the past four years has been dedicating his skills to our community as a member of West Ridge Fire Department.

"Being a firefighter is both exciting and rewarding," says Rob. "It's a large commitment and a lot of work, but that work really pays off each day. West Ridge answers approximately 1800 calls for service per year and is one of the busiest departments in the area. The great thing about volunteering is that there is no set schedule. You participate on calls when you are available. West Ridge averages more than 150 calls per month, and I personally respond to about 20 based on my availability. Each member within the West Ridge Fire Department is an exceptional individual. It's a close-knit group — they are good friends and second families."

Rob encourages potential volunteers to make the commitment not only because of the opportunities it provides to learn lifesaving skills, but also to experience the satisfaction of making a difference. "I tell our volunteer candidates — particularly our junior firefighters — that this is a very exciting and rewarding job," says Rob. "There is a great sense of satisfaction and personal accomplishment in what we do. And these things are truly priceless."



"It's a large commitment and a lot of work, but that work really pays off each day."

— ROB GILBERT
Volunteer Firefighter





Your Community, **Our Community.**

In addition to serving as your local first responder to fires and emergencies, WRFD also provides numerous interactive education, prevention and safety-oriented services throughout our community. We conduct an ongoing Fire Prevention Program that reaches approximately 1,500 children each year, covering such topics as preventing fires in the home, swimming and water safety, and weather-related emergencies. We also have our expert staff on standby for community sporting events and other large gatherings, prepared to provide emergency medical services should they be needed.

“We would rather instruct someone to prevent a fire or an emergency than to respond to one,” says Chief Dan Ouellet, “and we spend as much time as possible interacting with people in our community, particularly our youth, to generate the awareness needed to make safe decisions.”

“The visibility of our volunteers in the community also enables people to make the connection that we don’t only serve here, we live here,” says Chief Ouellet. “I think it’s important to see the people behind the shiny, high-tech equipment — those who are dedicating their time and work to the safety of us all.”



“I think it’s important to see the people behind the shiny, high-tech equipment ...”

— DAN OUELLET
Chief

What are the basic steps for fire safety?



Having working smoke detectors, particularly in hallways and bedrooms



Developing and practicing fire escape plans



Safe cooking practices and rules for children who cook



Proper storage and use of flammable materials



Proper use of portable space heaters

OCTOBER IS NATIONAL FIRE PREVENTION MONTH.

Sponsored by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), Fire Prevention Month dates back as far as the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, which left 100,000 homeless and more than 250 dead. At WRFD, teaching fire-prevention practices is a major commitment. During the month of October, we will sponsor seminars and demonstrations dedicated to this important topic. However, our services extend beyond this — our staff and volunteers dedicate hundreds of hours each year to fire-prevention education.

The most common causes of household fires are cooking, heating equipment, electrical wiring and devices, smoking materials and arson. Roughly 80 percent of all fire deaths occur where people sleep, such as in homes, dormitories, hotels or barracks, emphasizing the need for working smoke detectors.

While fire prevention is often directed to children, adults may also benefit from these lessons. Adult caretakers must be proactive in preventing circumstances that could result in fires, such as unsupervised cooking, and playing with lighters, matches or other combustible materials.

HOW TO BECOME A FIREFIGHTER.

West Ridge Fire Department is seeking committed individuals to join its mission of community service. With an average of 150 calls per month, our volunteer firefighters have ample opportunity to become actively involved in an array of firefighting, rescue, and emergency medical services. Service with WRFD provides invaluable training, including local, state and national conferences, as well as frequent hands-on drills.

Belonging to WRFD also means becoming part of a tightly knit family. We serve our community with distinction, and are rewarded by the appreciation of the people who live here.

WRFD offers an adult active firefighter membership as well as a Junior Firefighter Program for youth ages 14 to 18. Junior firefighters are trained in weekly sessions and also participate in parades, public events and community education.

To find out how you can become a part of our distinguished group, please visit our website at www.westridgefire.org. Candidates are also encouraged to visit our fire stations Monday evenings at 6:30 p.m. to meet our members and experience what it means to become a WRFD firefighter.

Why you should become a WRFD firefighter:

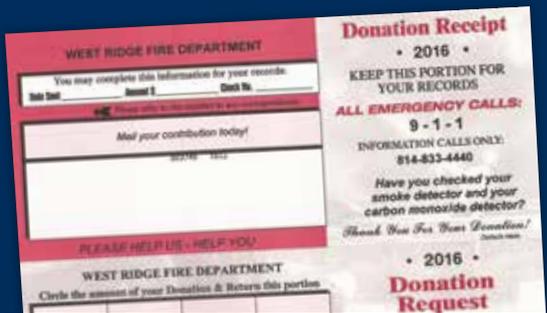
- Make a difference in our community through your service
- Become an integral member of our elite corps
- Learn invaluable, life-saving rescue, emergency medicine and firefighting skills
- Become mentally and physically honed to make decisions that save lives
- Become an educator and role model for our youth
- Represent WRFD at community events



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Watch for This Mailer

The West Ridge Fire Department is your fire-safety organization, and we need your support to sustain it.

How much should you give? Here are some guidelines:

Homeowners

1/10 of 1% of your home's value

Example:

\$100,000 home value = \$100 annual contribution

Renters

5% of monthly rent

Example:

\$600 monthly rent = \$30 annual contribution

Businesses

5 cents per square foot of occupied space

Example:

5000-square-foot building = \$250 annual contribution

If you've already given, thank you! If not, we ask that you watch your mail for this pledge card reminder and support your volunteer fire department.