

# 2012 Annual Report of the Deer Creek Fire Department



January, 2013

[www.deercreekfire.org](http://www.deercreekfire.org)



# There's A Place Just For You

It takes someone with a desire to do something important for the community;  
someone with courage and dedication, who isn't afraid of hard work,  
and is willing to accept the challenge of a difficult job.

If you're this kind of person, you're needed as a volunteer firefighter.

**Contact the Deer Creek Fire Department Today**

309-447-6490   [www.deercreekfire.org](http://www.deercreekfire.org)   [info@deercreekfire.org](mailto:info@deercreekfire.org)

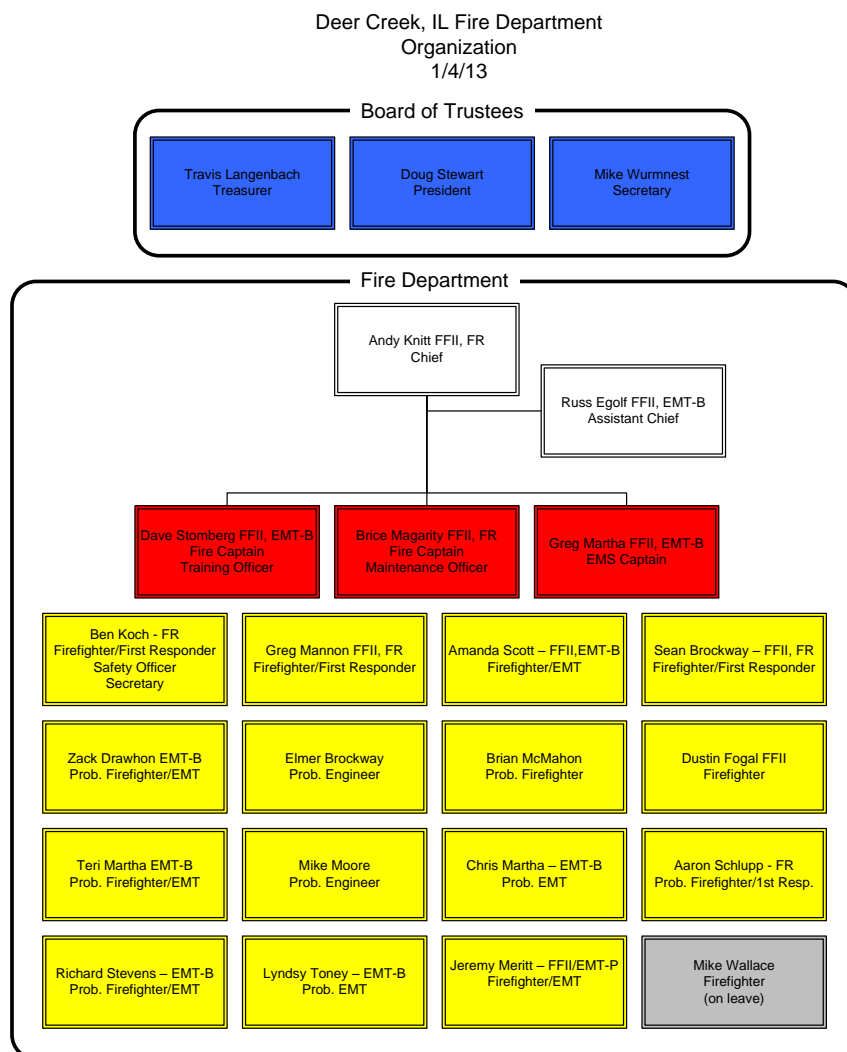
## ***Introduction***

The volunteers of the Deer Creek Fire Department continued to work hard to provide emergency services to the community in 2012. Areas of progress this year included:

- Increase in the number of Firefighter 2 certified members from 8 to 10
- Increase in the number of emergency medical technicians on the department from 7 to 10
- Increase in the number of certified medical First Responders on the department from 1 to 6
- Formation of a Fire & EMS Explorer Post for high-school aged youth
- Overall increase in the number of department members and average number of responders per call
- Started planning for a training building to be built behind the fire station

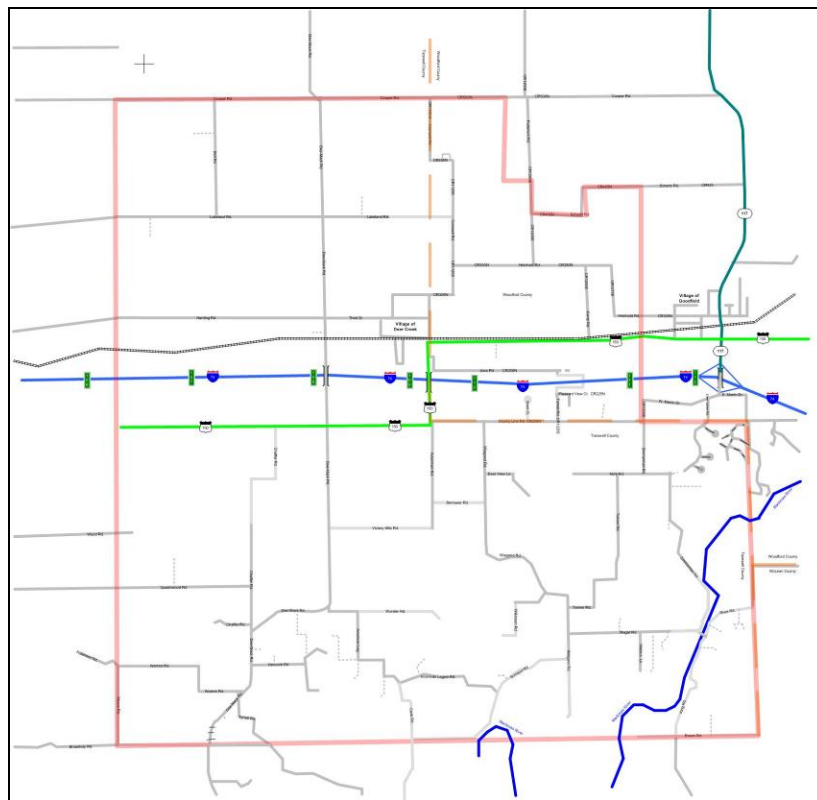
The department's biggest challenge continues to be recruiting enough volunteers to provide adequate response capabilities, especially during daytime working hours.

## ***Department Organization***



## ***Services Provided***

The Deer Creek Fire Department is an all-volunteer fire and EMS department that provides fire suppression, light rescue, and non-transport emergency medical services to the Village of Deer Creek and the 32 surrounding square miles of the Deer Creek Fire Protection District. The population of the District is approximately 1300 people and includes 5.5 miles of Interstate 74, 5.5 miles of railroad track, 6.5 miles of natural gas pipeline, and various agricultural and industrial businesses in both Tazewell and Woodford counties. The department also provides and receives mutual aid from departments throughout the area through membership in the Illinois Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS). Ambulance service in the District is provided by the Morton Fire Department paramedic units.



Deer Creek Fire Protection District (Border in Red)

## ***Personnel***

The Deer Creek Fire Department is staffed by a very dedicated group of volunteers. Members come from all walks of life including welders, equipment operators, engineering and administrative professionals, healthcare workers, and many more. These include newer members who have less than a year's experience and others who have served this district for many years.

In 2012 the department added five members to the roster and lost two. Of the new additions, two are members of neighboring fire departments who have agreed to also join our department to help with our daytime staffing problem. The goal for 2013 will be to recruit at least four additional members to help bring us closer to our goal of twenty active interior firefighters and fifteen EMTs.

Daytime responses continue to be a major challenge for the fire department. Most fire department members work in Peoria or Bloomington, making them unavailable to respond to emergencies during the day. In the past we have had department members who worked third shift and could respond during the day, but this is no longer the case, as those members have either left the department or moved to first shift. Within the past two years we have lost four “regular” daytime responders.

We are fortunate to have the support of several local businesses who allow their employees to respond to emergencies during working hours. However, these members are not always available as their jobs require frequent travel.

We have taken a number of steps to try to address this issue. They include:

- Providing emergency childcare to members so they can respond to calls
- Opening department membership to those who work in District even if they don’t live in District
- Starting joint membership with Goodfield FD and Morton FD for daytime responders who live nearby
- Holding recruitment drives – signs, letters, postcards, etc.
- Starting a Fire and EMS Explorer program to create a pipeline of future volunteers

While our overall department membership has increased in the past year, our weekday response capability has actually stayed the same or slightly decreased. We continue to look for solutions to this perpetual problem.

The Department would like to thank the following local employers who are supporting their community by allowing their employees to respond to emergencies from work:

- Central Illinois Truss
- Case New Holland
- Homeway Homes
- Perficient, Inc.

### ***Explorer Post Formation***

In 2012 we received federal grant funding to start a Fire & EMS Explorer Post for junior high and high school aged youth. The Exploring program gives young people a chance to learn about the emergency services in a safe and controlled environment. The ultimate goal of the program is that these youth will become involved in these fields in a volunteer role or as a career after they graduate high school. Several other area fire departments are contributing personnel and equipment to help get the Post



started. These departments include Eureka-Goodfield, Congerville, and Morton. Youth from the Eureka, Dee-Mack, and Morton school districts are welcome to apply for membership.



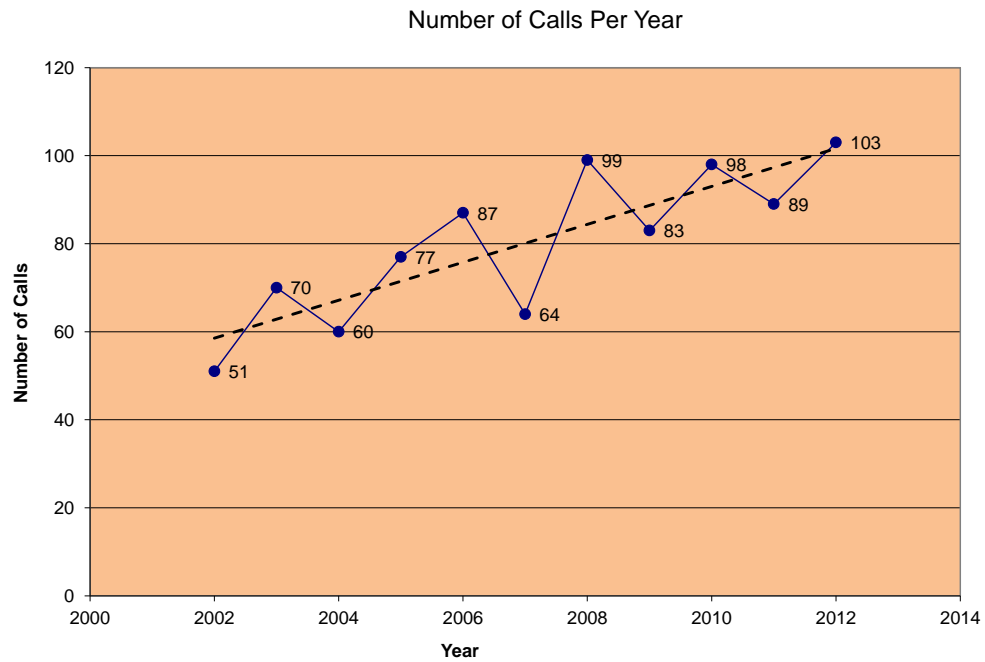
Explorer Post Members during SCBA Training

### ***Emergency Responses***

In 2012, the Deer Creek Fire Department responded one hundred and three requests for assistance, a department record. Responses were categorized as follows:

	2012
Structure Fires	4
Vehicle Fires	4
Grass/Brush Fires	10
Other Fires	9
EMS	41
EMS Vehicle	19
EMS Other	0
Good Intent	10
Mutual Aid	5
HazMat	0
False Calls	1
Weather Watch	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>103</b>

This represents an increase of fourteen calls from 2011. Long term trends continue to show an increase in the number of emergency responses per year.



Deer Creek & Goodfield Firefighters at a Car Fire



June 2012 House Fire

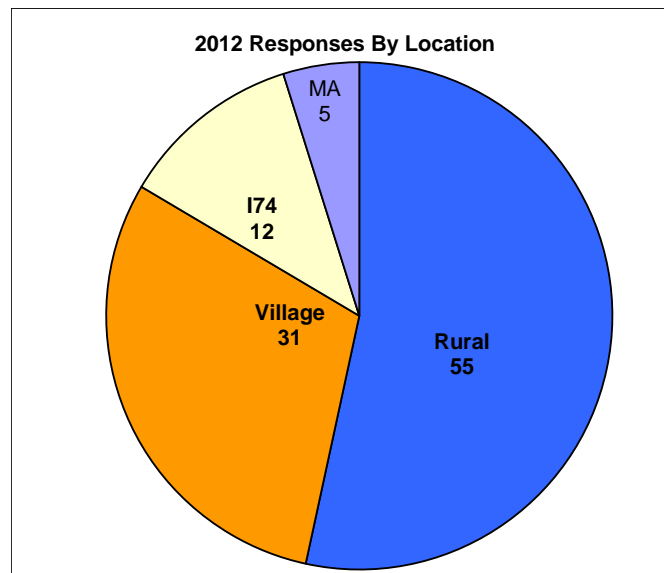


July 2012 Tractor Fire



July 2012 Rollover Accident with Entrapment

Of the 2012 calls, fifty-five were in rural portions of the District, thirty-one were in the Village of Deer Creek, twelve were on Interstate 74, and five were in neighboring districts as mutual aid calls. This distribution varies from previous years in which calls were split much more evenly between the Village and rural portions of the District.



The 2012 average response times by call location are shown in the table below.

Average Response Times		
Rural	Village	I-74
11.4	5.5	11.1

These response times are calculated from the time that the department is paged by the dispatch center until the time the first unit arrives on scene. This includes the time it takes for department



members to respond from home or work to the fire station, but does not include the processing time at the 911 dispatch center before the department is paged.

In 2012 the average number of responders per call was 7.0, which is an improvement over the 2011 figure of 6.5. This average includes both EMS and fire calls. While the improvement in the number of responders is encouraging, it also highlights the need for additional recruitment, as any type of major fire or incident will require much more than seven people to mitigate.

## ***Training***

The members of the Deer Creek Fire Department continued to invest a significant amount of their personal free time to drill and train in 2012. In total, department members completed over fifteen hundred person-hours of training in 2012. This includes both in-house department training and outside courses, training events, and fire schools.

Two members received State of Illinois Firefighter II certification this year, and four more are slated to get their certification in 2013. One member received State of Illinois Fire Instructor I certification. Six members received State of Illinois medical First Responder certification through a class taught by Greg Martha, the department's EMS Captain. One member completed EMT-B training, while another received authorization to practice as an EMT within the Peoria Area EMS System.

In 2012 the Deer Creek Fire Department started conducting all training jointly with the Goodfield station of the Eureka-Goodfield Fire Protection District. This joint training helps to increase communication and coordination between the two departments and results in more personnel available at training drills which increases the number and types of drills that can be performed. We plan to continue this joint training practice in 2013.



Water Shuttle Training



Pump Training at Goodfield



Vehicle Extrication Training



Vehicle Fire Training

In addition to providing the skills and knowledge needed to respond to incidents, training is also very important to department membership engagement and retention. Training that is realistic and hands-on keeps volunteer firefighters interested, involved, and active in the department. Because this type of realistic training is so important, the Fire District is currently working to construct a permanent training building that will be used on a regular basis to provide firefighters with a safe, smoke-filled environment in which to train.

### ***Funding***

The Deer Creek Fire Department is funded primarily by a property tax levy administered by the Deer Creek Fire Protection District. Excluding funds from grants, roughly 80-90% of the Department's annual income is generated by the tax levy. The remaining 10-20% comes from donations, memorials, and fundraisers. The Deer Creek Fire Department does not charge for services.

The department has had very good success over the last several years in receiving state and federal grant funding to upgrade equipment and vehicles. As these grant programs are reduced or eliminated due to federal and state fiscal concerns, our department must be proactive in planning for the future to ensure that we can maintain safe and reliable equipment for our responders. Work is underway to develop a long-term plan for equipment replacement so that funding sources can be identified early enough to be effective.

### ***Equipment & Facilities***

While there were no "major" equipment or apparatus purchases in 2012, the department made several incremental improvements to equipment and facilities. These included an additional automatic external defibrillator (AED) and a RAD57 pulse oximeter that were funded through a regional grant project sponsored by the Eureka-Goodfield Fire Protection district, as well as additional stabilization struts for vehicle extrication and rescue work.

The Fire District has made significant progress in two areas related to facilities. First, we are planning on installing a prefabricated above-ground storm shelter at the fire station in 2013. This is needed because firefighters stand by at the fire station during severe weather events. Second, we are planning on constructing a training building behind the fire station in 2013. This 24'x32' building will allow us to conduct realistic, hands-on training exercises on a regular basis. Not only will this facility help us improve our skills and responses, but it will also assist with recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters, and will assist with future ISO evaluations. See the Appendix of this report for more information on this building.



Preliminary Design of Training Building

### ***Community Involvement***

The Deer Creek Fire Department receives strong support from the local community, and tries to be involved in area events whenever possible. In 2012 the department participated in the Dee-Mack High School homecoming events, the Deer Creek Halloween Parade and Fall Festival, and did a demonstration at the Intermediate School in Deer Creek as part of Fire Prevention Week in October.





DCFD at the Deer Creek Fall Festival



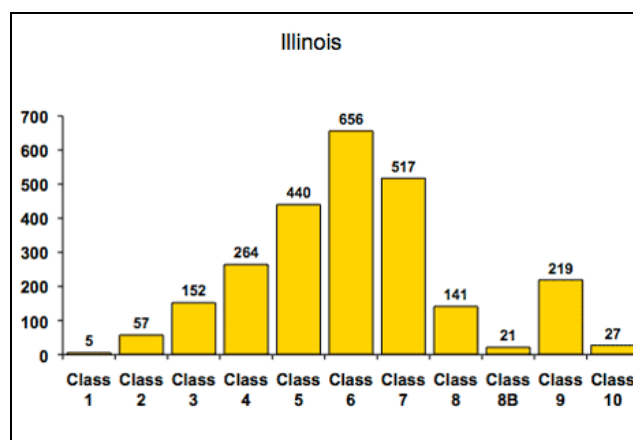
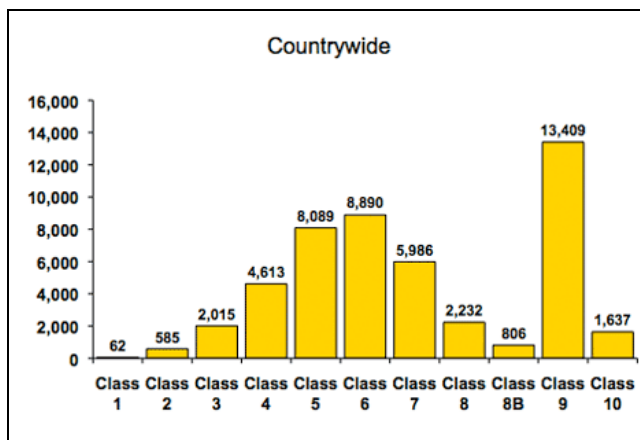
Engine 1 in the Dee-Mack Homecoming Parade

In addition to these community events, the department works to keep the public informed of ongoing activities by maintaining a website ([www.deercreekfire.org](http://www.deercreekfire.org)) and a page on Facebook.

### ISO Rating

In 2011 the department was evaluated by the Insurance Services Organization (ISO). ISO evaluates the fire protection capability of every community in the country every ten years, and provides their ratings to insurance companies. Insurers may use these ratings when determining property insurance premiums in the community. ISO ratings range from 1 (best) to 10 (does not meet standards). Factors that influence a community's rating include the water system used for fire protection, the emergency communication system (911 system), and the fire department.

After the 2011 evaluation the Deer Creek Fire Protection District was given a score of 5 in areas with fire hydrants and a score of 6 in areas that are more than 1000 feet from a fire hydrant. This represents a significant improvement over the 7/9 rating from previous years. In particular, the 6 rating in rural areas is one of the best ratings in the area.



Number of Fire Departments Assigned Each ISO Class – Nationwide and in Illinois



## ***Looking Ahead***

2013 promises to be an exciting year for the fire department as construction begins on our new training facility. Recruitment of new volunteers will continue to be a major priority, especially as it relates to workday response capability. New and innovative ideas are being sought to address this troubling problem. We also hope to grow and solidify our youth Exploring program and continue to look for new ways to better serve our community.

# Appendix

## Why build a fire department training building in Deer Creek?

Fighting a structure fire has some things in common with playing football. Both firefighting and football are team efforts. In football, there is a lot going on during a play. Things move quickly and change quickly, and it's up to the quarterback to try to keep track of what's going on and make instant decisions that can mean success or failure. On a fire scene, we call the "quarterback" the incident commander, or IC. Like a quarterback, the IC has to constantly monitor the situation and make quick decisions in a fast-paced and changing environment.

So how do football teams prepare for a game? They train and they practice. They train by running drills, such as passing drills or tackling drills. These drills help them develop techniques and skills. Those techniques and skills don't do them any good by themselves, however. They have to work together as a team, and they practice that by playing scrimmages and pre-season games. In the fire service we do the same types of things. We run drills on things like ladders, pumps, and hoselines to learn skills and techniques, and we practice working as a team by running realistic scenarios and exercises. Unfortunately we haven't had a place to run those scenarios and exercises. We've been like a football team without a practice field.

How have we dealt with this lack of a place to practice in the past? We've tried a number of things, but none of them work well. We can do some training in our fire station, but we're limited by what we can do there since we have to be concerned about damaging floors and walls as we're dragging tools, hoses, and bodies through the building. We can't easily reconfigure the building for different layouts, and only a small part of the building can easily be smoked up. On rare occasions we gain access to a structure that's going to be torn down and get to do some short-term training in those buildings, but that's for a very limited time and the buildings are not always useable due to safety concerns. We can travel to outside training facilities, but that means taking equipment and personnel out of service, and the entire department isn't able to train together in those situations.

Because of the importance of realistic training and the limitations of our currently available methods, the Fire District is moving forward with constructing a training building behind our fire station. This metal post-frame structure will be designed to closely match the existing fire station from the exterior, but will be designed with training as its core function. When it's completed, it will have three levels that can be used for incident simulations, two stairwells, walls that can be moved to reconfigure the layout, provisions for smoking the building, and confined space and forcible entry training features. We'll be able to regularly run realistic training scenarios to improve our "team's" response capabilities.

Some might question why a small fire department such as ours needs a facility like this. The reality is that because we're a small department serving a small community, we don't get as many calls as larger departments, which means that it's impossible to learn "on the job" from experience. Some of our firefighters may go more than a year between responses to a structure fire. This means that frequent, realistic training is actually *more* important for a small department than for a busy department where

members have the opportunity to learn from experience. We want to be fully prepared for that structure fire when it does occur, as rare as it may be. That's our job. In a perfect world we'd love to have a facility that we could do live burns in, but that would be cost-prohibitive for our District. However, putting out the fire is actually the easy part of firefighting. Locating the fire and searching for victims in zero visibility, staying oriented and aware of surroundings, maintaining accountability for all firefighters on the scene, and coordinating their actions are the more difficult parts. We feel that we can realistically simulate 90% of a fire scene without needing to do live burning. We'll continue to use facilities in other jurisdictions to polish our skills in the remaining 10% that consists of actual fire extinguishment.

Another reason we're confident that this facility is a good idea is that it will be a resource for other area departments to use. We rely a lot on the resources our neighboring communities and fire departments for support and mutual aid, and this facility is a resource that our neighbors don't have that we'll be able to share back with them. This is an investment in the future of our fire department that will be around for a long time, and we feel that the initial expense is well worth the payback of a better trained, more disciplined, more prepared fire department that's able to better serve your community.

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# Can You Fill These Boots?

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