

Drexel Heights Fire District



Annual Report
2008

A photograph of two firefighters in full protective gear, including helmets and air tanks, running away from the camera on a concrete sidewalk. In the background, a red fire truck is visible with the words 'PREXEL HEIGHTS' on its side. The scene is set outdoors on a clear day with palm trees and mountains in the distance.

MISSION STATEMENT:

To minimize the threat to life and property due to fire, medical or other emergencies through education, prevention, preparedness, prompt response, & effective customer service.

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Administration, Training & Station 401 - 5030 S. Camino Verde

Station 402 - 6340 S. Mark Rd

Station 403 - 5960 S. Cardinal Ave

Station 404 - 3255 S. Kinney Rd

Communications - 6950 S. Beehive

www.drexelfire.net

Administration



A message from Fire Chief Douglas Chappell

2008 has been a challenging year for the Fire District as well as the entire region. The District has completed a number of projects and laid the groundwork for some critical improvements that will take place in 2009.

The tasks included in the 2005 Strategic Plan have essentially been completed. The final part of the project was a rewrite of the operational procedures. Those procedures are either complete or at least in draft and under review. The remaining items still in draft will be wrapped up in the coming months. Once completed, distribution and training will take place on the new procedures. The District's Governing Board also purchased

land in Star Valley to build a fire station in that section of the District. The construction plans were completed for that project in 2008 and plans are now in plan review for permits through Pima County. We hope to begin construction on this fire station later in 2009.

The District and its contractors have nearly completed the new fire station project at Cardinal and Mossman. A few unexpected issues have delayed the completion but the District expects to relocate the personnel and equipment into the new building in January so that demolition of the old station can take place. The Governing Board approved the purchase of a new pumper to replace a 1995 unit that has suffered repeated and expensive repair issues. The Governing Board also replaced one ambulance early in the year. Later in the year the District received a grant through the Tohono O'Odham Nation allowing us to replace another unit. Although that unit has not been received yet, delivery is expected in early 2009.

The District was able to maintain the staffing improvements of the past few years. The District had set a goal to have a minimum of one Captain and two Firefighters on each of the four Engines and two Firefighters on each ambulance unit daily and in January 2008 that goal was fully achieved. A final piece of the personnel part took place in July with a re-organization of the District which included the hiring of a Division Chief of Operations and the reassignment, from the current roster, of a Division Chief of Technical Services. The various Divisions were realigned to fall under the two Division Chiefs and that has resulted in a better flow for information and supervision.

The Board and Administration have continued to pursue grants to assist with District projects and programs. In 2008, the District received \$40,000.00 in funding through the Community Development Block Grant Program which provided a few new fire hydrants in the District and educational programs under the Family Safety Program. In addition, the District received grant funding from the Governor's Office of Highway Safety for safety related billboards, a FEMA Fire Prevention Grant for a Senior Fire Safety Academy, a Gaming Revenue Sharing Grant from Tohono O'Odham Nation and we continued to receive funding for the additional staffing through a FEMA SAFER program which amounts to more than \$1 million over a five year period which started in 2007. In all, the District realized more than \$500,000.00 in grants in 2008.

2009 will bring more progress in the District. We will complete the Fire Station 403 construction project at Cardinal and Mossman and begin construction on a new Fire Station 405 in Star Valley on Wade Road. The Administration will continue to seek out additional grants while working hard to maintain the minimum staffing program in place. The District has worked hard to reduce workplace injuries and the staffing component is largely responsible for that improvement. The reviewed and improved operation procedures have reduced other risk factors. The District has limited the number of units responding on incidents by increasing the staffing per vehicle. In addition, all response protocols have been reviewed with the intent of reducing risk both to Firefighters as well as the public.

The Governing Board and employees look forward to the challenges that 2009 will bring. The ever changing economy and housing market will affect how the Fire District does business. The District will continue to attempt to balance our established community partnerships for both emergency and non-emergency services. Providing outstanding service to our community is our obligation. Our Mission clearly demonstrates that we accept that challenge and will do our best to exceed the public's expectations. I encourage our residents to let the District know how we are doing. Visit our website www.drexelfire.net and provide your feedback and comments.

Fire Board



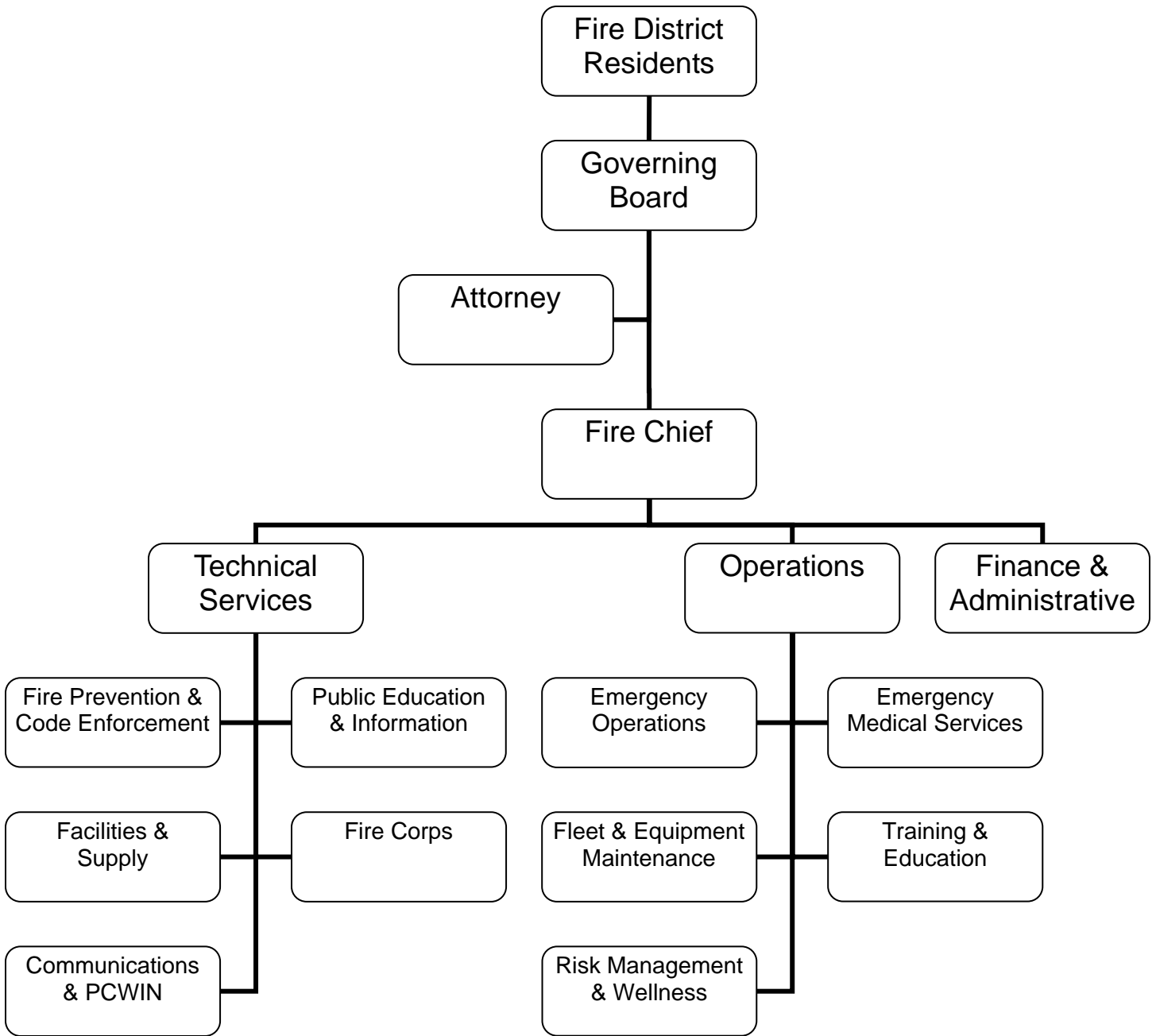
2008 Fire Board

- Ron Greil, Chair
- James Bertrand, Clerk
- R.M. Bishman
- Laura Dailey
- Jayne Stepnoski

The Drexel Heights Fire District Board conducts public meetings on the second Friday of each month at 9:00 AM, in the DHFD classroom at 5030 S. Camino Verde. The public is encouraged to attend. All meetings are handicap accessible and with 10 days written notice, arrangements can be made for the hearing impaired.

- The Board entered into agreements with the County which provided grants for hydrant installations and the Family Safety Program. Those grants totaled \$40,000.00 in funds for the District.
- The Board authorized the purchase of several new vehicles to replace older units. The Board approved the purchase of two ambulances and a new pumper.
- The Board entered into a purchase agreement to purchase land in the Star Valley area for a new fire station.
- The Board adopted a balanced budget which included a property tax rate reduction totaling more than an 11% reduction in rates. The adopted budget was \$14,110,097.00.
- The Board recognized two retiring Board Members during the year. Ms. Jayne Stepnoski retired from the Board mid year and Mr. Greil retired late in the year. Ms. Cheryl Cecil was appointed to fill the unexpired term of Ms. Stepnoski. Mr. Greil's seat on the Board was filled in the November election.
- Three residents were elected to the Board to serve a four-year term starting December 1, 2008. Those elected were Cheryl Cecil, James Bertrand and Charles Mendonca.
- The Board entered into a three-way agreement with Pima County and the Tohono O'odham Nation to accept a grant from the Gaming Revenue Sharing Program. The \$110,000.00 grant will pay for one of the two ambulance units purchased in 2008.
- The District received a grant from the Governor's Office of Highway Safety. The \$4,500.00 grant has been used to place car seat safety messages on two billboards along Valencia Road.
- The Board received and approved the audit report for the fiscal year that ended on June 30, 2008. The District's independent auditor found that proper accounting practices were being utilized and that there were no deficiencies discovered during the audit process.

Organizational Chart



Employee Recognitions

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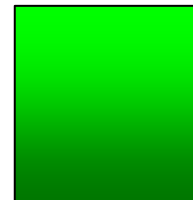
Administration & Training Employees

16



Communication Employees

81



Operations Employees

Promotion

David Rimron

Paramedic

August

New Training Certification

Richard Lane

Hazardous Material Technician

April

Eddie Riesgo

Hazardous Material Technician

April

Alan Hildenbrand

Car Seat Technician

September

David Stone

Certified Fire Investigator

December

New Hires

Alex Castro

Firefighter

January

Erik Enriquez

Firefighter

January

David Fox

Firefighter

January

Alan Hildenbrand

Firefighter

January

Nathan Hoyle

Firefighter

January

James O'Sullivan

Firefighter

January

Dan Martinez

Firefighter

January

Douglas Roop

Firefighter

January

Lionell Salazar

Firefighter

March

Martin Samaniego

Firefighter/Paramedic

June

Chris Smetana

Firefighter/Paramedic

June

Anthony Toto

Firefighter/Paramedic

June

Cathrine Cochran

Firefighter/Paramedic

July

Randy Karrer

Division Chief

August

Mike Droban

Telecommunicator

August

Greg Bustamante

Firefighter/Paramedic

November

Diane McKenzie

Telecommunicator

November

Kristi Plimpton

Telecommunicator

December



Emergency Operations



Fire Service Related Responses

- 25 Automatic Aid Responses
- 5 Mutual Aid Responses

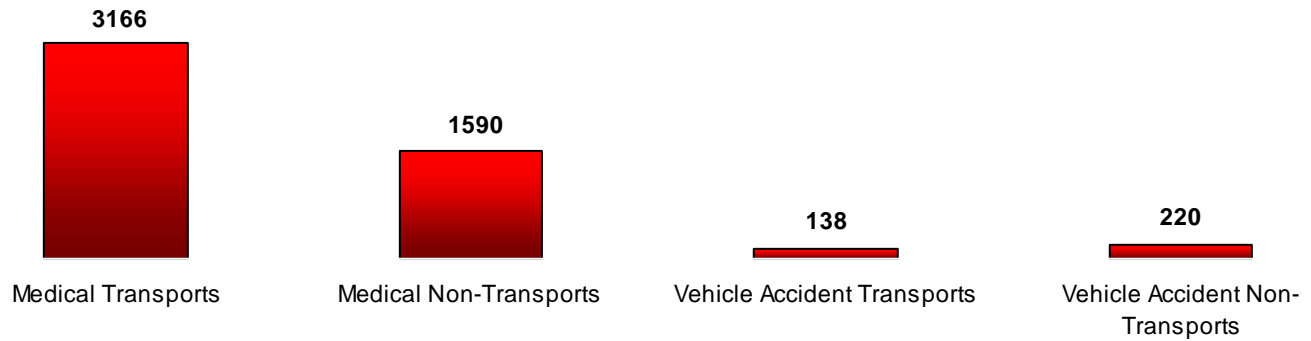
Risk Management Seminars

- Southern Arizona Safety Officers Committee
- Southwest Gas
- Tucson Electric Power
- Tucson Water

- This year's fleet purchases included a 2008 ambulance and two new staff vehicles. Staff also completed the specification and ordering process for a new pumper and ambulance due to arrive in 2009.
- The District's Response Process was evaluated and adjusted this year to improve the type of response each emergency call receives. The changes came after assessing the community needs and our communications dispatch protocols .
- Standard Operating Procedures/Guidelines have been the final piece of the District's strategic plan to be completed. Throughout 2008, procedures and guidelines have been reviewed and written and a final draft has been submitted to administration. As the new document is implemented in 2009, all employees will receive training on the protocols.
- In addition to DHFD's participation in multiple risk management seminars, many Company Officers completed Safety Officer Certification. The District's own peer fitness trainers introduced physical fitness programs in 2008 such as Fire Ground and Cross Fit. Operations personnel complied with new legislation requiring safety vests be worn while operating in roadways and the District began the process of installing "chevrons" or special striping on the back of apparatus which improves safety for the firefighters and the public.



Medical Services



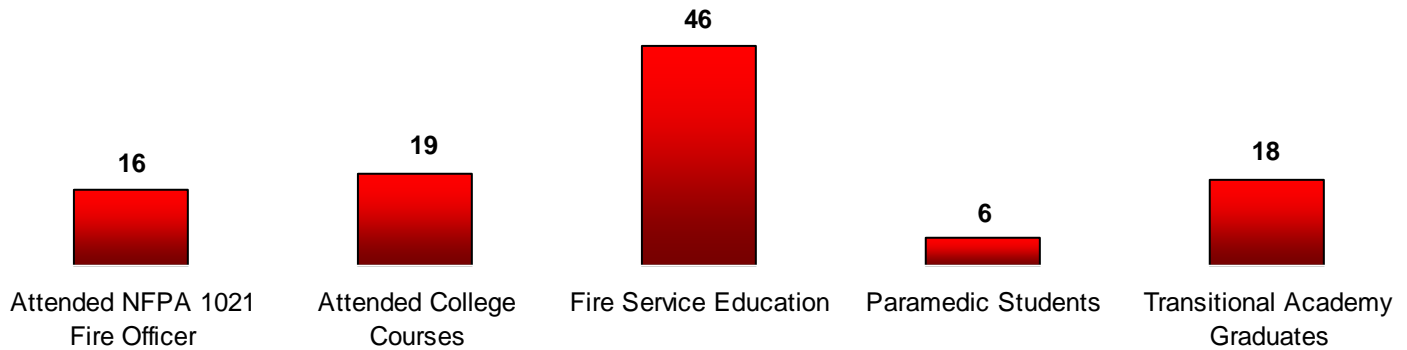
Emergency Medical Service Related Responses

- 520 Automatic Aid Responses
- 48 Mutual Aid Responses

- In 2008, we received grant funding from Southeastern Arizona Emergency Medical Services Council for EZ Inter-Osseous (IO) drivers. These are medical drills that will insert an inter-osseous needle into the tibia in the event paramedics can't get IV access on a critical patient. All fluids and medications can be administered through the IO.
- Also this year, paramedics were trained in Rapid Sequence Intubation techniques. This is the administration of paralytic medications so we can intubate before a patient loses respiratory effort. It's used for severe respiratory and head injury patients.
- The EMS Division has been tasked with becoming more involved in the Metropolitan Medical Response System (MMRS). Drexel Heights Fire District will receive a trailer equipped for a multi-casualty incident and will be a member of a regional strike team with Tucson Fire, Northwest Fire, Green Valley Fire and Rural Metro. We will be available to respond to incidents locally and in the future regionally.
- In 2008 we began investigating the possibility of going to an electronic emergency medical incident reporting system. There are numerous hurdles to overcome but at some point in the future this system will benefit the district by allowing ambulances to complete reports quicker with improved accuracy. It will also make statistical data gathering much more effective and reliable.



Training & Education



2008 Training Classes

- Advance Vehicle Extrication & Stabilization
- Extensive Ladder Operations
- Firefighter & Victim Rescue
- Multi-Unit Night Drills
- Rapid Intervention Crews
- Safe Driving education
- Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus Skills

- In 2008 there were significant changes in the structure and scope of the Training & Education Division. The addition of instructional staff has improved training for in-house personnel by increasing training hours per employee 64% from 2007 and by the development of new recruit transitional academies. New clerical support assigned to training helped complete a current and archival data base of training activities and is able to provide an analysis for future training activities.
- We continue to improve our compliance with regulatory programs with OSHA, EEOC, NFPA and ADHS. The biannual audit conducted by the Arizona Department of Health Services rated Drexel Heights Fire District at 97%. Training programs continue to be recognized by the Arizona State Fire Marshal's Office, National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians, Arizona Department of Health Services, and Pima Community College for both fire and emergency medical education.
- Emergency Cardiac Care continues to comprise a large percentage of the training activities. Course work in the Healthcare Provider, Advanced Cardiac Life Support, and Pediatric Advanced Life Support are continuous training classes provided throughout the year. This year Emergency Cardiac Care education was provided to 724 residents, employees and others.
- This year has seen the reintroduction of the competency skill task book modules. This program was initiated with all the probationary fire fighters hired this year. This represents the start of a major undertaking that will eventually involve all of the positions in the Operations Division.



Special Teams

11



Haz Mat Team Members

13



Technical Rescue Team Members

2008 HAZ-MAT RESPONSES

- Carbon Monoxide Detector Alerts
- Chemical Analysis with Pima County Sheriff
- Gasoline Spills
- Propane & Natural Gas Leaks

2008 TECHNICAL RESCUE RESPONSES

- Rescue in mountainous area
- Swift Water Rescues

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS TRAINING

- “Wildcat” dumps of toxic chemicals
- Over the road, tank car incidents
- Pressure line leaks
- Liquid spills
- Chlorine Releases
- Haz-Mat First Responder refresher class for all of DHFD suppression personnel

NEW EQUIPMENT FOR HAZ-MAT TEAM

- Carbon monoxide monitors
- Radiological monitoring equipment
- New emergency decontamination equipment that is more environmentally conscious meeting OSHA requirements

TECHNICAL RESPONSE TEAM (TRT) TRAINING

- Swift water rescue skills
- Confined space rescues
- Structural collapse response
- Rope rescue techniques

NEW EQUIPMENT FOR TRT

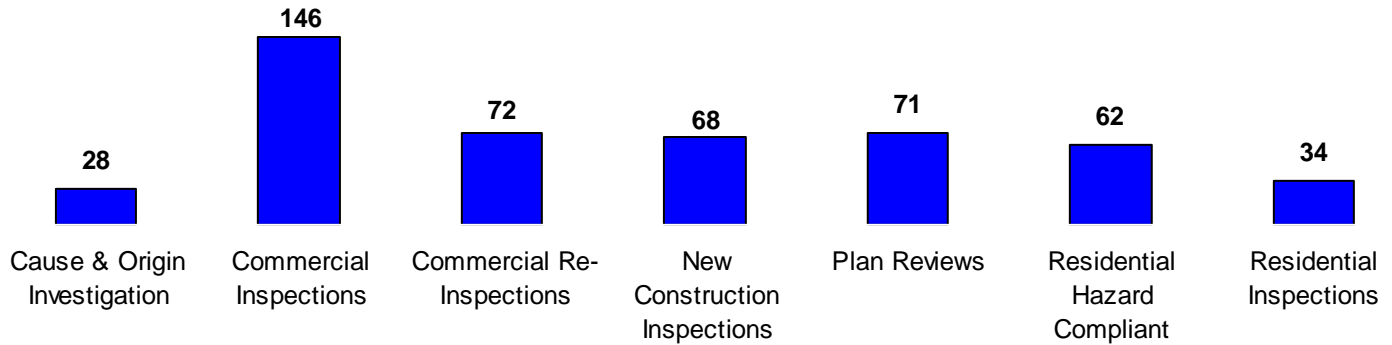
- Rope rescue equipment

NEW TECHNICAL RESCUE TEAM MEMBERS

- Firefighter Eric Enriquez
- Firefighter John Ford
- Firefighter John Graves
- Firefighter Alan Hildenbrand
- Firefighter James O’Sullivan



Fire Prevention

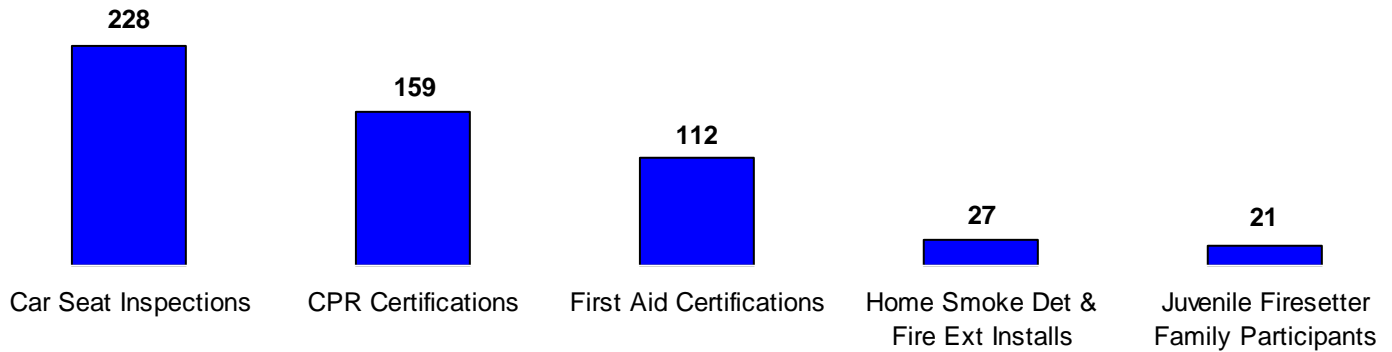


Residential Fire Sprinklers- Commercial buildings have long benefitted from sprinkler systems. These systems were introduced over 100 years ago after a series of devastating fires which claimed many lives and destroyed entire businesses. But what about our homes? Millions of homes have smoke detectors which are important for warning occupants of a fire, but they can not contain or extinguish a fire. Drexel Heights Fire District strongly encourages home owners to consider residential sprinkler systems, especially if they are constructing a new home. A sprinkler prop was constructed in 2008 to train firefighters on the systems as well as educate homeowners.

- DHFD sent three firefighters to the first of four one-week certification classes with the International Association of Arson Investigators (IAAI) Fire/Arson. Currently, DHFD has four IAAI certified fire investigators to investigate structures fires in the District, most of which will be close to retiring from the organization in the next few years. Therefore training additional fire investigators is important for future retirements. The IAAI program is a two-year process to train and certify.
- The District received a Community Development Block Grant to install five fire hydrants in 2008. The hydrants were placed where they were most needed to provide an adequate water supply related to fire suppression services. District residents near these new hydrant locations will benefit from lower home owners insurance rates. DHFD inspects and tests fire hydrants throughout the community making sure they are in good working order, approximately 2,000 fire hydrants were tested in 2008.
- Statistically, only 3% of structure fires in the area actually have working smoke alarms. Firefighters find most homes have missing smoke alarms, missing batteries, or disconnected smoke alarms. The Building and Fire Codes require a smoke alarm to be installed in each bedroom or sleeping area as well as the hallways leading to them, and on every floor level. DHFD strongly encourages its residents to make sure they have smoke alarms installed in their homes and that they replace the 9 volt battery regularly. DHFD offers free smoke detectors to any district resident.



Public Education



2008 Community Requests

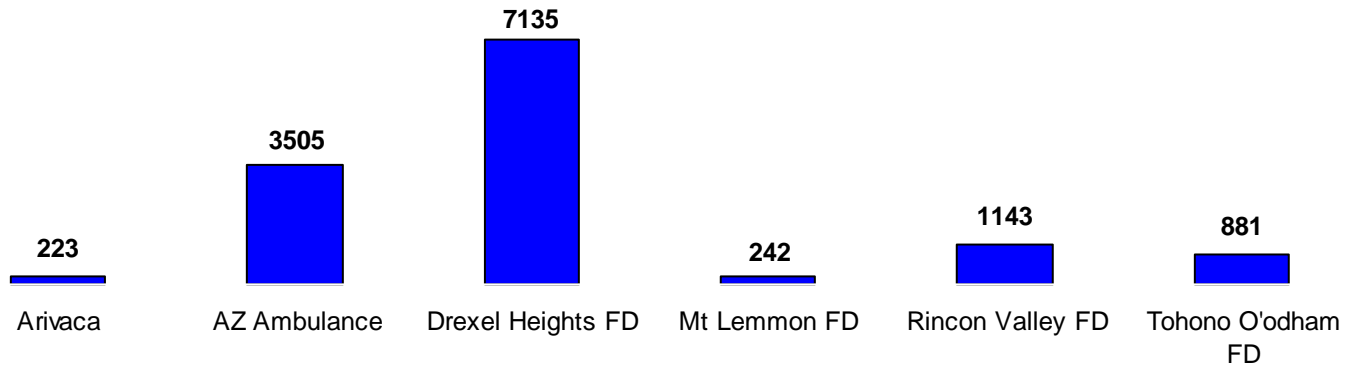
- 119 Community Request Events
- 29,211 People Reached
- 13 Station Tours
- 36 Apparatus Tours

With the close of each home sale in the District, a Welcome Packet is mailed out with a greeting letter from the Fire Chief and information on public education programs available to district residents. 854 were sent out in 2008

- In 2008, the District received it's fifth year of Community Development Block Grant funding for the Family Safety Program. This allows the District to provide programs such as CPR and first aid classes, car seats, home fire safety and babysitting classes. Other grant awards this year included a buckle-up billboard campaign from the Governor's Office of Highway Safety and a senior citizen fire academy from FEMA's Assistance to Firefighters, Fire Prevention and Safety Grant. One of the District's schools also benefited from a Safe Routes to School grant through Safe Kids Tucson, bringing pedestrian and bike safety to elementary students.
- DHFD participated and co-sponsored a new water safety program in partnership with Safe Kids Tucson. The program targeted first graders who learned water safety behaviors in their classroom and then were rewarded with a field trip to an aquatic center where safety messages were reinforced in a fun learning environment. The program was a huge success and will continue annually.
- This year's Fire Prevention Month Characterization Program had a "Fire House Clown" theme to it. DHFD partnered with two members of the Pima County Sheriff's Auxiliary Team and covered safety messages like don't play with lighters and matches, drug resistance, gun safety and eating right and exercising regularly. The program was well received by the participating 11 schools and over 4,500 children.



Communications

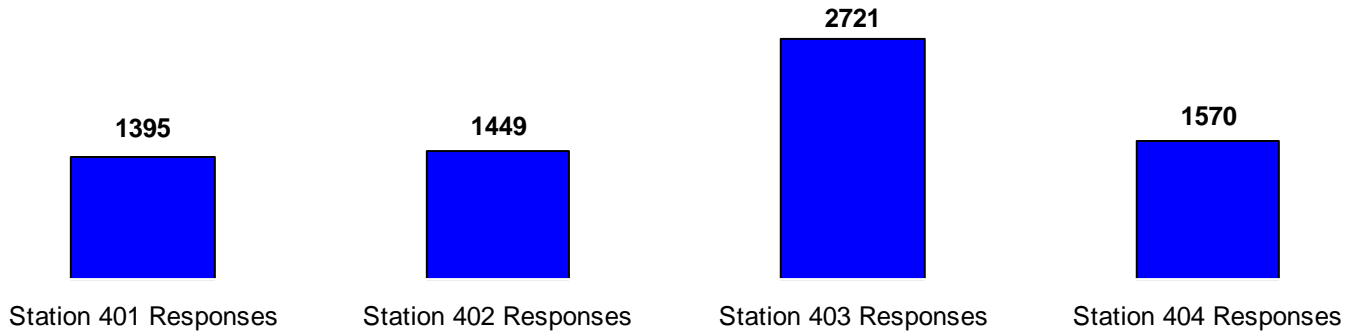


2008 Communication Training

- Association of Public-Safety Communications Officers certification
 - Communication Center Use & Operations
 - C.P.R. Re-certifications
 - Incident Command System
- During 2008, Communications Center employees participated in the update and instructional review of the Emergency Medical Dispatch program. This program is used to provide instruction to 911 callers who are on the scene of a person in need of medical attention. The program also gathers important information which is then transferred to emergency responders as they respond to the incident.
- In 2008 the Computer Aided Dispatch program was updated allowing the system to report to the communications operator the real time location of emergency units whether they are in the field or in quarters. This program gives the operator information concerning the closest units and the most appropriate response to an emergency. Another benefit to these updates is the reduced amount of radio traffic tying up the airwaves.
- Pima County Wireless Integrated Network (PCWIN) project continued to move forward this year. Bid documents for the radio system and the data system were released to vendors and the bid award is expected to be made after the first of the year. Additionally, we participated in the programming committee for the design of the new communications center or centers. We are working with Northwest Fire District on developing a combined Pima County fire dispatch consortium consisting of many if not most of the fire districts in Pima County.



Facilities



Facility Apparatus for Response

Station 401— Engine, Ambulance, Water Tender

Station 402—Engine, Ambulance, Brush Truck

Station 403—Engine, Ambulance, Battalion Chief

Station 404—Engine, Ambulance, Squad Truck, Brush Truck

- Station 401 received exercise bars and stair rails behind the station for physical fitness training. The training grounds, which are also located at Station 401, received permanent props for forcible entry drills. Additionally, Station 401 and 402's swamp cooling system was replaced with an air conditioning system this year.
- Station 403 is being rebuilt adjacent to the existing facility. The construction process was completed at the end of the year. The next step will happen in early 2009 and will include personnel and equipment moving over to the new structure. The old building will then be torn down to make room for the apparatus driveway and a parking area. This new station is replacing one of the District's original structures that was constructed from 1970-1974 by community volunteers.
- The process for a brand new fire station was started this year. Station 405's future location will be in the Star Valley Community near Los Reales and Camino Verde. Land purchase agreements and construction plans were initiated this year.



Drexel Heights Fire District
5030 S. Camino Verde
Tucson, AZ 85735

2008 Customer Service Questionnaire Responses

When residents were randomly asked to provide comments about
Drexel Heights Fire District, here is what they had to say...

- We wanted to thank you so much for going out of your way to help our family!
- Thank you for everything you have done for our family. You are all great and we appreciate you always being here for us.
- It is indeed comforting to know how you were able to respond to our emergency within four minutes. Thank you for your service, not only to us, but to all of the residents you serve.
- Thank you for your work, we appreciate your presence.
- Thank you so much for your prompt, courteous and professional actions. And thank you also for your kind tolerance of our barking dog. You are clearly dedicated to excellence.
- It is our privilege to have such professionals!
- Thanks to all the firefighters who got me to the hospital so quickly. Everyone was really great.
- The response time was terrific. They were completely professional and I am grateful to all of them.

*Thank you from the Drexel Heights Fire District for all of the support
we receive daily from our community. It is a pleasure to serve you!*