



MENDOTA HEIGHTS FIRE DEPARTMENT



2018 ANNUAL REPORT

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It is my pleasure to present the 2018 Annual report for the Mendota Heights Fire Department. In 2018, our firefighters dedicated thousands of hours in support of our mission: to preserve and protect life and property from fire and other hazards through community education, emergency response and community service.

As we progress through 2019 and into 2020, much of our focus will be directed towards managing the operational and logistical hurdles that are associated with the station addition and remodeling project. Beyond the construction challenges, we are continuously evaluating all aspects of administrative and operational procedures. We are focused on addressing firefighter health and safety issues, improving training programs, enhancing response and reporting capabilities through technology, analyzing equipment needs, and addressing a variety of other projects to ensure that we continue to provide safe, efficient and

professional emergency services. The department also continues to build and expand relationships with neighboring departments, mutual aid partners, Health East EMS services, and other regional response teams and organizations. The efforts to build these relationships prior to the emergency call translates to a higher degree of operational proficiency and ensures a more unified response to any emergency – regardless of the size or complexity.

The ability to carry out our mission now and into the future is due to the dedicated members of the Mendota Heights Fire Department and the support of their families, the tremendous support from elected officials, the business community, and citizens. I am blessed and humbled to be a part of this organization and community. Thank you for the continued support.

*Chief Dave Dreelan
Mendota Heights Fire Department*

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2018



A message from the Mendota Heights Fire Relief Association

The Mendota Heights Fire Department is looking forward to another beautiful Minnesota fall in the community.

The Mendota Heights Fire Department has been protecting the local community since 1947. It is a 36-member organization made up of residents who work full-time jobs in addition to their service for the Fire Department. Last year, firefighters willingly spent countless hours on training, fire prevention, meetings, and responding to emergencies ensuring community safety.

In the past, the MHFD Relief Association held an annual fundraiser, the Firefighter's Dance, to support costs associated with maintaining and running many of the volunteer Fire Department activities. Members of the department visited residents of the community selling tickets and taking donations. And while dance ticket sales and donations have been the primary department fundraiser since 1948, over the past several years interest in the dance has decreased. Last year, due to declining attendance, this fundraiser was discontinued.

In the future, the MHFD would like to introduce a new community fundraising event that will be enjoyed by all residents. Planning for such an event takes time and resources. With the fire station renovation, the majority of resources are currently focused on this construction project.

Resident feedback is encouraged for future community events. As always, our firefighter team enjoys visiting with and meeting residents, and is interested in any comments or suggestions, please contact us at mendotaheightsfirerelief@gmail.com.



The Mendota Heights Fire Relief Association Needs Your Help!

The Mendota Heights Fire Relief Association is reaching out to the community by asking neighbors to pledge tax-deductible financial support for on-going fire prevention activities. We gladly give our time, but we need your financial support to make it all come together.

100% of these fundraising efforts go directly toward supporting your local Fire Relief Association.

To donate, please mail a check, payable to the Mendota Heights Fire Relief Association, to 2121 Dodd Road, Mendota Heights, MN 55120. Thank you for your consideration.

The above statement has been prepared and paid for by the Mendota Heights Fire Relief Association.



Hanging Up Their Bunker Gear For The Last Time

In 2018 the Mendota Heights Fire Department said farewell to two firefighters who, combined, had 27 years of service to the residents of Mendota Heights, Lilydale, Mendota and Sunfish Lake.

Vince Belmares joined the Fire Department in November of 2005. Vince, or “Vinny” as he is always referred to, had a full-time job as an employee of Xcel Energy working in the gas division. The department quickly discovered what an asset it was to have a “gas guy” on the truck. Vinny was on the truck the day that a construction crew, while moving a wall section via a crane, accidentally hit a large propane tank. This caused a major propane leak that quickly ignited, burning the propane as fast as it came out. It took quite some time, but eventually the leaking propane had slowed enough for the crew to attempt to stop the leak. The leak was stopped, the fire was extinguished, and today the Lilydale Senior Living Facility stands as the completed construction project.

In addition to his capabilities on the fire ground, Vinny brought with him a great attitude. Always quick with a story or joke, one couldn’t help but enjoy when he was around.

Another big loss to the ranks of the Mendota Heights Fire Department was the retirement of Steve Abrahamson. Steve joined the MHFD in 2003, but after 15 years of service, Steve desired to spend more time with his family. Steve’s quiet demeanor and dedicated work ethic were an asset to the department.



Vince Belmares



Steve Abrahamson

In addition to being a firefighter, Steve often worked at least two other jobs, yet was still able to make his call percentages and complete all required trainings and classes.

Important to firefighter performance is physical fitness, and Steve took that seriously. His dedication to firefighting and fitness was clearly demonstrated during the Fight for Air Challenge, a fundraiser for the American Lung Association. This is where participants climb the stairs of a skyscraper in downtown Minneapolis in full gear – including air packs. Competing with the additional weight makes it very challenging, and Steve’s consistent, fast times led the department’s team. Out of a field of 200-300 firefighters, Steve earned fifth place in 2016 and eleventh place in 2017. Steve also demonstrated humility by never boasting of his incredible times – that just was not his style.

Steve was very knowledgeable, and when given an assignment at a drill or on the fire ground, it was quickly completed – and completed correctly. Steve extended this same will and commitment to his wife, daughters and parents, and when any of them were in need of more of his time he made that a priority, balancing each with importance and dedication.

Vince and Steve will be greatly missed by their brothers and sisters in the fire service, as well as the Mendota Heights community. The MHFD is grateful for their service, and wishes them the best of luck!



2018 Summary of Fire Calls

Fires	Lilydale	Mendota	Mendota Heights	Sunfish Lake	Mutual Aid	Total	Sub Total
Building fire		1	4			5	
Cooking fire			2	1		3	
Vehicle fire			8			8	
Dumpster fire			1			1	
							17

Rescue & Emergency Medical Service	Lilydale	Mendota	Mendota Heights	Sunfish Lake	Mutual Aid	Total	Sub Total
Medical assist	4	5	22	1		32	
Motor vehicle accident with injuries	1		4			5	
Vehicle accident with no injuries			2			2	
Extrication from vehicle			2			2	
Removal from elevator	1		1			2	
							43

Hazardous Condition (No Fire)	Lilydale	Mendota	Mendota Heights	Sunfish Lake	Mutual Aid	Total	Sub Total
Liquid spill			4			4	
Gas leak	1	2	11			14	
Electric wiring/equipment problem			1			1	
Powerline down			11			11	
Carbon monoxide		2	5			7	
Arcing, shorted electrical equipment			3			3	
							40



Service Call	Lilydale	Mendota	Mendota Heights	Sunfish Lake	Mutual Aid	Total	Sub Total
Service call, other			1			1	
Assist police	2		2			4	
Smoke or odor removal			3	1		4	
							9

Good Intent (No Fire)	Lilydale	Mendota	Mendota Heights	Sunfish Lake	Mutual Aid	Total	Sub Total
Good intent call, other	1		14	1		16	
Dispatched and cancelled	7	4	49	4		64	
No incident found			1			1	
Authorized controlled burn			1			1	
Smoke scare	1		7			8	
HazMat release w/no HazMat	1		9			10	
							100

False Alarm and False Calls	Lilydale	Mendota	Mendota Heights	Sunfish Lake	Mutual Aid	Total	Sub Total
False alarm	1		2			3	
Malicious/Mischievous			3			3	
Malfunction	5	1	24	1		31	
Unintentional	6	1	37	2		46	
CO detector activation, no CO			1			1	
							84

31	16	235	11	15	308	308
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Mendota Heights Only	235	Mendota, Lilydale, Sunfish Lake
Other Coverage Cities	58	
Mutual Aid	15	
Total	308	



Training Division

The Training Division supports the Mendota Heights Fire Department's mission to preserve and protect life and property from fire and other hazards through community education, emergency response and community service. The division provides training, education, and personal development for all firefighters and fire officers through in-house instruction, online education, conferences and seminars. In 2018, the team conducted 3,219 hours of training for 36 Fire Department members.

All members of the department must attend a combination of mandatory and elective trainings over the course of the year in order to maintain proficiencies and meet state and national certifications. The following are examples of the types of training that the team develops and teaches:

- **Emergency medical service training**
Members of the department are certified as an Emergency Medical Responder (EMR). In order to maintain this certification members must complete ongoing classroom and hands-on training.
- **Self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) and personal protective equipment (PPE) training**
Firefighters receive constant training on the proper use of PPE and SCBA used when entering life-threatening environments.

- **Firefighter safety and survival training**
Firefighters are trained on self-rescue techniques and how to rescue other firefighters that may become lost or trapped in building fires.
- **Fire apparatus operator training**
All firefighters are trained to drive and operate the fleet of fire trucks. The complexity of today's new fire trucks require constant operational training.
- **Fire streams and fire hose training**
A new high-flow fire hose and nozzles were recently purchased and put into service. Firefighters trained on the techniques needed to effectively use the new equipment.
- **Fire behavior training**
Fire behavior is extremely important to firefighters. The training team built a fire training prop that allows them to change fire conditions, such as wind direction and fuel load, to demonstrate their effects in a controlled and small-scale environment.
- **Forcible entry training**
Train on techniques that help limit the amount of property damage that can occur when firefighters need to forcibly open locked doors and windows.

Dakota County Special Operations Team

In 2018 two of the City's public safety employees, Firefighter Dan Johnson and Police Officer Tony Patton, participated in extensive and ongoing training with the Dakota County Special Operations Team (DCSOT). The team's mission is to enhance the resources and capabilities that are needed to deal with low frequency - high risk types of emergencies. The team is made up of individuals from public safety agencies across Dakota County that train together approximately 15 days per year. The team is available to respond to a wide range of complex emergencies such as hazardous material spills, wide area searches, radiological emergencies, confined space and rope rescue events, trench rescues and structural collapses.

Interested in Joining the Fire Department?

You may qualify if you:

- live within 6 minutes of the fire station,
- are at least 18 years of age and physically fit,
- have high school diploma or GED and
- have a valid Minnesota driver's license

Visit the city website and fill out online an "I'm interested in joining the MHFD card" and we will let you know the next time we are looking to add new members to our "Fire Family."



Mendota Heights Fire Department: Blazing The Trail Since 1947

From its humble beginnings in 1947, the Mendota Heights Fire Department has proudly served Mendota Heights and surrounding communities for the last 62 years. During this time the department has experienced many changes. In the early years, firefighters were activated only when there was a verified fire. The coverage area extended into the cities of Eagan and Inver Grove Heights. A mainly rural community was protected with one engine, a water tanker, and a Willys jeep outfitted for wildland fires.

As the city transitioned from farm fields to housing developments, the Fire Department grew to meet the needs of the burgeoning community. By the early 1960's, the MHFD owned the first fire apparatus with an automatic transmission (1960 Ford C-900). The department was on the cutting edge again in 1970 when it purchased the first apparatus to be fitted with an articulating squirt arm. Seeing how effective this type of apparatus was, several surrounding departments followed suit in purchasing the technology. The articulated squirt has been so effective for the MHFD that it is still in use today, currently fitted to its third vehicle chassis (Engine-11).

The arrival of the 1980's brought equally notable advancements. Antiquated rubber coats and hip boots were replaced by turn-out gear, and the original fire station (built in 1947) gave way to the current residence at 2121 Dodd Road. Firefighting methods have also changed. With the rise in popularity of synthetic building materials

(petroleum-based paints and fabrics), firefighters needed to reach farther into much hotter environments. Given this, the department dedicated more resources to training and personal protective equipment (PPE) to better serve the community. The city has also been at the leading edge of change, being amongst the first municipalities in the state to require all commercial and public buildings to have sprinkler systems.

The 1990's introduced thermal imaging equipment into the department's tool kit. With a generous gift from Robert and Maureen Vince and family, the MHFD was able to purchase two thermal imaging cameras (TICs). These TICs enabled firefighters to see through the smoke in order to find the fire faster, as well as anyone trapped in a building. Additionally, in response to the city's growth in multi-level housing developments (both single and multi-family), the department's first ladder truck (Ladder-10) was purchased. In 1995 the fire department was also recognized for its efforts and was named Minnesota Fire Department of the Year; an award proudly accepted again in 2016.

In the last decade, fire service has continued to be at the forefront of safety and technology. Fire trucks are now equipped with laptops computers that enable faster arrivals, as well as provide the crew with real-time vital information before reaching the scene. Moreover, firefighters carry gas monitors to alert personnel if there is a danger in the home/building environment to life safety.

But with all of these advancements comes the reminder that fighting fire is still a very dangerous job. With the advent of lightweight construction design and increased use of manufactured building materials, fires are burning faster and hotter than in previous years. Additionally, the byproducts of combustion, which firefighters face, are also more deadly than ever.

Upon completion of the remodeled fire station, the MHFD will be poised, once again, at the forefront of safety, both for firefighters and for the community which they proudly serve. A new training bay will provide members a 21st century training facility, and a designated gear room with updated washer and dryer which will protect firefighters from cancer-causing soot collected on PPE during emergency events.

The immediate future may be filled with the sounds of construction. The members of the MHFD eagerly await a future home that will help the firefighters to protect every resident of the city from the dangers of fire and other hazards, through community education, emergency response, and community service.





City of Mendota Heights
Fire Department
1101 Victoria Curve
Mendota Heights, MN 55118
www.mendota-heights.com



Public Education

In 2018 the Public Education team of the Mendota Heights Fire Department was hard at work reaching out to neighbors, businesses, and organizations. The Public Education team strives to minimize emergencies through community education on how to avoid or mitigate dangerous situations before they occur. This past year's work included everything from teaching senior living facility residents how to avoid slips, trips, and falls, to instructing school children about cooking and fire safety.

Work continues in 2019 as the team plans for this year's Fire Prevention Week, featuring the theme "Not every hero wears a cape. Plan and practice your escape." Being a hero does not mean doing something extraordinary. Small, practical actions can be just as important, and may save lives. Firefighters hope that your house never catches fire, but if it

does, will every member of your family know **two ways out** of every room? With modern construction and furnishings, you may have less than two minutes to exit your home. Therefore, it is important for every member of your family to create, practice and memorize an escape plan.

Five steps to create an effective escape plan include:

1. Draw a map of the floor plan.
2. Draw two routes from every room to an exit.
3. Mark all smoke alarms within the plan. There should be at least one on every level, in every bedroom, and near the sleeping areas.
4. Pick a meeting place outside of your home to ensure everyone can be accounted for when the fire department arrives.
5. Be sure all family members know how to call 911 once they are safely

outside; this includes being able to get past mobile phone security features.

When a fire occurs, seconds count and a well-practiced escape plan will help to keep you and your family safe. For more information visit the National Fire Protection Association's website: www.nfpa.org.

This year's **Fire Prevention Week** is **October 6-12**. The MHFD will be visiting local schools during the week. However with all of the exciting updates at the station, there may be a few changes to the Open House schedule. Please watch for updates as the week nears.

As always, the Public Education team hopes you have a very safe and enjoyable year! If you would like to schedule a MHFD Public Education presentation for a class, company, neighborhood or residence, please contact City Hall at 651.452.1850.