

MENDOTA HEIGHTS FIRE DEPARTMENT



2019 ANNUAL REPORT



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April 16, 2019, marked the culmination of years of planning for the expansion and remodel of the City's Fire Station. As the excavator moved into position, many of us realized that despite all of the delays and setbacks, the project was really going to happen! For much of April, the construction went as planned. But then, the rain came – and it kept coming. You may recall the record rainfall that occurred last spring!

We learned through May and June of 2019 that despite all of our planning and preparation you can't control Mother Nature. By the time the weather normalized and the site dried up, we were already nearly six weeks behind schedule.

By the end of June, all the footings were finally poured and some of the outside walls began to go up. Just as the larger cranes were set to move in and put the roof structure in place, more rain came and delayed the construction process again.

Significant progress was made in September and October as the rest of the walls went up and the roof structures were raised. If the temperatures remained seasonable through November, we were confident we could begin the exterior brick work and make up some time. Do you remember how cold Halloween was? If not, Mother Nature struck again with record cold the first two weeks of November, dashing any hopes of catching up with the schedule.

By the end of December, the new training tower was up, the exterior walls and roof structures were in place and the building was enclosed and had temporary heat. Thankfully, the new addition was completed in March 2020. The focus is now the second phase, which is remodeling the existing portion of the building. Construction of the new facility is scheduled to be finalized in the summer of 2020, with an open house for the public to follow soon afterwards.

*Chief Dave Dreelan
Mendota Heights Fire Department*





A message from the Mendota Heights Fire Relief Association

When you hear "Relief Association" you may envision a group of people assisting after a natural disaster or other devastating event. And when you learn that the Mendota Heights Fire Department has a Fire Relief Association, you may think of course they would, however the concept of what a Relief Association actually does is vastly different than the images the term evokes.

A fire department's Relief Association is the entity that manages the retirement funds for the general membership of the fire department. Every year, the city and the state each contribute dollars to the Relief Association who, in turn, allocate these dollars into the department's retirement pension fund. The fund is managed by the State of Minnesota and is a balanced portfolio that is designed toward long-term growth.

Once a member of the department reaches their twenty-year anniversary, they become fully vested and are able to draw 100% of their portion upon retirement. This benefit is a nice reward for a long and dedicated career serving the city. It also serves as a selling point to those who may be interested in giving their time, efforts, and energies to fire service.



Support the Fire Relief Association

Beyond managing the department's retirement fund, the Fire Relief Association also manages the department's fundraising activities to support various projects not covered by the City budget, such as the annual banquet, community event hospitality, and service recognition awards to name a few. In an attempt to keep up with the times, the Fire Relief Association ended the annual Fireman's Ball door-to-door fundraiser and has been working to develop a more updated fundraiser.

The Fire Relief Association is always happy to accept donations. If you would like to support their efforts please mail a check, payable to the Mendota Heights Fire Relief Association, to:

Mendota Heights Fire Department
2121 Dodd Road
Mendota Heights, Minnesota 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

This portion of the Annual Report is reserved for introducing new faces who have joined the MHFD and to pay tribute to members who have retired from the department in the past twelve months.

The department is made up of thirty-six dedicated men and women with incredibly diverse backgrounds – each with a very different story to share. In a typical year, three or four members leave the department for retirement, a job location change, or other reasons. Going into the 2019 hiring season was unique since there was no turnover and therefore no openings. It has been a long time since the department went a full year with full retention. Consequently, the “Hello” section of this article is very short and the department is grateful it retained this talent.

Before year’s end, the department did have to say goodbye to two longtime members who retired: John Mendez and John Boland.

John Mendez joined the MHFD in 2005. John always had a smile on his face and a story at the ready, and his extroverted nature was an asset to community engagement and networking. Over the next twelve years, John worked on countless committees but if there was one that he really poured his heart and soul into, it was the Dance Committee. This committee was a small group that worked year-round to plan and host the annual Firefighters Dance. John worked diligently to source the best entertainment possible, the nicest venue,

and coordinated with business associates for raffle prize donations.

John was always willing to support the community in any way needed, whether it was bringing a truck to schools, a senior high-rise building, the Dakota County Fair, or other event. Late in John’s career he became the MHFD’s representative for the Capitol City region of the Minnesota State Fire Department Association (MSFDA) and he continues to serve in this role during retirement. His willingness to share his time with his coworkers and his community are dearly missed.

The other great loss to the ranks due to retirement was John Boland. The Boland family is very well known in the Mendota Heights community. John grew up in Mendota Heights and joined the department in September 1997. Before joining, John had been working for the City since 1991 in the Public Works

department. His shared fire and public works expertise benefitted the department – especially his heavy equipment knowledge and skills. John also spent many years serving as vice president of the Fire Relief Association and had been promoted to captain of Squad 3.

John retired from firefighting to focus on his promotion to public works superintendent for the City. His dedication to the City and his fellow firefighters, along with his flat out common-sense base of knowledge, made him an asset to the department that is not easily replaced.

The MHFD is grateful for the service of these two talented retirees and wishes them well in their future endeavors.



John Mendez



John Boland

BY THE NUMBERS



2019 Summary of Fire Calls

Fires	Lilydale	Mendota	Mendota Heights	Sunfish Lake	Total	Sub Total
Building Fire	0	0	6	0	6	
Cooking Fire	0	0	9	0	9	
Rubbish Fire	1	0	3	0	4	
Fire in Mobile Property	0	0	2	0	2	
Vehicle Fire	0	0	4	0	4	
Brush/Grass Fire	0	0	3	0	3	
Dumpster Fire	0	0	1	0	1	
Excessive Heat/Scorch Burns	0	0	2	0	2	
TOTALS:	1	0	30	0	31	31

Rescue & Emergency Service	Lilydale	Mendota	Mendota Heights	Sunfish Lake	Total	Sub Total
Medical Assist	6	2	31	1	40	
Accident w/injuries	0	0	6	1	7	
Accident no injuries	0	0	2	0	2	
Water Rescue	0	0	0	1	1	
Extrication	1	0	2	0	3	
Removal from Elevator	0	0	1	0	1	
TOTALS:	7	2	42	3	54	54

Hazardous Condition (No Fire)	Lilydale	Mendota	Mendota Heights	Sunfish Lake	Total	Sub Total
Liquid Spill	0	0	5	0	5	
Gas Leak	0	0	15	2	17	
Electrical Wiring/Equipment Problem	0	0	2	0	2	
Powerline Down	0	1	6	2	9	
CO Alarm	0	0	16	0	16	
Arcing/Shorting	0	1	1	0	2	
TOTALS:	0	2	45	4	51	51

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Service Call	Lilydale	Mendota	Mendota Heights	Sunfish Lake	Total	Sub Total
Water Problem	0	0	1	0	1	
Smoke/Odor Removal	0	0	2	0	2	
Public Service	0	0	3	0	3	
Assist PD	0	0	2	0	2	
Lift Assist	0	0	5	0	5	
TOTALS:	0	0	13	0	13	13

Good Intent (No Fire)	Lilydale	Mendota	Mendota Heights	Sunfish Lake	Total	Sub Total
Dispatched & Cancelled	6	0	60	4	70	
No Incident Found	1	0	2	0	3	
Authorized Controlled Burn	0	0	1	0	1	
Smoke Scare	0	1	6	0	7	
HatMat with no HazMat Release	1	0	9	0	10	
Unauthorized Burn	0	0	1	0	1	
TOTALS:	8	1	79	4	92	92

False Alarm and False Calls	Lilydale	Mendota	Mendota Heights	Sunfish Lake	Total	Sub Total
Malicious	0	0	4	0	4	
Malfunction	6	2	31	2	41	
Unintentional	7	2	47	1	57	
TOTALS:	13	4	82	3	102	102

29	9	291	14	343	343
			MUTUAL AID CALLS:		31
				CALL TOTAL:	374

Mutual Aid Calls	
Eagan	6
Rosemount	2
South Saint Paul	4
Inver Grove Heights	8
West St. Paul	11
TOTAL:	31

Mendota Heights 2019 Fire Losses:

	PROPERTY	CONTENT	TOTAL
	\$106,700	\$36,300	\$143,000



Training Division

The Training Department continues to provide high-quality training for all members of the department. Training is the foundation that promotes safety, effectiveness and efficacy while on the fire ground or an emergency scene. While training focuses primarily on the fundamentals of the job, in an ever-changing environment it also needs to evolve and adjust to meet the demands of the profession. The curriculum trains to the current state standards and strives to exceed those benchmarks.

During the year many milestones were achieved. Three members graduated from the Northern Dakota Training Academy (NDTA) to begin their careers as new firefighters. These firefighters have met the State of Minnesota standards of Firefighter I and II,

Hazardous Materials Operations 472 and Emergency Medical Responder, and have spent about one hundred and sixty hours in the classroom. The NDTA is built on a solid partnership with several surrounding fire departments including Inver Grove Heights, Eagan, and Rosemount.

In 2019, each firefighter also spent nearly one hundred hours training for all

types of emergencies. Throughout the year weekly skills training was provided, including topics such as:

Ropes and Knots: Common knots used in fire service are reviewed, ensuring all firefighters are proficient with each knot.

Fire Extinguishers: Reviewed different types, sizes and uses of each extinguisher with training on proper use.

Firefighter Recruitment Underway

What fuels your fire? If you dream of making a difference and protecting those dearest to you, desire to be a role model for youth, have a drive to inspire others, and a passion for service and giving back, consider becoming a firefighter. The Mendota Heights Fire Department can help foster your ideals and push you to become a better you.

The department is going through the hiring process in 2020 to find, hire and train dedicated citizens of our cities who will be here to serve the needs of the community into the future. We hope to add several new firefighters by year's end. If you are looking to fuel your fire, and think you would be interested in serving your city, neighbors, and family, we want to hear from you!

We will be holding informational sessions at the Fire Station this summer to learn about the firefighter role, what it takes to become a firefighter, and what you can expect from the entire experience. For more information visit mendota-heights.com/employment.

If firefighting isn't for you, encourage a neighbor or family member to check out this opportunity to serve our community.

“Being a firefighter and a member of the Fire Department means being part of something larger than yourself. It’s about being there for your community and putting the needs of others before your own. It’s about the sense of family created by your brother and sister firefighters. It’s a job and a source of pride that cannot be duplicated elsewhere.”

-- a Mendota Heights Firefighter

“Most people join to give back to the community. What you learn as a firefighter is that the community continues to uplift and support their first responders, working together to prevent, respond to, and recover from emergency incidents.”

-- a Mendota Heights Firefighter



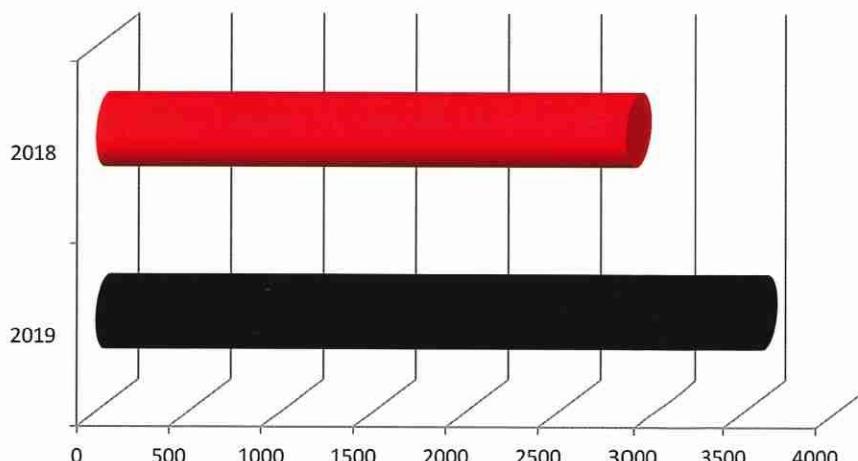


Ice and cold water rescue: Winter training took place on Rogers Lake where crews practiced techniques for rescuing victims that had fallen through the ice.

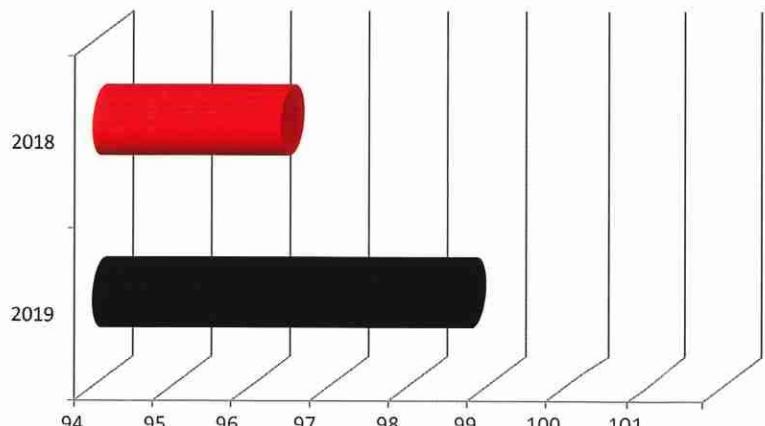
Emergency Driving: One of the leading causes of injury and death of firefighters according the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) is vehicle crashes. Firefighters are trained on driving each emergency vehicle with skills development in diminishing clearance, serpentine course, and backing the truck using a spotter.

Tender (water tanker) Operations: The MHFD provides service to Mendota Heights, Mendota, Lilydale and Sunfish Lake with varied infrastructures. Providing fire protection to areas that do not have fire hydrants requires special training. Though not often used, is very important when needed.

Total Department Training Hours



Average Training Hours Per Firefighter



Final Siren

Retired Firefighter Eugene (Gene) Lange passed away January 24, 2019. Eugene joined the Fire Department in 1966 and retired in 1984 after eighteen years of service. Eugene held the position of captain 1972 to 1973 and assistant chief from 1983 to 1984. Eugene was also a member of the Mendota Heights Police Department.

Retired Firefighter Marcus (Marc) Connolly passed away August 18, 2018. Marcus joined the Fire Department in 1971 and retired in 2006 after thirty-five years of service. During his time on the Fire Department he served as captain and training coordinator.

Retired Firefighter Paul Maczko passed away August 14, 2018. Paul joined the Fire Department in 1964 and retired in 1984 after twenty years of service. Paul was the first in a long line of service by members of the Maczko family.

Retired Firefighter William (Bill) Chisler passed away July 14, 2019. William joined the Fire Department in 1970 and retired in 1994 after twenty-four years of service. Bill was the secretary of the department from 1977 to 1982 and also served as department quarter master and the unofficial cook.



City of Mendota Heights
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Public Education Makes a Difference

The MHFD Public Education team continues working hard to be a community resource by providing fire and safety education to citizens. It believes through education, the impact of emergencies can be minimized or prevented altogether, and that a fire or injury that never occurs has the best outcome.

In 2019, Public Education and firefighters committed hundreds of hours to visiting child care providers, schools, businesses, and assisted living facilities. As part of youth education, preschoolers through elementary-age children learned what

firefighters do, and how to "get out and stay out" if they hear the smoke alarm going off. The team also participated in a joint Mendota Heights and South St. Paul Safety Camp, teaching fire safety skills for planning ahead of time, practicing what to do if something were to happen, and fire prevention.

As part of community education the team also networks with neighbors during Night to Unite, the Mendota Heights Parks Celebration, Dakota County Fair and Halloween Bonfire. And while the team usually plans and hosts the annual

Fire Prevention Open House, the 2019 event (temporarily moved to Mendakota Park due to Station construction) was unfortunately cancelled as a result of very cold weather. The next Open House is scheduled for October 2020.

The Public Education team and members of the MHFD look forward to continuing serving you and wish everyone in the community a safe year. If you have questions or would like to schedule a class, call City Hall at 651-452-1850.