



# MENDOTA HEIGHTS FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

### A MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF

I am pleased to present 2023 Fire Department Annual Report, and I am confident that you will find it both informative and interesting.

Since its inception, the MHFD has used a unique approach with equipment purchases, such as when we purchased our new ladder truck this year. We establish a committee of 4-5 firefighters and a fire officer who are responsible for doing all of the product research and evaluations, and in some cases, this also involves visiting a manufacturing facility. This committee writes a product specification used by the Department and the City during the purchasing process.

This approach has many advantages. Those who participate usually have a genuine interest in the product under consideration; and they often possess relevant experience from outside the department. Because of this, we end up with a committee of firefighters who are invested in the project.

With large purchases like a ladder truck, there are many steps to follow. New firefighters who take part in the committee process get first-hand experience on how the evaluation, specification and purchasing process is done. This allows new committee members the opportunity to develop and learn from those with more experience – which can even be retired members who volunteer to be part of the process.

Committee members also become experts on the new equipment, which makes them a great resource long after the purchase is made. As a result, they routinely help with training and become the go-to experts when operational or maintenance issues arise. Last and perhaps most important, this process connects firefighters to the facilities and equipment, which helps develop pride and ownership within the Department.

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-Fire Chief Dave Dreelan

# EQUIPMENT UPDATE



## LADDER TRUCK

In 2023, the Department acquired a new 78-foot ladder truck, Ladder 11, replacing the existing ladder which serviced the community for 26 years before it was sold.

Ladder 11 reaches 13 feet further than the previous truck, and carries 7 ground ladders, battery-operated hand tools and portable lighting, as well as rope rescue and medical equipment.

The new truck features computer technology to help ensure maximum reach of the aerial ladder without compromising stability, and new forward-facing emergency lighting to alert drivers in their rear-view mirror.

Ladder 11 is also equipped with an Emergency Vehicle Alert System (EVAS) to alert drivers via their vehicle navigation systems; and a laptop computer to display real-time information during an emergency response.

Ladder 11 has ushered in a new era for the Mendota Heights Fire Department, much as Ladder 10 did 26 years ago, and will safely and effectively serve the community for many years to come.

## JAWS OF LIFE

In 2023, the Department purchased new tools for motor vehicle extrication. Commonly known as the “jaws of life,” these tools have the capability to cut, pry and rip a vehicle apart; which aids in freeing trapped victims after a motor vehicle accident. The newly-purchased tools include a hydraulic cutter, spreader and ram, to replace the Department’s original 35-year-old extrication tools.

Over the years, car manufacturers have improved vehicle technology and parts, so today’s cars are made from metals that are much harder and stronger than 35 years ago. Therefore, the older extrication tools simply became outdated and ineffective, requiring the purchase of updated tools with greater cutting force.

Another benefit of purchasing new tools is they now run on a lithium-ion battery, very similar to any standard cordless power tool. Transitioning from equipment that was tethered by a power cord, to new battery-powered tools, frees up the area of operation and allows the tool to be used more effectively.

MHFD is now equipped with the newest technology in vehicle extrication, saving precious time during rescue operations after any vehicle-related incident.



## PUBLIC EDUCATION

The mission of the Department's public education program is to educate and train the communities we serve about the dangers of fire and other hazards, and to ensure the protection of life and property. The public education team coordinated 17 events in 2023, connecting with the community on fire and life safety topics. Firefighters visited six area schools during Fire Prevention Week in October, and hosted the annual Fire Prevention Open House. Visitors learned how to "stay low and go" with simulated smoke in the safety house, made an escape plan at home, and trained in hands-only CPR. Firefighters also taught hands-only CPR at open house events throughout the year, connected with kids at Safety Camp, and hosted Scout troops at the Fire Station to earn merit badges for first aid and safety.

Firefighters also participated in Night to Unite, Bogey with the Red and Blue, Parks Celebration, Frozen Fun Fest, Career Day at Two Rivers High School, Pickleball with Public Safety, and Mendota Day.

Looking ahead at 2024, the Public Education team will have a fire extinguisher training tool that was acquired with generous funds donated by the Coss family. This resource will be used for first responder training, as well as hands-on in training for community members during Fire Department events. The ability to confidently use a fire extinguisher, should the need arise, is a valuable skill, and we are very grateful to the Coss family for providing us the opportunity to further expand our public education efforts.





## A FOCUS ON RECRUITMENT

Mendota Heights proudly upholds its tradition as a paid-on-call Fire Department, comprised of dedicated volunteers committed to serving the community. Recognizing the importance of maintaining optimal staffing levels, the Department has embarked on a comprehensive process to enhance firefighter recruitment and retention, including bolstering retirement benefits and revamping recruitment methods. This concerted effort reflects the Department's unwavering dedication to securing the next generation of Mendota Heights firefighters.

Prospective recruits undergo rigorous training at our state-of-the-art, in-house Fire Academy for a full year to obtain licensure and demonstrate readiness to serve. If you possess a passion for teamwork, thrive on solving problems, aspire to contribute to a greater cause and live within seven minutes of the Fire Station, we invite you to join the ranks of our exceptional Department. Learn more at [MendotaHeightsMN.gov/BecomeAFirefighter](https://MendotaHeightsMN.gov/BecomeAFirefighter).

## DEPARTMENT RETIREMENTS

Originally hailing from Jefferson City, Missouri, Dan Bogg's employment in the aviation industry brought him to Minnesota in the early 2000s. After being hired as an inspector for Delta Airlines, Dan moved his family from South Minneapolis to Mendota Heights in 2012. Shortly after, Dan applied to become a member of the Fire Department. In Dan's words, "Helping people and serving my community is something I've always believed in."

Dan lived by that mantra, serving 11 years on the Mendota Heights Fire Department (2012-2023), and at every turn he could be counted on for his professionalism, work ethic, and personal accountability. Dan took great pride in everything he did, helping to raise the level of expectations on a variety of fronts. He was instrumental in building the Fire Station fitness center, and could be found there lifting weights just about every day. He was a high-quality firefighter, a dedicated public servant, and a friend to all who knew him.

On behalf of the MHFD and entire community, we wish him the very best as he retires from the Department and moves on to his next chapter!



## A DEDICATION TO TRAINING

Ensuring the Department is prepared to fulfill its mission requires regular, extensive, and ongoing training. The Department's Fire Academy trains our newest members to complete the initial certification process, and provides specialized training for members to receive advanced instruction.

In 2023, Department members completed 4,113 hours of training time, approximately 115 hours per person, on a wide range of topics including:

- CPR and EMS recertification
- Ice water rescue
- Fires in electric vehicles and energy storage systems
- Vehicle extrication
- MN State Fire Marshal sprinkler and fire alarm training
- Fire suppression in various type of structures, including an annual live burn training
- Vehicle fires using a propane-powered car fire prop
- Rescue training for remote areas accessible only by paths and trails
- Operation of the new ladder truck and new apparatus



In June of 2023, TJ Samec and Alex Lauth became the first graduates of Department's in-house Fire Academy, each completing approximately 200 hours of training over a ten-month period to become the departments newest firefighters. One month later, five more trainees began that journey and will graduate mid-2024.

Members of the Fire Department, all of whom are also your neighbors, take pride in being well trained and properly prepared to serve our community!



## **FIREFIGHTER RELIEF ASSOCIATION**

In addition to the strong sense of community in the Department, and the training and teamwork that firefighters gain through their time with the Department, another significant benefit to serving is that firefighters get a pension plan that they qualify for upon retirement from the department. The Fire Department and its members stand ready 24 hours per day, 365 days per year. The pension plan helps to ensure that the men and women who care for their community through their service on the Mendota Heights Fire Department are also taken care of following their retirement.

Vesting in this plan begins after the completion of 10 years of service and a member is fully vested after 20 years. The pension plan is funded by annual contributions from the City of Mendota Heights and the State of Minnesota. The Fire Relief Association administers the pension plan, manages the investment portfolio of the funds in the plan, and ensures accurate record keeping of all matters related to the pension and the members who participate in the plan.

While managing the pension plan is the primary purpose, the Relief Association engages in several other activities, all intended to support the mission of the department and its members – past and present. The Relief Association conducts separate fundraising activities that fund benefits, activities and events beyond those provided through funding by the City.

If you would like to support the Mendota Heights Fire Department, the Relief Association is grateful to accept donations. All donations received go directly to support the activities the Relief Association conducts to support its members.

Donations may be sent to:

**Mendota Heights Fire Department Relief Association  
2121 Dodd Road  
Mendota Heights, MN 55120  
Venmo: MHFD\_Relief**

Thank you for helping those who are dedicated to being there to help you when you need it most!



## SUMMARY OF FIRE CALLS

Incident Type	Lilydale	Mendota	Mendota Heights	Sunfish Lake	Total
<b>Fire</b> Buildings, vehicles, grass, cooking and other fires	2	1	19	2	24
<b>Rescue/Medical</b> Provide EMS, vehicle accident and lift assist	7	1	61	4	73
<b>Hazardous Conditions</b> Gas spill/leak, Carbon Monoxide, electrical and power line incidents	4	1	45	7	57
<b>Public Assist</b> Search, police assist and forced entry	1	0	12	2	15
<b>Good Intent</b> Smoke/odor scare, investigate (non-fire) and canceled en route	8	3	92	7	110
<b>False Alarm</b> Sprinkler or smoke detector activation	5	0	80	8	93
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>309</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>402*</b>

\*Includes 30 calls for mutual aid assistance to the Cities of Eagan, Inver Grove Heights and South Metro Fire (West St. Paul, South St. Paul).



Mendota Heights Fire Department  
2121 Dodd Road  
Mendota Heights, MN 55120  
[MendotaHeightsMN.gov](http://MendotaHeightsMN.gov)

## **FIRE PREVENTION WEEK OPEN HOUSE**

**OCT. 12  
10 A.M.-1 P.M.**

**MENDOTA HEIGHTS  
FIRE STATION**

**[MENDOTAHEIGHTSMN.GOV/](http://MENDOTAHEIGHTSMN.GOV/)  
CALENDAR**