



# Minooka Fire Protection District

*"A Culture of Excellent Service"*



## Annual Report

### Fiscal & Operational Year 2020

## **INTRODUCTION**

The following is presented as the 2020 Annual Report for the Minooka Fire Protection District. This report summarizes the activities of the Minooka Fire Protection throughout the 2020 year. The statistical data contained within the report provides members of the community a snapshot of the activities and operations of our organization.

2020 will definitely be a year to remember. COVID-19 required a great amount of planning, preparation, and operational adjustments as we worked to protect our citizens during a worldwide pandemic. Shelter-in-place orders, closed businesses, and slowed production at industrial facilities impacted our responses. The reduction in people traveling, working, going to school, etc. resulted in fewer emergency responses for 2020; however, many of those calls presented all new challenges with COVID precautions for our paramedics and staff.

## **COVID-19**

In 2020, Minooka Fire Protection District was required to quarantine ten firefighters under CDC guidance due to exposure. In early 2020 when COVID-19 was declared a pandemic and it was clear that emergency medical services would see a high risk of exposure, combined with a lot of unknowns on how COVID-19 would affect people, the fire chief and deputy chief met and formulated a continuity of operations plan (COOP).

COOP is not something new to emergency services. This provides an outlined plan on how a specific organization will continue to provide critical services when there is a significant impact on staffing, such as would be the case with multiple paramedics being out on sick leave.

Early in the pandemic, chief officers implemented aggressive measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 within the organization. For many years, the Fire District has educated and trained a member of our staff in infectious materials control. This person is responsible on a daily basis to properly address any exposure of our staff to infectious substances. Our Department Infectious Control Officer (DICO) is responsible for understanding the effect of infectious disease, exposure risks, protective measures, etc. The Fire District administration put the DICO staff to work early on in this pandemic to make sure we were following the science of the virus and recommendations from CDC and local health officials.

Through cooperation with our WESCOM Dispatch Center, the dispatchers became the first line of information for first responders, asking pointed questions of ill 911 callers, to determine if there was a COVID risk. Our responses of resources did not change much; however, the

process in how we entered residences, business, etc. definitely changed, sending in personnel who were protected with protective coveralls, eye glasses and prescribed masks.

2020 responses definitely looked different; however, our paramedics adapted well and overcame the challenges, and continue to deliver an excellent service to our citizens. We learned from this pandemic also and will continue to adapt to the challenges that come our way.

## **ORGANIZATION**

### **Organizational Structure**

In 1966, following a statutory required election procedure and judicial certification of the election procedure Minooka Fire Protection District was deemed an organized fire protection district under the statutes of the State of Illinois. The legal organization of the Minooka Fire Protection District followed a long history of fire department operations that dates back to the late 1800.

Records and documents reflect that the first organized group of people forming a fire brigade was around the 1890's. Local farmers, business owners and town people constituted the local volunteer fire department. Historical documents and accounts from local people indicate the original fire department was organized following two major fires that destroyed most of downtown section of Minooka.

In the 1800's fires were extinguished by bucket brigades, as well as horse and people drawn fire apparatus. In the lobby of the headquarters fire station you can view one of the original hose carts used by the Minooka Volunteer Fire Department. Today's fire service is much different in terms of fire apparatus and the way we extinguish fires as well as the expanded services offered by the modern fire protection district.

Today Minooka Fire Protection District personnel are equipped with some of the most advance apparatus, equipment and skills that are available. We have advanced technology to help firefighters more effectively rescue people, save lives and protect property.

Minooka Fire Protection District is rated a public protection Class 1 Fire Department by the Insurance Service Office (ISO) in the hydrant supplied areas and a Class 4 in the non-hydrant areas where water is required to be hauled by water tender. ISO Class 1 is the best rating available from ISO.

### Response Area:

The Fire District services a 38 square mile area, with an estimated population of 16,000. The response area includes heavy industrial, logistics warehousing, commercial and residential (single, and multifamily units). The District includes responses to areas of Interstate 80, the Illinois River, and multiple railroad systems.

## **GOVERNING AUTHORITY**

Minooka Fire Protection District is governed by a Board of Trustees under Fire Protection District Act of Illinois with board members representing the three counties of the Fire District proportionate with the population in those counties within the Fire District. The following are the 2020 Board of Trustees:

- Dan Roberts, President (Kendall County)
- Raymond Underhill, Vice President (Grundy County)
- David Clark, Secretary (Grundy County)
- Angela Robinson, Treasurer (Grundy County)
- Jason Baron, Trustee (Will County)

By statute, each trustee is appointed to his/her position by the county board within the county they reside and therefore represent. Trustees serve three-year terms.

In addition to the Board of Trustees, the Fire District has an appointed Board of Fire Commissioners. The commissioners are responsible for the establishing of eligibility lists for firefighter hiring, as well as promotional lists for the promotion of fire officers at various ranks. The Board of Commissioners is responsible to conduct disciplinary hearings and recommendations as necessary by the Illinois Firefighters Disciplinary Act. Commissioners are appointed by the Board of Trustees and must reside within the boundaries of the Fire Protection District. The following are the 2020 Fire Commissioners:

- George Lindemulder, Chairman
- Al Skwarczynski, Secretary
- Jeff Hanley, Commissioner

The Firefighters of Minooka Fire Protection District participate in the Illinois Article 4 Pension code, commonly known as the Downstate Firefighters Pension Fund. The pension fund board is a five-member board consisting of two members appointed by the president of the fire district

board, one is a retired firefighter who is a participant in the fund, and two active members of the pension fund who are elected by the pension fund participants.

The following are the 2020 pension board members

- Al Yancey, President
- Gerald Nellessen, Secretary
- Angie Robinson, Treasurer (District Treasurer)
- Eric Larson
- Ken Briley
- Kyle Symons

## **ADMINISTRATION**

The administration of fire district includes the fire chief, deputy chief, administrative assistant, and a part-time clerk. The administration is primarily responsible for budget and finance, planning, and human resources. The Fire Chief and Deputy Chief of operations work within administration; however, also within operations, responding to emergency incidents as part of the operations of the District.

Al Yancey, Jr. Fire Chief  
Brad Sprague, Deputy Chief - Operations  
Bill Collins, Deputy Chief  
Sheri Gresham, Executive Assistant  
Brandy Malone, Clerk/Reception

Fire Chief Al Yancey has over 32 years of experience in the fire service. He also serves as a Director with the Illinois Fire Chiefs Association, assigned to volunteer and combination department representation, is a Director with the Volunteer and Combination Officers Section of the International Association of Fire Chiefs, serves as president of the Mutual Aid Division 15 (Grundy County and southwestern Will County), and secretary of the Western Will County Communications Center (WECOM) chief operating board. Chief Yancey is also involved and participates in the mutual aid incident support/command team.

Deputy Chief Sprague has over 35 years of service to the fire district. DC Sprague is involved with specialized teams within MABAS Division 15, providing team co-leadership for water rescue, participating in the mutual aid incident support/command team, and coordination of regional hostile environment rescue task force deployment. DC Sprague is also closely involved

in educating firefighters, police officer and tow truck operators on traffic incident management around Illinois.

Deputy Chief Collins serves as a volunteer member of the organization, having just over 40 years of service to Minooka Fire Protection District. Chief Collins was instrumental in conducting fire prevention activities through the 90's and early 2000's until the District hired an inspector. Chief Collins has served as interim fire chief twice in the past when the District transitioned from one chief to the next.

### **Facilities:**

The administration of the Fire Protection District is operated from Fire Districts Headquarters – Station 1, located at 7901 E. Minooka Rd. The headquarters serves as the home to our administrative offices of the fire chief, deputy chief and administrative staff, fire prevention & education and training programs and EMS coordinator. The station also provides residential facilities for firefighter/paramedics working 24 hours shifts. Station #1 includes our training classrooms that can seat up to 60 people.



*MINOOKA FIRE STATION #1- HEADQUARTERS*

Station #2 is located at 28200 E. Rt. 6, Channahon, near the industrial plants on U.S. Route 6. Station #2 serves as a response facility for the southern areas of the fire district, including the U.S. Route 6 industrial corridor and is equipped with an ambulance and engine. The facilities house no administrative or support offices and serves as a response station only.

All stations are supplied with emergency back-up power to operate in the event of a power failure. Both stations have residence facilities (bunk rooms, kitchen, locker room) for the staff working 24/7 from the station. Each station also has an exercise facility for firefighters to maintain their cardiovascular and muscle strength. All stations are secured for the safety of the staff as well as the readiness of the Fire District to respond.

There were changes concerning fire station #2 in 2020. From 2003, when the building was constructed, until 2020, the building was co-occupied by Channahon Police Department and Minooka Fire Protection District, as a public safety building. In 2020 the Village of Channahon Police Department determined there was no longer a need to maintain a police substation at this location and turned the building over entirely to the Fire District. The District is evaluating space usage that was previously occupied by the police department.

In 2020 the space previously occupied by the police department at Station #2 was utilized as a quarantine facility for firefighters who required quarantine and wished to not go home. The space provides separate entrance, HVAC, locker rooms facilities, and a sleeping area which allowed it to be used as a quarantine location without exposing other firefighters.

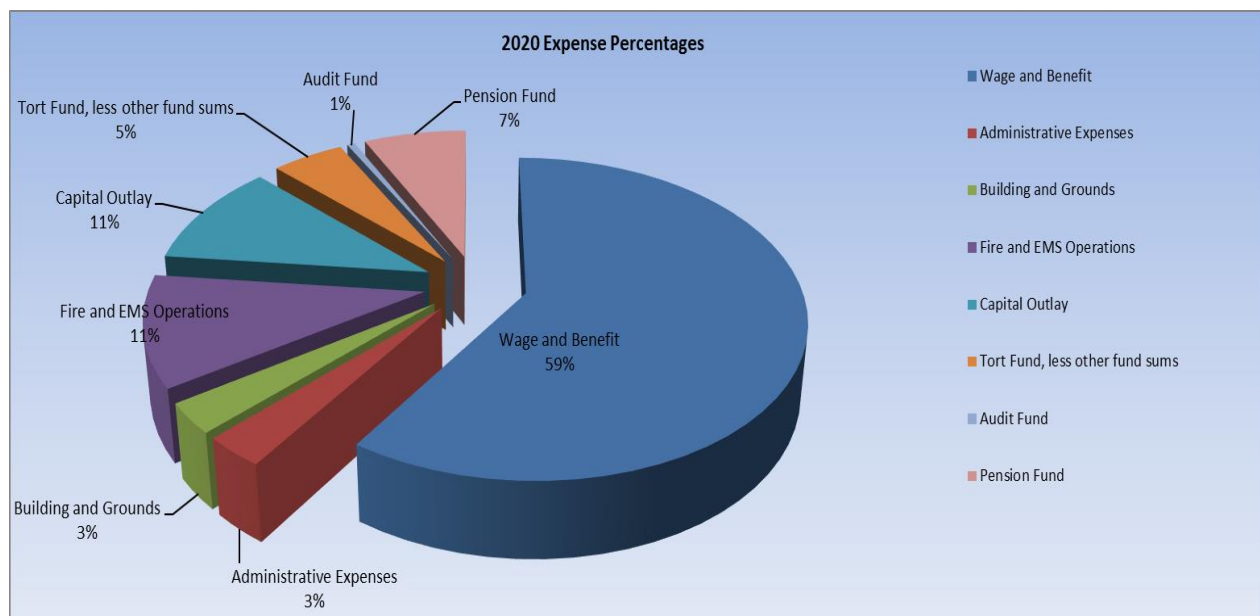
### **Budget and Finance:**

The fire district operates under Illinois Statute as a special form of government for the purpose of fire protection, rescue and emergency medical services. The Board of Trustees pass an annual budget for the operation of the fire protection district and emergency medical services. The board is also the levy authority for determine the amount of levy necessary to support the operations of the fire district. Other income to the fire district beyond taxes includes ambulance user fees, grants and various educational and pre-building review fees.

The fire district maintains a six-month fund reserve as recommended by the Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB), to provide sufficient funds for operations of the district should revenue not become available or be delayed.

<u>FUND EXPENSES</u>	<u>Corporate</u>	<u>Special</u>	<u>Tort</u>	<u>Downstate Pension</u>	<u>Social Sec. &amp; Medicare</u>	<u>IMRF</u>	<u>Audit</u>	
Wage and Benefit	\$ 1,012,876.25	\$ 2,045,133.00	\$ 445,545.75					\$ 3,503,555.00
Administrative Expenses	\$ 96,600.00	\$ 86,500.00	\$ -					\$ 183,100.00
Building and Grounds	\$ 89,856.00	\$ 89,856.00	\$ -					\$ 179,712.00
Fire and EMS Operations	\$ 319,436.00	\$ 278,574.00	\$ 65,765.00					\$ 663,775.00
Capital Budget	\$ 325,000.00	\$ 305,000.00	\$ -					\$ 630,000.00
Downstate Pension				\$ 342,618.00	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 16,000.00		\$ 418,618.00
Audit Expenditures							\$ 32,000.00	\$ 32,000.00
Tort Expenditures			\$ 293,500.00					\$ 293,500.00
<b>Total 2020 Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 1,843,768.25</b>	<b>\$ 2,805,063.00</b>	<b>\$ 804,810.75</b>	<b>\$ 342,618.00</b>	<b>\$ 60,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 16,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 32,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 5,904,260.00</b>

*Represents the dollars spend in the various major fund categories.*



*Represents percentage in the various major fund categories.*

The accounting practices and financial health of the fire district are reviewed annually by an independent auditor.

The Minooka Firefighters Pension Fund is reviewed annually by an independent auditor as well as by a third-party actuary. The actuarial reports that the Minooka Pension Fund is essentially 100% funded. The fiduciary and policy matters of the Minooka Firefighter Pension Fund is the responsibility of the Minooka Firefighters Pension Board.



## **OPERATIONS:**

Minooka Fire Protection District is comprised of just over fifty personnel, which is a combination of career and part-time firefighter/paramedics, and career and part-time support/office staff.

In 2020 we recruited our largest class of volunteer firefighters in more than ten years, planning thirteen volunteer recruit and cadets in the program. Several of these recruits are well on their fire service career journey, completing basic orientation and will be enrolled in the firefighter academy in early 2021. The journey for these volunteers will next be eligibility for part-time and contract firefighter positions, as well as makes those who are age 21 or over eligible for testing for career positions with Minooka Fire District.

The Deputy Chief of Operations, six lieutenants and firefighter/paramedics comprise of the operations division of the District. Each of these people plays an integral role in the efficiency of our daily operations. Often times the lieutenants serve as the incident commander and manage incidents that are usually single station responses.

Line personnel are part of the operations of the District. Lieutenants and firefighter/paramedics are the personnel making the daily responses to emergencies. These personnel are responsible for daily readiness of facilities, apparatus and equipment to be ready to respond whenever called upon.

In addition to the administrative roles, the fire chief and deputy fire chief are considered command staff. Chiefs respond to incidents to provide command and incident management to the emergency, especially those incidents that include multi-department response or a complex incident. The incident commander is responsible for managing the overall incident so that the proper resources are assigned to effectively control the incidents and meet the objectives of the strategies set by the command staff.

The Deputy Chief serves as the supervisor immediately in charge of all six lieutenants to ensure that operations are ready for response. The Deputy Chief maintains operations for optimal delivery of service to the community.

Our shift firefighter/paramedics are supervised by a lieutenant. The lieutenant is the immediate supervisor of all of the firefighter/paramedics assigned to the station on a 24-hour shift and responsible for making sure assigned personnel, apparatus, equipment and facilities are in a ready state to respond.



The lieutenant is the direct mentor, leader and coach for the line firefighter/paramedic and is directly responsible for making sure the firefighter/paramedic has the tools necessary for a safe and effective shift and also is responsible from time to time to deliver training and education to his crew of firefighters. On the incident scene the lieutenant is the direct supervisor of his group of firefighters, referred to as a “company”. The lieutenant leads his company of firefighters in fire suppression, rescue or medical activities they are assigned by the incident commander.

Our firefighter/paramedics are those personnel that are working at the tactical level of each incident; operating the apparatus, handling the hose, rescue tools, and delivering medical care at the scene of incidents and in the ambulance. Our firefighter/paramedics are trained in many levels of medical care, fire suppression and rescue. All of our firefighters are State of Illinois certified firefighters.

Many of our firefighters also have advanced rescue certifications in specialized rescue to participate in one or more of specialized teams of the Fire District. Minooka Fire District is a member of the following regional teams:

- MABAS 15 Water Rescue (surface, ice, swift, and underwater)
- MABAS 15 Technical rescue (confined space, trench, collapse, and high angle)

- MABAS 15 Hazardous Materials
- MABAS 15 Incident Management



### **EMS OPERATIONS**

EMS operations are a large part of what the Fire District does. Over 70% of our responses are medical or rescue service. Our EMS Operations falls within the Operations Division of the Fire District. The Fire District Emergency Medical Services Coordinator is responsible for the coordination of EMS between the EMS system hospital and the Fire District. Lt. Brian Mellen serves as our EMS Coordinator. Our coordinator is responsible for coordinating training, equipment, orientation, implementation of new standard medical orders, and overall general EMS operations.

The Fire District EMS operations are directed through Morris Hospital Emergency Medical Services System. Our paramedics operate under the guidance and direction of a Medical Doctor at Morris Hospital, using protocols established by a Regional EMS System designated by the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH). Beyond the initial licensing of paramedic, Minooka Fire District Paramedics also receive specialty certifications in Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) and Pediatric Trauma Life Support (PTLS) and several other levels.

Minooka Ambulances are equipped with state-of-the-art life support equipment; including cardiac monitors connected to local hospital emergency departments where doctors can immediately read patient conditions and prepare the emergency room to begin treatment of the patient once the ambulance arrives.

The Fire District works with other neighboring fire departments and police departments for Rescue Task Force (RTF) operations. Our organization has participated in past year drills to evaluate the ability of local fire, ems and police in a response to a mass active shooter. Deputy Chief Sprague sits on a regional committee to formulate guides and operating procedures for RTF responses.

## **TRAINING**

Our Training Division is led by Lieutenant Mike Hermes. Lt. Hermes is certified by the Illinois State Fire Marshal as an Advanced Technician Firefighter, Fire Investigator, Fire Officer II, and Training Program Manager.

Minooka Firefighters conduct training each week while on shift. Our volunteers and cadets conduct their training on Wednesday nights.

Training includes emergency medical care continuing education, rescue, fire suppression, driver training, hazardous materials, technical rescue operations, and incident command. Much of our training is provided by our fire officers and firefighters who are trained in technical operations; however, we also use outside instructors from FEMA, Illinois Fire Service Institute and other training organizations.

Annually, some of our firefighters attend Fire Department Instructors Conference in Indianapolis, where they receive both hands on and classroom instruction from well-known instructors from around the United States. Personnel attending the Conference are expected to return and share their new knowledge with the remaining department personnel. Our chief officers often attend programs by the International Association of Fire Chiefs, Illinois Fire Chiefs Association, Illinois Association of Fire Protection Districts and the National Fire Protection Association. Our prevention staff participate in continuing education through the Illinois Fire Inspectors Association and Fire Safety Alliance.





While training was delivered much different in 2020, we still continued our training and educational program. In 2020 there 322 different courses delivered to our personnel. The District training totaled 22,035 hours cumulative across all employees. Each active employee averaged 407 hours of training.

Significant training items for 2020:

- Company Officers and Acting officers completed National Incident Management System training at the 300 & 400 level.
- The District implemented video training on many topics in order to comply with social distancing recommendations. In cases where social distancing was not possible for training evolutions, we utilized masks or other respiratory protection.
- Volunteer firefighter recruit and cadet program began with 18 recruits.
- Drone pilot training class through Lewis University and certified 5 employees as FAA 107 Drone Pilots to implement the District Drone operations program.
- All active shift employees brought up to the Water Operations and Watercraft Technician certification levels.

## **SUPPORT SERVICES - FLEET**

The fire and rescue operation of the Fire District is accomplished using multiple types of vehicles. Our fleet of vehicles includes ambulances, fire engines, ladder truck, heavy rescue, water tender, specialized rescue vehicles, and staff cars.

All of our fleet is maintained by a fire apparatus mechanic known as an “Emergency Vehicle Technician (EVT). Ben Petro serves as the EVT. Minooka Fire District partners with Morris Fire Protection District and Troy Fire Protection District to maintain our own in-house EVT. The EVT is responsible for service and repair of all of the fire apparatus and vehicles owned by the Fire District.

Our fleet service center is located in Morris and is a facility shared by the three fire districts. This facility is equipped with the necessary tools and technology to properly service fire apparatus and get it returned to service in an efficient amount of time.

Our fleet service program is an example of government working together and sharing the cost of an important and necessary program within the Fire District. Our mechanic uses a service vehicle to travel to each station to work on apparatus as well as response to major incident scenes to provide mechanic services to fire apparatus that may be having difficulty during heavy workloads.

In 2020 the three fire districts began planning for an expansion of the fleet maintenance facility to accommodate additional apparatus within the service center at once. Construction is planned for 2021. Additional planning for the fleet services includes the possible addition of another EVT once the facility space is expanded.

## **PREVENTION**

### **Inspection Services:**

The Fire District employs one fire inspector who is responsible for routine inspection of businesses and commercial facilities as well as fire alarm and sprinkler plan review and approval.

We conduct commercial and industrial fire safety inspections for code compliance. Our inspector also offers courtesy home fire safety surveys. Commercial/industrial fire safety inspections are conducted to make sure commercial/industrial properties are compliant with the latest adopted fire codes.

Commercial/industrial property owners are required by law to comply with the fire and life safety codes adopted in the jurisdiction and our inspections make sure those facilities are compliant. Often times compliance is gained by pointing out the problem and explaining the reason a correction is needed; however, in some cases property owners do not comply and then, as a final step, a citation can be issued. These citations can be several hundred of dollars per day of non-compliance.

Our home fire safety survey is a courtesy program. These are done by request of the homeowner and provides homeowners with valuable tips on how to protect their family and property from fire. We encourage homeowners to call the Fire District to schedule a home fire safety survey. Low income families who cannot afford a smoke detector or carbon monoxide detector can contact the Fire District for assistance with detectors and installation.

2020 presented challenges for inspectional services. Many businesses were shut down for extended periods of time and then when the business did reopen there were strict COVID precautions in place at the place of business, as well as for the fire district employees. Throughout COVID in 2020, our inspector focused on new occupancy inspections as well as situations where practices of businesses were dangerous to employees and the public.

In 2020 the inspector also considerable time preparing guidance documents to assist businesses in maintaining safe business environments during COVID. Many businesses altered their business plans, restaurant service, etc. etc. and it was important to maintain clear exits, egress pathways and outside dining tent safety.

#### **2020 INSPECTIONAL SERVICES ACTIVITIES**

Plan Review Activities:	27
Annual Inspections:	40
Occupancy Inspections:	10
Underground Flush Tests:	5
Hydrostatic Sprinkler System Test	7

The inspector is also responsible for overseeing our compliance software and following up on any commercial hood/duct extinguishing system that has not had its annual inspections. The inspector is responsible for following-up with the business to make sure the suppression systems for cooking is compliant.

#### **Fire & Life Safety Education:**

The F&LS Specialist is a shared employee with Channahon Fire Protection. The Fire District thanks the Channahon and Minooka School District for their continuing partnership that allows us to provide valuable fire and life safety education to children. This education comes back into

the homes through children reminding parents to check smoke detectors, practice escape plans, establishing safe meeting places and understanding the need to prepare. It has also resulted in lives saved through educating children who know how to react during a medical emergency either through first aid or by simply calling 911.



2020 presented some real challenges in providing public education. In March all of the schools switched to remote learning and the in-school safety presentations were on hold the remainder of the year. It was a learning curve for both teachers and Firefighter Cindy; however, eventually virtual programming was implemented. In September, Channahon schools went back to school but they did not allow visitors. Minooka schools started out with virtual learning. Scheduled Google Meets for Channahon and Zoom sessions for Minooka were used to do safety lessons. Firefighter Cindy developed virtual programs and safety related games for the kids to play...*Hunt for kitchen hazards*, *Hot vs Cold*, and *Toys vs Tools*. Firefighter Cindy introduced the Firefighter Cindy bitmoji to help teach the lessons.







At the beginning of 2020 we were continuing to deliver our CPR classes, babysitter training, and car seat installation. In April and going forward, our programs were cancelled for several months until Fall. When COVID appeared to be declining, the Fire District opened up the availability of single student practical evaluations for CPR with class room being delivered on-line.

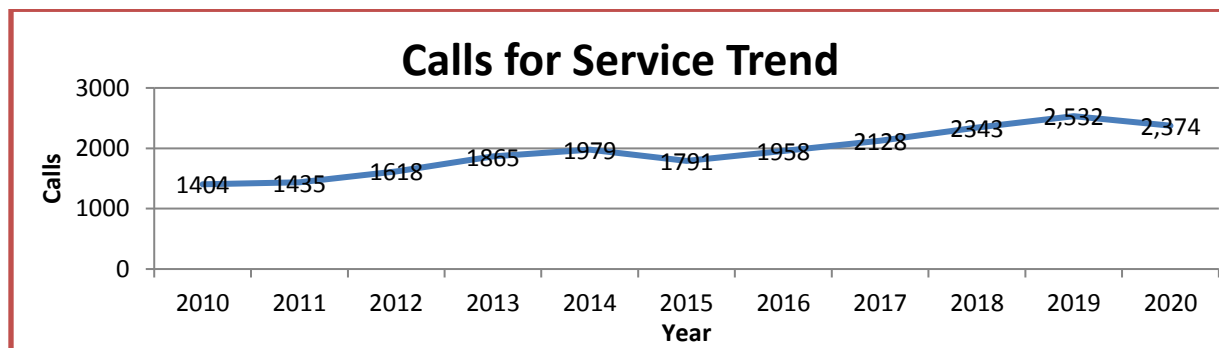
#### **2020 EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM ACTIVITIES**

<b>Type Class</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
CPR Students:	83
Car seats installation:	17
Babysitter Training:	23
Schools Visits:	271 hours
(in-person Jan – March and virtual remaining year)	

#### **RESPONSE STATISTICS**

Minooka Fire Protection District responded to 2,374 calls for service in 2020. This represents an 6% decrease in calls for services over 2019. The main contributing factor for this decrease is

COVID 19. 2020 included a stay at home orders, as well as a significant increase in people working from home, which resulted in less traffic on the roads, resulting in less crashes. Less people moving about equates to less personal injury through slips, trips and falls. Situations that may be occurring at home are tended to closer resulting in less fire occurrences. All resulting in an overall decrease in calls for service.



In 2020 the District response time average was six minutes and thirty-seven seconds (6:37) from time we are dispatched to the call. Within that 6:37 total response time is a 1:11 minute reaction time, which is defined as from the time we are dispatched and leaving the fire station to the call.

#### **Incident Types:**

<u><b>EMS/Rescue:</b></u> <i>(includes medical and traffic crashes)</i>	1,533 (65%)	<u><b>Good Intent:</b></u>	413 (17%)
<u><b>False Call:</b></u> <i>(false fire alarms, no incident)</i>	211 (9%)	<u><b>Fire:</b></u>	83 (4%)
<u><b>Hazardous Condition:</b></u> <i>(wires down, gas leak, spill cleanup)</i>	78 (3%)	<u><b>Service Call:</b></u>	54 (2%)
		<u><b>Other:</b></u>	2 (.08%)

#### **Calls by day of the week:**

Sunday:	329
Monday:	345
Tuesday:	332
Wednesday:	348
<u>Thursday:</u>	<u>373</u>
Friday:	347
Saturday:	300

**Incidents by Time of Day:**

On average, our busiest time of the day is between 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. For 2020 we responded to 64% of the calls for the year during this time range. Of that range between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. tends to be the peak range.

**2020 Total dollar loss to fire in the District:**

**\$713,200.00**

Two significant losses occurred with a residential fire and a machine shed full of equipment, both occurring in a rural area. Neither building had early detection or suppression. No one was home during the residential fire, the residence was a distance off the road and was only discovered when fire broke through the roof. The machine shed was a distance off the road in the back of a farm and not easily visible; fire was not discovered until fire was extensive throughout the building.