

February 7,

2010

Buckingham Township Board of Supervisors  
Upper Makefield Township Board of Supervisors  
Wrightstown Township Board of Supervisors

## **Lingohocken Fire Company – 2009 Report**

The Lingohocken Fire Company is proud to present a summary of our service for 2009, our 96<sup>th</sup> year of providing emergency response services to your communities. While 2009 was not our busiest year in terms of actual responses, the number of responses was among our top 5 ever. We do not see this trend declining in the foreseeable future.

### **Some key accomplishments during the year were:**

**- A successful recruiting drive focused on the Buckingham Township portion of our response area, primarily funded through a federal grant.** We currently have 9 new members taking the Bucks County Firefighter 1 training program, and expect most of them (some are under the age of 16) to begin to be able to fully respond to fire calls by July, 2010. Outfitting these new members, however, has created a strain on our budget. We are currently pursuing federal grant funds to assist with this, and plan an additional recruiting campaign this year focused on our Wrightstown and Upper Makefield Township coverage areas.

**- Implementing a program which during weekdays, our engine based at our Forest Grove substation (Engine 95), was moved to respond from Wrightstown Public Works.** Our manning at Forest Grove had become very thin, and we were unable to respond with a full crew (4 firefighters) from Forest Grove over 90% of the time. There are 4 active firefighters/officers that work for Wrightstown Township and are available during weekdays. Over the summer, a 5<sup>th</sup> firefighter was hired by the Township as a seasonal employee. Redeploying this engine resulted in significantly faster response times during weekday hours. For example, at the quarry rescue call in July, Engine 95 was on the scene of that incident within 6 minutes of dispatch, likely 4 minutes faster than during a normal response. Our long-range plan, however, is to return Engine 95 to Forest Grove on a full-time basis, utilizing our new firefighters to man it. We greatly appreciate the valuable service provided by the Wrightstown Township employees (responding to calls in our entire coverage area) and will continue to

explore ways to quickly and efficiently utilize their abilities.

**- Implementing a life insurance benefit for members that covers them at all times, whether on fire company business or not.** This was implemented as a recruitment/retention tool and is being funded through our Relief Association.

**- Fully implementing a program begun at the end of 2008, where we respond in conjunction with emergency medical units to cardiac arrest calls in our coverage area to provide manpower/assistance to them.** In the past, we had an emergency medical first response unit that provided initial care until the arrival of the closest ambulance. The demand for that lessened when Central Bucks implemented a paramedic ambulance now based in our Wycombe station. As manpower increases, we are exploring the possibility of reinstating that service when the Wycombe ambulance is tied up on another call, when ambulances must respond to our coverage area from more distant stations.

**- Continue to evaluate the need for using red lights and sirens (RLS) on certain types of calls.** Nationwide, 25% of firefighter fatalities occur while responding/returning from incidents. On alarm system calls, unless there is an indication that there is an active hazard, normally only our closest unit will utilize RLS. We respond to other calls without RLS as well, including wires arcing outside, investigations (such as “smoke in the area”), and other incidents that have a low probability of life or property risk. This only marginally affects our response time, and if there is any evidence of life or property risk, the response is upgraded. Active carbon monoxide alarms with no occupants exhibiting any symptoms result in a non-emergency response of a Chief Officer. We have obtained additional monitoring equipment for our chiefs to respond to these calls. We believe this is a prudent approach to minimize risk to our personnel, equipment and the public. Our volunteers have professionally embraced this.

**- Continue to work with the Upper Makefield Fire Company to develop a pragmatic solution to their request to more fully utilize their Eagle Road station for response in the Western portion of Upper Makefield Township.** We have recently provided a proposal to them for this. The funds that we receive both from taxes and donations for our long-standing, dedicated service to this area are a key to balancing our budget.

**- Continue to work with ISO ([www.isomitigation.com](http://www.isomitigation.com)) to further improve Wrightstown Township’s insurance rating.** We were able to reduce the rating from a 9 to a 7 with no public water, but have had ongoing meetings with ISO to point out irregularities in the rating that resulted in getting less credit during the rating process than we believe. Some of this stems from the fact that we received the first rating less than a “9” in a community without public water throughout the Philadelphia region. Further demonstrations are slated with ISO in early April, 2010, at which time we anticipate potentially reducing the rating further.

- **Replaced the aging boiler at our Wycombe station.** This unit was beginning to malfunction, and we primarily funded this project through a State Grant. In 2008, through a grant from the US Department of Homeland Security, we established a retirement program to retain existing volunteers, and assist in recruiting new ones. This program provides a small annual stipend only to active members, which can be accessed by them upon retirement after 15 years of service, and is grant funded through 2011. **We will need assistance to fund this program for years 2012 and beyond.**

NFPA 1720, *Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Volunteer Fire Departments*, 2010 Edition, is utilized to determine staffing and response time objectives for structural fire fighting, based on a low-hazard occupancy such as a 2000 ft<sup>2</sup>, two-story, single-family home without basement and exposures and the percentage accomplishment of those objectives for reporting purposes. By this standard, **Lingohocken's coverage area is considered Rural (less than 500 people/sq. mi), and the recommendation for these calls is a minimum staffing of 6 firefighters within 14 minutes 80% of the time. In 2009, for these types of calls, Lingohocken met this standard 100% of the time.** Some portions of Lingohocken's coverage area may be considered Suburban (500-1000 people/sq mi), and the recommendation for these calls is a minimum staffing of 10 firefighters within 10 minutes 80% of the time. There were no calls for structural fires in the areas that could be considered Suburban in 2009, however, we have planned for adequate mutual aid in those areas to achieve, or come close to achieving this recommendation.

**Our 2009 Responses were to the following communities:**

<b>Buckingham Township</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>(38%)</b>
<b>Wrightstown Township</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>(34%)</b>
<b>Upper Makefield Township</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>(16%)</b>
Doylestown Twp/Borough	6	Other Communities = (12%)
Newtown Twp/Borough	6	
Warwick Township	3	
New Britain Township	2	
Northampton Township	2	
Warrington Township	2	
Plumstead Township	1	
Warminster Township	1	

Our 2009 Responses were of the following types:

Residential Fire Alarms	56	(31%)
Mutual Aid Assist	24	(13%)
Commercial Fire Alarms	13	(7%)
Wires Outside	13	(7%)
Structure Fires	11	(6%)
Cover Another Station	11	(6%)
Vehicle Rescues	9	(5%)
Investigations	9	(5%)

Accident Standby	7	(4%)
Assist EMS	7	(4%)
Rescue	3	(2%)
Brush	3	(2%)
Wires Inside	3	(2%)
Other	3	(2%)
Vehicle Fire	2	(1%)
CO Alarm	2	(1%)
Fuel Spill	2	(1%)
Water Rescue	1	(1%)
Gas Leak Outside	1	(1%)
Appliance	1	(1%)

(Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding)

We traveled 1716 miles at incidents during the year, and our members provided the following volunteer manhours:

Incidents –	1179
Drills	1201
Training Classes	232
Fire Prevention	82
Work Details/Other	855

**For a total of 3546 manhours (or 148 mandays) of volunteer service to the community.** This does not include countless committee meetings, vehicle/station maintenance work, county association meetings, and other activities our personnel participate in. For example, I serve as a Deputy Task Force Leader for the Bucks County Regional Terrorism Fire Task Force.

We have attached information on particular calls of significance/interest. During 2009, we had 2 incidents of regional and even national interest, both in Wrightstown Township – the quarry rescue in July, and Wrightstown’s first residential sprinkler save on Christmas Day. Although we have seen the great value of sprinklers in buildings and homes elsewhere, the Christmas Day fire proved the value of the foresight of Wrightstown supervisors enacting a home sprinkler ordinance 14 years ago.

We welcome any feedback or questions on this, or any of our operations, and you may stop by our Wycombe Station any Tuesday night after 7:30 pm to see our volunteers in action. We continue to stand ready around-the-clock to provide a professional level of service throughout our coverage area. We commit to continually keeping you abreast of key information, or opportunities to observe activities we perform in the community.

Greg Jakubowski  
Chief

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## 2009 CALLS OF INTEREST

**January 2** – Evergreen Ave., New Britain Twp., assist Doylestown Fire Co. at a dwelling fire. 11:27am – 1:42pm

**January 19** – Ridge Road, Buckingham Twp., assist Midway Fire Co. at a dwelling fire. 2:41pm – 4:45pm

**January 23** – Swamp Road, Buckingham Twp., auto extrication. 11:01am-11:28am

**February 6** - Smith Road, Buckingham Twp., chimney fire with extension into the house. 11:13pm-1:57am Est. damage \$45,000 structure, \$5,000 contents Home occupiable that night. Mutual aid received.

**February 18** - Woodcrest La., Doylestown Twp., assist Doylestown Fire Co. at a dwelling fire. 1:20am-2:20am

**March 5** - Pineville and Windy Bush Roads, Wrightstown Twp., auto extrication. 5:25pm-6:00pm Mutual aid received.

**March 17** – Multiple locations in Buckingham and Wrightstown Townships off Swamp Road – truck struck pole on Swamp Road taking wires down and causing power surge from 33,000 volt lines to multiple homes. At least 7 homes on Swamp Road, Mozart Road, Dark Hollow Road, and Smith Road reported damage, although we do not have a full accounting of all of the properties affected. 7:08am-8:14am Mutual aid received

**April 21** – Airport Blvd., Plumstead Twp., assist Plumstead Fire Co. at a building fire. 6:47am-10:16pm. Tanker from Union Fire Co., Titusville, Mercer County, NJ covered Station 35 during this incident to provide tanker coverage East of Route 202.

**May 5** – Multiple locations in Buckingham and Wrightstown Townships off Swamp Road – truck struck pole on Swamp Road taking wires down and causing power surge from 33,000 volt lines to multiple homes. At least 12 homes on Swamp Road, Mozart Road, and Dark Hollow Road reported damage, although we do not have a full accounting of all of the properties affected. 8:23am-9:40am Mutual aid received

**May 14** – York and Greenridge Roads, Buckingham Twp., industrial rescue. Extrication of victim from skid-steer loader on road construction project. 1:49pm-2:34pm. Mutual aid received

**May 25** – Swamp Road, Wrightstown Twp., dwelling fire. 9:44am-12:47pm Est. damage \$60,000 structure, \$5,000 contents Home occupiable that night. Mutual aid received.

**June 7** – Valley Road, Warrington Twp., building fire involving hazardous materials (3 alarms). 7:59pm-3:03am

**July 14** – W. Dorchester St., Buckingham Twp., assist Doylestown Fire Co. with a fire in a townhouse. 6:06am-6:58am

**July 16** – Swamp Road, Wrightstown Twp., for an extrication involving a large truck. This 2 hour and 6 minute extrication was streaming live on most regional television stations from their helicopters. The victim was successfully extricated and was released from the hospital 4 days after the incident. 11:34am-3:42pm Mutual aid received.

**August 2** – Route 232 at the Neshaminy Creek, Wrightstown Twp., water rescue of 4 boaters in the heavily swollen creek. Mutual aid received.

**October 29** –Wrightstown Road, Wrightstown Twp., Extricated deer stuck in fence.

**November 19** – Linton Hill Rd., Newtown Twp., assist Newtown Fire Assoc. with garage/dwelling fire. 11:49pm-12:55am

**December 19** – Swamp Road, New Britain Twp., assist Doylestown Fire Co. with a barn fire. 6:24am-10:03am

**December 25** – Rushland Rd., Wrightstown Twp., reported garage fire with residential sprinkler activation extinguishing the fire prior to the fire company's arrival. 12:47pm-1:19pm Est. damage \$2,000 structure, \$8,000 contents Est. damage WITHOUT SPRINKLERS \$100,000 structure, \$80,000 contents. Home occupiable that day. Mutual aid received.