

January 21, 2012

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

## **Lingohocken Fire Company – 2011 Report**

The Lingohocken Fire Company is proud to present a summary of our service for 2011, our 98<sup>th</sup> year of providing emergency services to your communities. With respect to call volume, 2011 has proven to be the 2<sup>nd</sup> busiest of those 98 years. In 2010, our previous busiest year, we responded to 228 emergencies, and in 2011, we responded to 217 emergencies, along with 28 Chief's Investigations and Pump Details (where the entire company was not dispatched), and 1 additional EMS response during severe winter storms. Chief's investigations included everything from a malfunctioning fire alarm, to a cat in a tree, to a body removal. Despite this workload, our firefighters experienced only 2 minor first aid injuries during the year and there were no injuries or deaths by fire suffered by civilians in Lingohocken's coverage area. Due to the growth that has occurred in the communities that we serve, we see the trend towards increased service demands on our organization continuing. Thanks to partnerships with the communities that we service, and surrounding mutual aid companies, we believe we continue to be prepared to meet that challenge – into our second century of service to your communities, which approaches in 2013.

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

- **Training our new firefighters.** We had a new member complete Firefighter 1 training (almost 200 hours) and become a full firefighter in the Company during the year. In addition, one of our firefighters completed his Instructor 1 certification and another his Firefighter 2 certification. 5 of our firefighters were trained as EMS First Responders, a step below EMT, during the year and have been able to use this training at several incidents during the year. We have several firefighters scheduled to begin their full vehicle rescue training in February, 2012.

- **Upgrading our program which provides a pumper during weekdays to respond utilizing Wrightstown Township employees.** At the end of January, the gently used (5 year old, 5000 miles) all-wheel drive pumper from Montana we purchased at a discount from a new apparatus was placed in service at Wrightstown Public Works during weekdays. This vehicle is moved on weekends,

holidays, and during winter storms to respond from our Wycombe station, adding capabilities to our existing fleet. Some gently used/demo hydraulic rescue tools were purchased to equip this apparatus to conduct basic vehicle rescue tasks prior to the arrival of heavier rescue equipment. **In the 11 months that this apparatus was in service, it responded to 38 emergency incidents during critical weekday hours, averaging a 2.5 minute time from dispatch to response to these incidents when our normal time for dispatch to response is 5-6 minutes.** We greatly appreciate the valuable service provided to our entire coverage area by the Wrightstown Township employees.

**- Fire Prevention.** Throughout the year, we visited every school and pre-school in our coverage area to teach the students fire prevention messages. We hosted our annual fire prevention open house in October, attracting an estimated 300-400 members of the community. We participated in Buckingham Township's "Day In The Park" with fire prevention handouts and tours of our apparatus. Our fire prevention programs connect with an estimated 1500 community members each year. At the end of the year, we accompanied Santa on his annual run through the community, passing out not only candy canes to the eager children of all ages, but fire prevention literature and gift tags with fire safety messages. Lingohocken also worked with the State Fire Commissioner and the Pennsylvania Fire and Emergency Services Institute to provide filmed interviews of a number of our personnel regarding the December 25, 2009 sprinkler save in Wrightstown Township. Approximately 20% of the homes in Lingohocken's coverage area are now provided with residential sprinklers. **The Fire Company has begun a campaign to raise funds to purchase a Fire Safety Trailer that will be used to provide hands-on training in fire safety to our communities. We have received several significant contributions to this campaign already and welcome others.**

**- Facilities Upgrades.** Lingohocken rebuilt the generator enclosure at the Forest Grove Station (95). There were numerous code and safety issues with the existing enclosure and this work proved fortuitous due to the numerous power outages in the area during the year. Roof repairs have been made and are ongoing at the Wycombe Station (35).

**- Equipment Upgrades.** Besides the "new" pumper and associated equipment for it such as hose and rescue tools, Lingohocken replaced our air lift rescue bags on Rescue 35. These were beyond their lifespan and we took advantage of a 20% trade-in offer from the manufacturer to replace this equipment.

**- Awards.** The 2010 Central Bucks Chamber of Commerce Burpee Award winner from Lingohocken was Chief Engineer Duane Smith for his dedicated work with our apparatus. Assistant Chief David James was recognized for heroism for his work in the rescue of a victim on New Hope Road in Buckingham Township during Hurricane Irene.

We led or participated in a number of community events, including a Block Party in the Windsor Square Development, the July 4<sup>th</sup> Bike Parade in Devonshire Estates, the July 4<sup>th</sup> fireworks in Peddler's Village, and a Firefighter's Day at the Heritage Townhouses in Furlong. We hosted our annual Pancake Breakfast, which was enjoyed by 663 community members, with the 2012 Breakfast scheduled for Sunday, April 22.

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 has been grant funded through 2011. **We will need assistance to fund this program for years 2012 and beyond.** We have applied for federal grant funding to replace our self-contained breathing apparatus (an estimated \$228,000 project) and through a regional grant to purchase the new radios being required by the county system upgrade (an estimated \$145,000 project).

**It is important to note that all of these goals were achieved over this time period without any additional request for funding from the municipalities we protect.** We have been very successful in obtaining both state and federal grant funding to assist in several of these projects and continue to pursue these funding avenues.

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 2010, for these types of calls, Lingohocken exceeded 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. We did not have any responses for structure fires in these sections of our coverage area in 2011.

**Our 2011 Responses were to the following communities:**

<b>Buckingham Township</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>(35% of the total calls)</b>
<b>A 14% decrease over 2010</b>		
<b>Wrightstown Township</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>(37% of the total calls)</b>
<b>An 18% increase over 2010</b>		
<b>Upper Makefield Township</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>(14% of the total calls)</b>
<b>A 29% decrease over 2010</b>		
Warwick Township	9	Other Communities = (14%)
Newtown Twp/Borough	8	
Northampton Township	5	
Doylestown Twp/Borough	4	
Warrington Township	1	

Plumstead Township	1
Lower Makefield Township	1

Our 2011 Responses were of the following types:

Residential Fire Alarms	51	(24%)	Same as 2010
Commercial Fire Alarms	36	(17%)	A 100% increase over 2010, primarily due to alarm problems at Buckingham Valley Nursing Home and the FOP Lodge on Mill Creek Road that are being addressed
Wires Outside	27	(12%)	A 42% increase over 2010, primarily due to a number of storms during the year. Some wires calls were also handled as Chief's investigations, which we do in severe weather to reduce running large apparatus for low risk incidents
Mutual Aid Assist	24	(11%)	A 35% decrease over 2010, largely due to less major incidents in the area in 2011 vs. 2010
Assist EMS	10	(5%)	A decrease of 4 over 2010
Accident Standby	9	(4%)	
Cover Another Station	9	(4%)	
Good Intent	8	(4%)	
Vehicle Rescues	7	(3%)	Same as 2010
Structure Fires	4	(2%)	
Brush	3	(8%)	A decrease of 14 over 2010 as this year was wet/rainy
Rubbish	3	(1%)	
Heater Malfunction	3	(1%)	
Vehicle Into Building	3	(1%)	
Wires Inside	3	(1%)	
Vehicle Fire	2	(1%)	
Dryer Fire	2	(1%)	
Marine Rescue	2	(1%)	
Fumes Inside	2	(1%)	
Investigations	2	(1%)	
Commercial Waterflow Alarm	1	(1%)	
Mower Fire	1	(1%)	
Oven Fire	1	(1%)	
Wood Stove	1	(1%)	
Assist Police	1	(1%)	
Dispatched and Recalled	1	(1%)	
Other	1	(1%)	

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

The estimated dollar loss due to fires and related events (such as lightning strikes) involving structures, autos, etc. in Lingohocken's coverage area during 2011 was:

Buckingham Township	- \$19,000
Wrightstown Township	- No loss
Upper Makefield Township	- \$975,000

While 41 percent of the calls we respond to involve both residential and commercial fire alarms, we work closely with the fire marshals' offices in each of the Townships we protect to investigate and mitigate the root cause of these activated alarms to prevent recurrences and avoid unnecessary dispatches of fire apparatus. At the same time, we carry battery smoke detectors in our apparatus, and when we respond to a residence where we find there are none (which occurred several times this year), we ensure the home is provided with at least one before we leave.

It should also be noted that several years ago, we developed a policy to respond to low risk calls such as fire alarms and wires calls at non-emergency speed, to reduce the risk of vehicle accidents. We still respond in a timely fashion, but it may take 2 or 3 minutes longer to arrive. Over 50% of our calls in 2010 were handled without using red lights and sirens.

We traveled 1993 miles in our major apparatus to incidents during the year, which is down a bit from 2010 due to less major incidents during the year. Our members provided **a total of 4190 manhours (or 175 mandays) of volunteer service to the community in calls, business meetings, and work details - a decrease over 2010 primarily due to less training for new firefighters.** 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 and functioned as the Planning Chief for the Ready Bucks Exercise held in the Doylestown Area on May 1, involving over 300 responders from the 5-county Philadelphia Region.

During the year, we had an average of 10.8 firefighters responding per call, with no less than 1 full crew (4 firefighters) on every call. We have sustained this number over the past 5 years, despite the loss of several very active firefighters over that time period. An icon in our Company retired from active firefighting during the year after 50 years of active service – George Rowe. George has done much for the Fire Company and the community during this period, and continues to serve as the Company Secretary and performing safety and support duties at the station as well as fire prevention education in the schools.

You can take pride in knowing that the members of the Lingohocken Fire Company are dedicated and focused on providing a high level of quality emergency and fire safety services to your communities at a very reasonable cost.

Looking ahead to 2012, our focus will be on planning for major incidents and working on becoming more involved in first responder emergency medical services to backup the Central Bucks paramedic unit that is based out of our Wycombe Station. We work closely with them, but there can be a delay in the arrival of emergency medical services in our coverage area when this ambulance is tied up on other calls. When necessary, as a service to the family members, we will provide transportation for them to the hospital in fire company vehicles if needed when we assist at serious medical calls. Our planning for major incidents will include developing pre-emergency plans for the Jehovah's Witnesses facility and Buckingham Valley Nursing Home in Buckingham Township, and

the Wrightstown Elementary School in Wrightstown Township. We are working with these facilities in public/private partnerships to fund development of detailed computer-based pre-emergency plans that are shared with police and EMS, along with mutual aid companies, and working with EMS and other agencies to plan for action should a multi-casualty incident occur at the Grange Fair. This plan will provide a foundation for emergencies at the other facilities in our coverage area. In addition, we have begun planning for our 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary year festivities in 2013, which will include hosting the County Fire Parade on June 8, 2013.

We have attached information on particular calls of significance/interest. We welcome any feedback or questions on this, or any of our operations, and you are welcome to stop by our Wycombe Station any Tuesday night after 7:30 pm to see our volunteers in action. You can always find up-to-date information about us on our website. 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.

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## 2011 CALLS OF INTEREST

**February 5** – Route 202, Buckingham Twp., assist Doylestown Fire Co. at a significant gas leak at a residence. 5:21pm – 6:05pm

**March 2** – Greenridge Circle, Newtown Township, Assist Newtown at dwelling fire. 10:50am – 12:00pm

**April 16** – 4100 Block New Hope Road, Buckingham Township, for a dwelling fire, house struck by lightning. Multiple points of damage, checked throughout for fire extension. Estimated damage \$10,000 structure. There were sprinklers in the home however they did not activate as fires were small/contained. 9:32pm-10:41pm. Mutual aid received

**May 23** – 3200 Block Wilkinsons Village Court East, Buckingham Township, for a school bus driver with arm pinned in wheelchair lift. 8:08am – 8:34am

**June 7** – Route 413 and Pine Lane, Wrightstown Twp., for dump truck accident taking down 3 telephone poles and transformer, wires and fluids on highway and down on truck. Stood by until PECO cleared the truck to allow patient to self-extricate. 12:28pm – 1:28pm

**July 6** – 2100 Block of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Pike, Wrightstown Twp., for an auto extrication with 3 patients. 1:28pm – 2:04pm

**July 18** – 1000 Block of Swamp Road, Wrightstown Twp., for an auto extrication. 9:46pm – 12:02am

**July 19** – Windy Bush Road and Street Roads, Upper Makefield Twp., for an auto extrication. 9:35am – 9:56am

**July 23** – Unit Block Maher Lane, Upper Makefield Township, for a dwelling fire during heat wave, fire in the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor and attic, conditions deteriorated with interior crews removed for exterior attack. Estimated damage \$150,000 structure, \$75,000 contents. There were no sprinklers in the home or detectors in the area of origin. 6:32am-12:06pm. Mutual aid received

**August 27-28 (Hurricane Irene)** – Multiple locations throughout our coverage area, heavy rain & winds. Just after 9:30 pm on Saturday night, the responses started with visible wires arcing in the sky in the area of Lower Mountain Road and Route 413 and a resulting power outage. This became the norm throughout the storm. We cleared the last pump detail on Sunday afternoon at about 3 pm. Throughout the storm, there was little sleep for the Lingohocken volunteers, and personnel were performing storm duty in areas where police were actively searching for a murder suspect who shot 2 police officers (and several others) during the night. We answered 7 fire calls, handled 4 Chief's

Investigations for wires, and responded to 10 requests for assistance with significant water in the basement of homes that lost power or had their sump pump fail.

**August 30** – River Road, Upper Makefield Township, Assist Upper Makefield at dwelling fire. 7:46am – 9:58am

**September 8 (Tropical Storm Lee)** – New Hope Road at Creek Road, Buckingham Township, motorist trapped in chest deep swift water, firefighters rescued victim at great personal risk with assistance from heavy equipment from Buckingham Township Public Works. 6:43am – 7:09am Mutual aid received.

**September 8** – Second Street Pike at Neshaminy Creek, Wrightstown Township, motorist trapped in knee-deep water, rescued by personnel from Miller Quarry in heavy equipment as firefighters were preparing to deploy rescue boat. 7:03am – 7:16am Mutual aid received.

**September 29** - Milords Lane, Buckingham Township, Assist Doylestown at 3 alarm fire involving multiple dwellings. 7:49pm – 11:28pm

**October 27** –575 Durham Road, Wrightstown Twp., for an auto extrication. 10:41am – 11:44am

**November 12** – 3100 Block of Route 263, Buckingham Twp., for an auto extrication. 3 victims trapped in 2 different vehicles that were separated by several hundred feet. 12:20pm – 1:16pm Mutual aid received

**November 15** – 400 Block Pineville Road, Upper Makefield Twp., for a dwelling fire. 3 car garage fully involved in fire and extending into the house. Excellent job by firefighters to contain fire. Estimated damage of \$550k structure, \$200k contents. There were no sprinklers in this home, nor detectors in the area of origin. 1 minor injury sustained to firefighter not directly involved in firefighting operations. 6:18pm-11:02pm Mutual aid received

**November 29** – Street Road, Buckingham Twp., assist Midway Fire Co. at a silo fire. 7:37am–9:48am

**December 15** – 1300 block of Swamp Road, Buckingham Twp., for a dryer fire in a dwelling. Clothes fire requiring extinguishment with a moderate smoke condition in the dwelling. Firefighters quickly extinguished/removed the burning materials, estimated smoke damage of \$5000. There were no sprinklers or smoke detectors in this home, we provided a smoke detector to the resident. 4:45pm-5:28pm Mutual aid received

There was 1 incident during the year where firefighters arrived before paramedics to a bicyclist who collapsed of cardiac arrest along Lower Mountain Road in Buckingham Township. Despite administering several shocks from an AED by firefighters, and advanced life support procedures, the victim did not survive.