



## **PARKSVILLE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT**

# **ANNUAL REPORT**



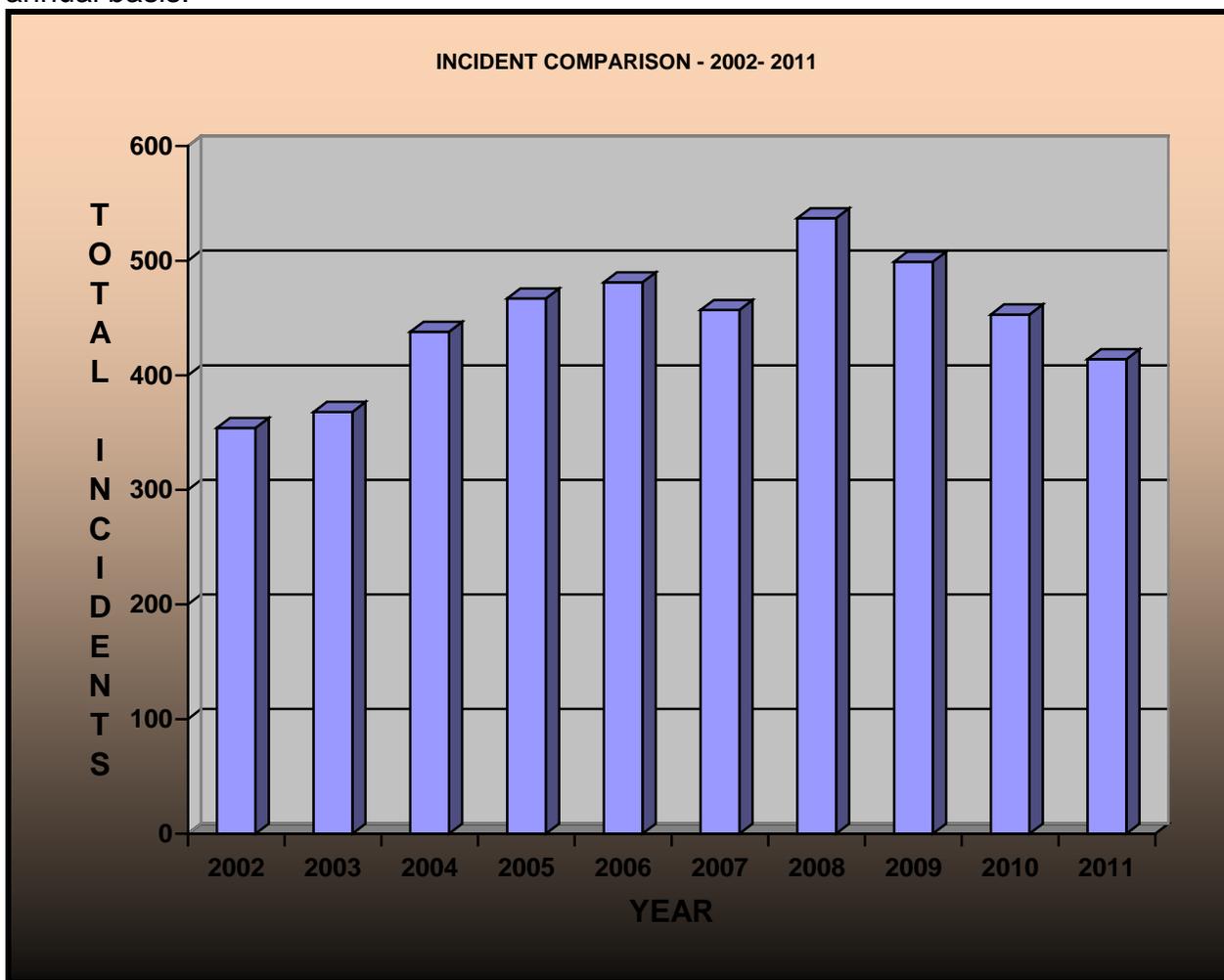
# **2011**



# PARKSVILLE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2011

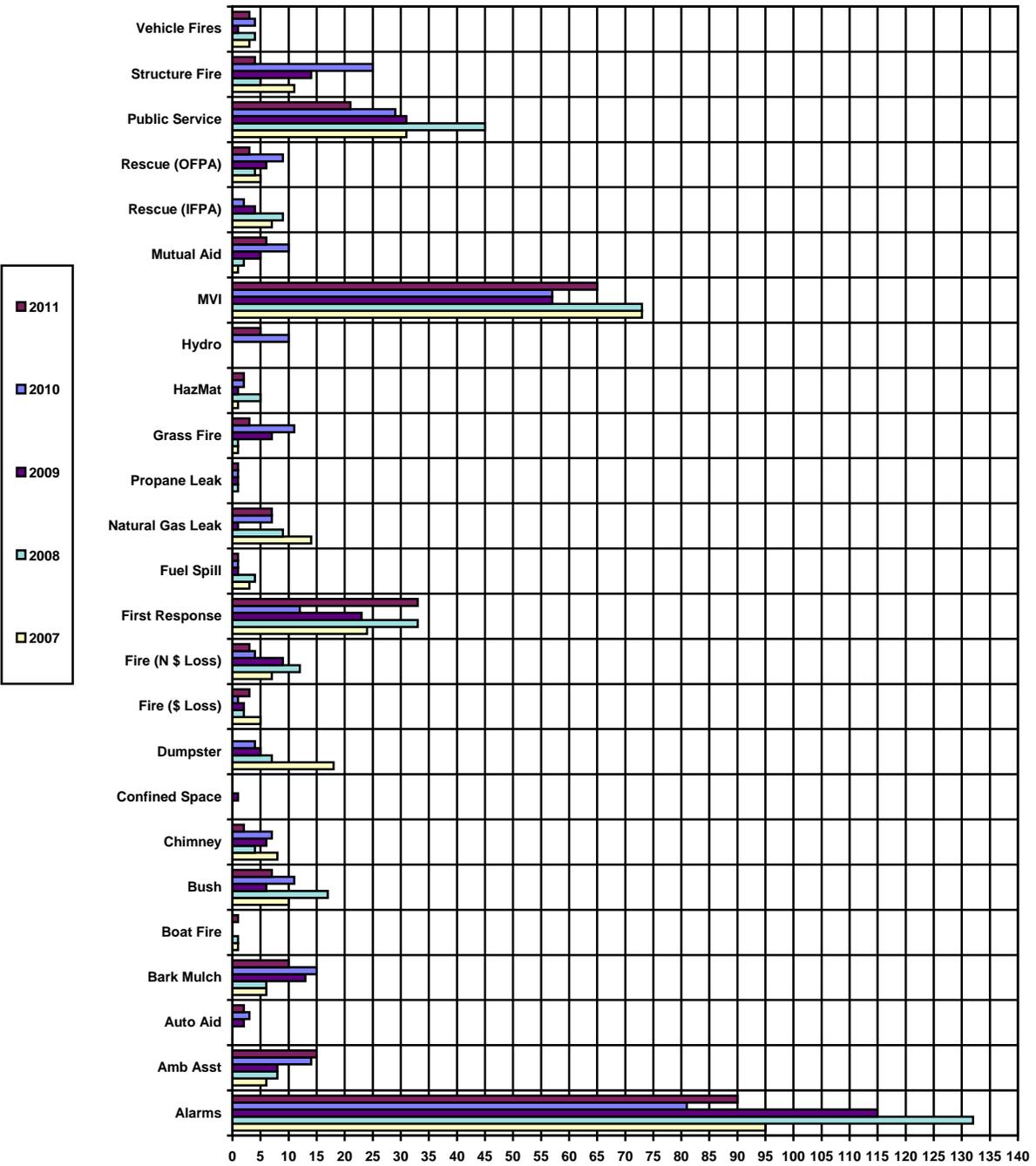
This department responded to 304 emergency calls during 2011 with another 110 recorded incidents including public education events, burning complaints, and equipment maintenance totaling 2538 person-hours. The total number of recorded incidents actually decreased for the third year in a row by 40 incidents from 2010. Accordingly, the number of man-hours required to deal with these incidents decreased as well. On average, duration of recorded incidents was 49 minutes and with the average turnout of 7 members.

The following chart shows the trends of the total incidents that the department has dealt with on an annual basis.



The chart on the following page is a comparison of the number and type of calls responded to for the period 2007 – 2011.

5 YEAR EMERGENCY CALL COMPARISON  
2007- 2011



The following is a brief description of the most common incidents that the department typically deals with on a day to day basis.

## **ALARMS (Accidental and Malicious)**

While the number of calls for Alarms increased for the first time in two years. Calls for Alarms ringing or False Alarms continue to be the largest part of the department's call volume (21.7%). Calls for alarms increased slightly from 81 in 2010 to 90 in 2011. As calls for alarms ringing may be considered "nuisance" calls, it is important that this department still responds as it does to any other type of call. While the vast majority of these calls are confirmed as a result from cooking or other minor cause of smoke or dust, past history has shown that responding efficiently to this type of call has helped to reduce the damage from an actual fire due to the early alert to the fire department.

It is anticipated that these types of calls will continue to be a significant percentage of calls for the department due to the fact that more and more homeowners are installing residential alarm systems to help protect their property as well as an increase in the number of systems installed in commercial properties. The vast majority of the calls for alarms ringing are to residential occupancies. In most cases, the homeowner is unaware of steps to be taken to prevent these types of calls and in most cases the fire department does not have to respond to the same residence. In these cases, the department provides the homeowner with some tips on how to prevent the false alarms from occurring in the future. Some new commercial buildings tend to have a brief period of alarm calls as they sort out some technical issues when the building is first commissioned. This results in a number of calls initially especially when the building is in the final stages of construction and partially occupied.

## **MOTOR VEHICLE INCIDENTS**

Response to Motor Vehicle Incidents (MVI's) account for 15.7% of the department's call volume. The number of Motor Vehicle Incidents that the department responded to in 2011 increased slightly from 57 in 2010 to 65 in 2011. In most cases, the Duty Officer responded to the incidents and was able to deal with the situation without calling out a crew for further assistance. The fire department is requested to attend these types of incidents to provide scene safety for other responding emergency agencies.



## **RESCUE/EXTRICATION CALLS**

The number of rescue/extrication calls decreased from 11 in 2010 to 3 in 2011. PVFD provides rescue/extrication services outside of our Fire Protection area, typically the Inland Hwy and the Errington FPA, and has done so since the mid 1970's. In particular, the department is dealing with scenes that are a result of higher speeds with vehicles going off the road. These types of incidents result in significantly more damage to the vehicle and making rescue of the occupant more challenging. As traffic volumes continue to rise within the area, the potential for continued increases for extrication calls is very real.



## **MEDICAL AID/FIRST RESPONSE/AMBULANCE ASSIST CALLS**

The number of requests for First Response/Medical calls in 2011 increased. The department was requested by BCAS to respond to 48 First Response/Medical/Assist calls up from 26 in 2010. Presently, the fire department only responds to these calls under the following criteria: Echo type calls, BCAS is delayed more than 15 minutes, upon request by on scene crew for additional support. In 2009, the City of Parksville signed an agreement with the Emergency Health Service Commission to provide both the authority and indemnification for the department to respond to these types of calls. While the call volume for this type of incident is relatively low (11.6% of total incident volume,) it is critically important that the department maintain the necessary skills required to aid in these calls. Not only does it allow us to serve the public, it is also for the protection of the membership who respond to all types of emergency calls.

## **DOLLAR LOSS FIRES/STRUCTURE FIRES**

Fires with a dollar loss totaled was reduced significantly during 2011 due to the decreased number of structure fires in 2011. These types of incidents represent 1.6% of the total call volume of the department. Incidents at SFD's remains to be the largest number of this call type.

The severity of on particular incident was dramatically reduced due to a residential sprinkler system being installed. The occupant was disabled and not able to move when the bedding caught on fire. The sprinkler system activated in short order and the fire was extinguished by the system, saving the occupant from significant injury or death.

Even with the low incident rate for these types of calls, it is the type of incident that the department must prepare for in order to reduce the impact of the fire and also to provide members with the necessary skills to perform their required duties in a safe and efficient manner. It is this type of high profile incident that the department is measured against in determining how efficient and skilled the members are.



## **PUBLIC SERVICE**

The Public Service category covers a wide variety of incidents. These would typically include Duty Officer responses to enquiries or concerns from the public such as problems with smoke detectors, smoke odors, etc. While the nature of these calls is typically minor in nature, the expectation from the public is that a representative of the Fire Department will be able to come out and assist them with their concern. These types of calls provide the department with an opportunity to educate the public on the particular issue.

## **AUTOMATIC AID**

The department entered into an Automatic Aid Agreement with the Town of Qualicum, Errington Fire Dept, and Coombs/Hilliers Fire Dept. This Agreement was established to ensure sufficient resources are initially dispatched to pre-determined buildings in each area. In particular, this agreement is used to ensure the potentially needed resources are sent to Care facilities, High-Rise buildings, and other buildings considered to be high risk for the particular fire department. As this was the first full year that the Agreement has been in place, it appears that the it is working as intended. Parksville responded to 2 separate incidents in Qualicum, while Qualicum and Errington responded to 4 separate incidents in Parksville. While each of these calls were minor

in nature, the additional initial response would have a significant impact on the overall outcome should there be an event that turns out to be more than "alarms ringing".

## **MUTUAL AID**

The department responded to 6 requests for Mutual Aid from other departments in 2011 versus 10 requests in 2010. While the calls that were responded to had significant potential, the overlying reason for the requests are for additional manpower to properly deal with the situation. This is due to the fact that all fire departments in the area are feeling the "crunch" when it comes to the attraction and retention of volunteers. The availability of members, particularly during daytime hours is a strain on all departments in the event of a significant event in the community.



The Mutual Aid Agreement was updated during 2011 to include some new requirements for member departments to train together on a more regular basis in order to improve fireground operations. Without an effective Mutual Aid Agreement in place and a strong working relationship with member departments no one jurisdiction could cost effectively be able to handle larger incidents on their own.

## **EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE**

Weekly equipment checks continued throughout the year in order to ensure that all equipment was checked on a regular basis. This requires extra effort and time by all the department members to ensure that equipment is in good working order and is put away properly.

## **RESPONSE TIMES**

The average response time for an emergency call in the Fire Protection District was 5 minutes 13 seconds. This is the time from the initial page until the arrival of the first unit, -- the Duty Officer in most cases. This time varies slightly depending on the location of the incidents responded to. The muster time for a crew to respond to the fire hall, crew the apparatus, and begin a response is an average of 6 minutes 43 seconds. The driving time to an incident is totally dependant on its location. The only variable in the driving time is the traffic or weather conditions. These times are consistent with past years and seem to be acceptable for the type of operations that the department is currently able to provide.

## **MEMBERSHIP/STAFFING**

Membership changes continue to happen within the department. The department again had to bring in a new recruit class to fill vacant spots created by the departure of members. A total of 11 members left the department in 2010 creating the need to bring in additional members to fill the vacancies. During 2010, most members that left the department did so due to changes in their employment. In particular, 4 active members in 2010 were able to secure full time careers in the fire service in larger communities. This reflects well on the Parksville Fire Department and the level of training that members are provided. While we may have trained these members to a high standard that enables them a future in the fire service, the department also benefits from their time in the department as they also encouraged other members to take the same level of training

In May of 2011, the department brought in our largest recruit class to date. A total of 11 new members were brought in to bring the roster up to a full complement. As of the end of 2011, 8 of these members are still with the department. As is usually the case, some of the members left the department due to moving from the area, or lack of available time to commit.

The department currently has 35 members (not including the Fire Chief, Deputy and Assistant Chiefs.) Currently, 62% of the volunteer membership has less than 5 years experience. This has a significant impact on the department's ability to respond to certain situations. While the experience level is low, the willingness and effort is high. In order to combat the lack of experience level in the newest members, the department continues to use an aggressive training program proven to be successful in bringing the newest members up to a level where they can perform their required duties in a safe and efficient manner. These new members, along with the current members, continually display a keen interest in taking any and all training made available to them in order to improve their skill levels.

The following chart gives a breakdown of the current experience level of the department:

	Less than 1 year	1 – 5 Years	5 – 10 Years	10 – 20 Years	20 Years +
2011	8	14	7	7	2
2010	6	12	10	5	2
2009	6	13	11	5	1
2008	6	16	10	5	1
2007	8	12	7	5	1
2006	5	14	5	4	4

### **FIRE HALL EXPANSION PROJECT**

The Fire Hall Expansion project was substantially completed and occupancy permit issued in August. Fire Department members began moving in equipment, organizing and preparing the facility for use. While the interior of the building has been completed, there is still some landscaping that has yet to be completed due to some budget considerations. The cost for the project exceeded budget estimates due to some unforeseen expenses such as asbestos removal, increased costs for emergency generator, and delays with connection to BC Hydro.

On October 29, 2011, the department hosted a Grand Opening and dedication of the newly expanded and refurbished facility. There was an excellent turnout of the public (300+) to come in and tour the renovated facility. To date, the department has received many positive comments on the facility and look forward to providing service to the community from this location. (insert photo of Hall)

### **APPARATUS/EQUIPMENT**

A new 1500 GPM Pumper was added to the fleet in November. This piece of equipment brings the department pumping capacity up to Fire Underwriters Standards. It is anticipated that the new apparatus will be going into front line service by March of 2012. This will allow for all department members to be fully training on the operation of the apparatus and the remaining equipment to be installed.

The department also took delivery of a new set of heavy hydraulic rescue tools. These tools replaced an outdated set of tools that had been in service for approximately 25 years and had been purchased through fund raising efforts of department members. The purchase costs of the new tools was offset by a JEPP Grant from the Federal Government. (approximately \$24,000.00)

## TRAINING

**THE TRAINING OF FIREFIGHTERS IS CRITICAL IN PROVIDING EFFECTIVE CUSTOMER SERVICE, SATISFACTORY JOB PERFORMANCE AND SAFETY.**

**The** Parksville Volunteer Fire Department has an intensive training program which is comprised of a comprehensive mix of emergency service delivery related subjects.

**There** are multiple levels of fire, medical and specialized training delivered and/or attended throughout the year. Training includes items such as, education to obtain or maintain a license or credential, recruit training, new response concepts, skills maintenance, special technical rescue training, and other training as necessary.

**Training** occurs at regular weekly practices held each Monday night and at extra training sessions offered on weekdays/weekends, both locally and non-local, throughout the year. The focus of training continues to be firefighter and public safety in turn providing for a professional and effective fire service for the citizens and visitors served by the Parksville Fire Department.

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### 2011 Training Highlights:

- 🚒 **Eight (8)** members completed initial First Responder Emergency Medical Attendant training. (40 hours)
- 🚒 **Five (5)** members recertified as First Responder Emergency Medical Attendants. (24 hours)
- 🚒 **Six (6)** firefighters completed recruit training (includes 3 junior members)
- 🚒 **Eleven (11)** recruit members began their training.
- 🚒 **Two (2)** members completed technical rope rescue training. (100 hours)
- 🚒 **Two (2)** Automatic/Mutual Aid practices were held with neighboring departments.
- 🚒 **One (3)** members completed the Hazardous Materials Operations course (4 days)
- 🚒 **Ten (10)** members completed the Auto Extrication Operations course (2.5 days)
- 🚒 **Four (4)** Officer Training Days were attended by PVFD Company Officers and Senior Firefighters.
- 🚒 **Six (6)** members attended the Fire Rescue Company Officer Program. (2 days)
- 🚒 **Six (6)** members completed their Emergency Vehicle Driver Operator evaluations.
- 🚒 **One (1)** member completed Fire Service Instructor Level 1. (2.5 days)
- 🚒 **Three (3)** members completed Fire Officer Level I certification. (120 hours)
- 🚒 **Six (6)** members completed their NFPA 1001, FFII, certification for Firefighter Professional Qualifications. (300 hours, over 2 to 3 years)
- 🚒 **Five (5)** members completed Hazmat Awareness training. (1 Day)
- 🚒 **Five (5)** members attended the Live Fire 301 program. (1 Day)
- 🚒 **Seventeen (17)** members completed the Emergency Scene Traffic Control course.

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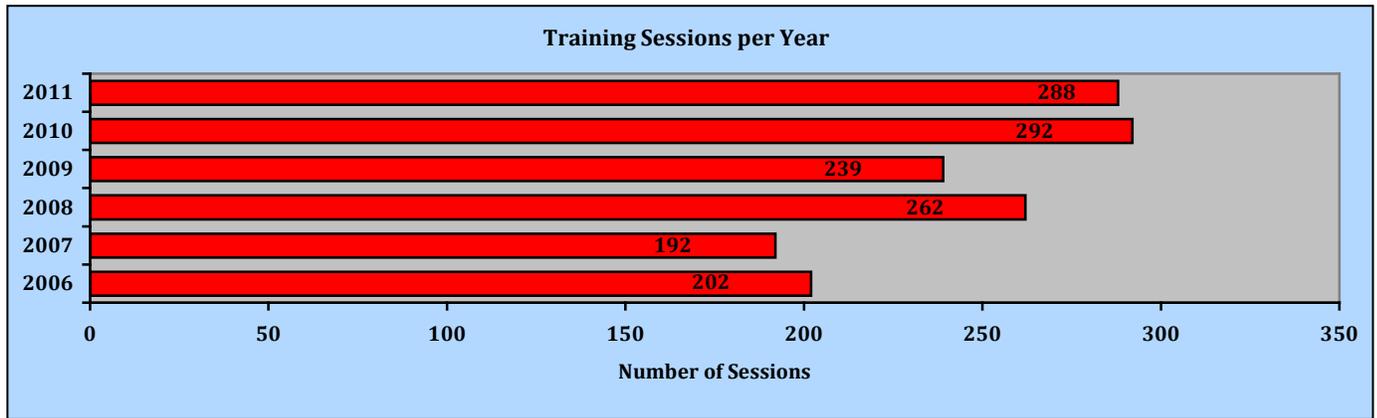
### 2011 Training Comments:

Members of the Parksville Volunteer Fire Department continued to show dedication through their commitment to participation in training. Fire Hall renovations caused some nuisance in terms of regular training throughout 2011 however PVFD members met all challenges head-on which translated into a successful training year.

## 2011 Training Statistics

TRAINING STATS 2011													
Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep t	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Person Hours	240	857	239	508	602	545	317	437	699	643	593	380	<b>6061</b>
Sessions	19	25	21	21	33	26	30	22	20	17	30	24	<b>288</b>

## Historical Training Statistics



## 2012 Objectives:

- 🚒 Complete change over to Red Cross First Responder Program.
- 🚒 Complete orientation & familiarization training for Engine 42 prior to putting apparatus into service.
- 🚒 Complete Training Tower Capital Project.
- 🚒 Complete High-Rise training session.
- 🚒 Host Pumps and Pumping course.
- 🚒 Focus on Company Officer Development.

## **FIRE INSPECTION AND PREVENTION PROGRAM**

This year the Fire Prevention Division had another successful year with continuing public education. Although slower due to the Fire hall expansion project, we were still able to complete over 29 events, totalling more the 266 person hours. The majority of these events were actually held after moving into the new hall.

### **NEW PROGRAMS:**

Over the past year, we opted out of new program development and tried to focus on improvement of existing programs. We have purchased some new programs that are focused on senior fire safety, including one by Tom Bosley (Mr. Cunningham , Happy Days). We will be working more with these programs over the next year including a new program developed by Deputy Chief Marc Norris that helps to focus on older adults.

### **2011 FIRE INSPECTION PROGRAM**

Inspection Program	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007
Inspectable Occupancies (Approx.)	787	769	742	725	710
Inspections Due (Approx.)	483	458	335	287	258
Inspections Completed	500	369	407	438	452

The total number of inspections for 2011 was 382 inspections. Unsatisfactory inspections have dropped due to a more consistent and regular inspection frequency. Damaged fire separations, improper door lock hardware and extinguishers that are either missing or are past due for servicing as well as electrical overloading and storage are still the most common problems found during unsatisfactory inspections.

Over the past year, the number of inspections being completed has dropped. This has been largely due to problems with the integration of two separate fire inspection software programs and has resulted in over 120 “Lost” inspections. We are presently trying to solve the issue with the past programmer. Later in the year the decision was made to purchase the license to use FDM in a mobile application. The decision to do this eliminates the problems of data integration and losing inspections. It also allows a greater amount of usability while in the field. Public requests for home safety inspections have increased over the last couple of years. These “inspections” or requests are tracked under public service calls and are not reflected in the total number of fire inspections.

### **FIRE CAUSE and DETERMINATION**

The Assistant Chief/Fire Inspector has completed the NFPA 1033 Fire Investigator Certification as well as Advanced Arson Investigation and Advanced Fire Investigation programs. He has also completed his NFPA Fire inspector II certification program. The Fire department has been asked to be a part of the Restorative Justice Program that helps youth involved with fire play to understand the effects of the actions. This program does serve to better educate people in the real actions and consequences of fire play and the serious implications it can have.

## EMERGENCY PLANNING

In a continuation from the situation in 2010, work continued developing the City's Emergency Program time permitting. Training and infrastructure development continue with the hope of working towards exercises to refresh skills and identify areas needing improvement in the program.

As the new Fire Hall reached completion, a Smart Board was installed allowing for better communication between City Hall, Public Works and the Fire Hall during an emergency response. The Smart Board system also creates an opportunity for the City to have more efficient communication between buildings on a day to day operational basis. Training continued for and existing staff alike. The addition of staff, especially in senior positions has pushed plans for exercises back due to ensuring that the training component is complete.

2011 became the year of the volunteer in terms of the City Emergency Program. A custom built communications trailer that was proposed in 2010 became reality in 2011. The trailer is located under the carport at the Fire Hall behind the Hazmat Trailer. The all aluminum purpose built trailer belonging to the City of Parksville, Town of Qualicum Beach and RDN provides amateur radio short and long distance voice and data communications for any emergency response at any location in District 69. Thanks to the efforts of volunteers within the Emergency Communications Team, the trailer was completed within budget ahead of schedule and beyond expectation for the completed product. Special thanks to Greg Rehill, the volunteer who completed the millwork, complete electrical system and obtained many of the corporate sponsors necessary to complete the project.

In addition to the Emergency Communications Team, the City also benefits from the volunteers in Emergency Social Services. The Emergency Program Coordinators within District 69 worked together in 2011 to review and change the ESS program. There have been significant societal changes to the way people volunteer their time. We have noticed this in the form of reduced volunteer support of ESS. This program has been significantly changed with the addition of a new volunteer director who has a professional history in volunteer recruitment to address the declining volunteer base that we rely upon.



## **CONCLUSION**

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Parksville Volunteer Fire Department as well as all of the dedicated volunteers associated with the Emergency Program for their continued support to myself and staff. Their dedication to ensuring the citizens of the City of Parksville are assisted in times of need, and the professionalism in which they carry out their duties, are qualities the community and they themselves can be proud of. Special thanks to the Officers of the P.V.F.D., who have worked tirelessly throughout the year. We are fortunate to have a core of Officers whose commitment, skills and dedication are the cement of this department.

Respectively Submitted

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Doug Banks, Fire Chief