West Lafayette Fire Department
December 2009

Uplifting News A mother and her, now, 17 year old daughter stopped in the station for a Christmas visit and well wishes. They spoke with one of our assistant chiefs who, 12 years ago, was a captain in charge of an accident scene involving the daughter and a number of other children. The daughter's arm was severed but the fire crew was able to treat her and the other patients and recover and package her arm for transport to the hospital. It was successfully reattached and during their visit the daughter and mom were showing our assistant chief how well her fingers worked and said thank you once again.

Run Total Increased The number of emergency calls WLFD responds to continues to increase year over year. At 1600 plus in 2009 the total will be approximately 2 percent higher compared to 2008. The final numbers will be filed in the annual report.

Budget Items Washers and dryers have been purchased for the stations. This will improve our cleaning and decontamination procedures. On-duty uniforms that become contaminated on a medical scene will be able to be laundered right at the station eliminating the additional potential contamination steps of bagging and un-bagging them and the potential for cross contamination at home with family laundry. Similarly, uniforms that are sweaty and dirty from a fire will be able to be laundered upon returning to the station rather than having them stink up the station for 24 hours or until the end of the shift. These are front load wash machines and, since there is no agitator and because of the increased spin speed of the water extraction cycle, turnout gear can be washed in them. (Turnout gear is the fire coat and pants, or outer layer, of protective clothing that is directly exposed to the smoke, soot and other contaminants at a fire.) There are significant plumbing, space and other installation problems in the stations that are being worked through but once these are sufficiently dealt with then, the annual budget line item of $2500 for Laundry Contracts can be eliminated as the normal daily laundry items of towels and bed linens will not need to be sent out each week.

Oxygen bottle refilling is being changed. About two years ago a procedure was put in place where WLFD began renting oxygen bottles and St. Elizabeth/T.E.A.S. arranged for and paid for refilling them. Prior to this WLFD purchased bottles and paid each month to have them refilled. T.E.A.S. is in the process of contracting with a different company and as part of this change we will not pay for bottles or pay to have them refilled.

Fire Inspector Lancaster was involved in a vehicle accident. He was not injured and was not found to be at fault. A delivery truck driver, in the right hand lane, passed another vehicle that was in the left hand lane in winter road conditions, which then started the accident. Because of it age (2001) and mileage (over 100,000 miles) our insurance company considers the fire inspector vehicle to be totaled. Information on a replacement is being gathered and I anticipate that the insurance settlement will be enough or nearly enough for the 2010 lease purchase payments on a replacement vehicle.

Chief Drew