Fort Morgan Volunteer Fire Department

Established 1894

The purpose of FMVFD is the prevention and control of fires, and prevention of injury and destruction of life and property caused by fire; to provide assistance during time of emergency; and to promote a spirit of cooperation and good fellowship among the members of the department.

History

The Fort Morgan Volunteer Fire Department, established in 1894, consisted of five buckets and two ladders. Over the years we have progressed; the first truck was purchased for $525 in 1904. In 1931 the first telephone line was installed in the station and in 1937 the department took delivery of a pumper truck and a ladder truck from American La France. FMVFD is still in possession of these two rigs, they can usually be seen in the Christmas parade with Santa Clause as a passenger.

The 1950s saw the first rescue truck, and the first set of bunker gear was purchased for $41.50. In the 60s the department purchased the first chief's car. 1981-1982 saw the addition to the fire station along with the purchase of a 110' ladder truck.

Since 2000 the 110' ladder truck has been replaced with a 100' platform, the city has purchased an additional pumper, the rural board has upgraded its tanker trucks, mini-pumpers and added an additional structural engine. We have added a second station on the south side of the tracks with a 13 acre training ground. Plans are in the works for construction of training buildings.

Some of the historic fires over the years were the Masonic Temple fire in 1971, the Roman Elevator fire in 1974, the Methodist Church fire in 1978 and the Baker School fire in 1995.

Organization

We are actually two fire departments in one; we are the City of Fort Morgan Fire Department as well as the Fort Morgan Rural Fire District's Fire Department. We are governed by the Ft. Morgan City Council on the city side and by the Rural Fire Board on the rural side. The same fire fighters respond for both departments, however, each governing body owns its own trucks.

Equipment

FMVFD is very proud of its equipment and takes very good care of it. Each member is issued personal protective gear called "bunker gear" at a cost of approximately $3000 each. This includes coat, pants, gloves, boots, helmet and hood. In addition, each member is issued wild land gear, which we have affectionately nicknamed "chicken suits".

Our city trucks consist of a 100' ladder truck, three structural engines, one heavy rescue truck, one light rescue truck, a command vehicle, a pick-up truck for the fire marshal a hazardous materials trailer and a safety house trailer. One of the structural engines is housed in Station 2 on the south side of the tracks. In addition, we have our two 1937 antique trucks.

On the rural side we have two structural engines, two grass units, and two tankers. One rural structural engine is housed at Station 2 on the south side of the railroad tracks.

Members

We have an entirely volunteer response; every member works a full-time job outside the fire service and responds to calls from home or work. When an alarm comes in, a volunteer leaves work to respond to the emergency. Many times, a fire fighter must work nights or weekends to make up for time missed while on a fire call.

An applicant must be a US Citizen between the ages of 21 and 35 and be a resident of Fort Morgan. A candidate will spend one year as a probationary member; at the end of one year he may be voted on as a permanent member. After 20 Years of service, a member may retire and receive a small pension.

Currently our average member is 37 years old with 8.8 years of experience. The total number of years' experience for the department is 255 Years.

Family

Our families make a great sacrifice to the community as well. They eat dinner's cold because an alarm may have come in just as dinner was on the table. They have birthdays, Christmases and other holidays without the fire fighter in the family because of an alarm. They are woken up during the night from a deep sleep because of a fire or emergency call. FMVFD could not survive without the support and unselfishness of the families.

Alarms

Our department averages approximately 400 calls per year; calls include fires, medical emergencies, traffic accidents, hazardous material incidents and ice rescues.

Practice and Meetings

Our monthly business meeting is held at 7 pm on the second Tuesday of every month. Most other Tuesday nights are training nights where we practice skills for the types of emergencies listed above.

Each member is required to have at least 36 hours of training per year; in 2008 our members averaged over 160 hours of training.

We have members who are state certified as Fire Fighter I and II, as Emergency Medical Technicians, as Haz-Mat Ops or Tech and most are certified as Ice Rescue Technicians.

Fire Prevention

FMVFD spends many hours each year teaching fire prevention and safety to school age children through its Safety Pals program. The Safety Pals are a group of fire fighters who volunteer extra time to put together programs for different ages of kids in order to teach them what to do in case of emergency. Not only does the team teach fire prevention, but it will also educate the children in other areas such as bicycle safety. The Safety Pals may also use our safety trailer which can teach children how to escape

from a house during a fire; the trailer also has a feature which educates on what to do in case of severe weather.

We also have a paid Fire Marshal whose job it is to inspect local businesses for fire code compliance and prevention of fire.

Administration and Maintenance

We have a part-time paid Administrative Assistance whose job is to assist the Volunteer Fire Chief in the day-to-day clerical operations of the fire department. We have four full-time Emergency Response Technicians whose job is primarily to dispatch alarms to the department and maintain two stations, trucks and equipment. The ERTs will work a 24 hour shift with two days off in between shifts; one of these four is at the station at all times.

Fireman's Prayer

When I am called to duty God,
Wherever flames may rage,
Give me strength to save some life
Whatever be its age.

Help me embrace a little child
Before it is too late,
Or save an older person
From the horror of that fate
.
Enable me to be alert
And hear the weakest shout,
And quickly and effectively
Put the flames out.

I want to fill my calling
And give the best in me,
To guard my every neighbor
And protect his property.

And if according to your will
I have to lose my life,
Please bless with your protecting hand,
My children and my wife.
(Author Unknown)