

# VISTA Fire Department



Annual Report 2010



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Established in 1941 to serve Vista Fire District N°.1, Vista Volunteer Fire Department has served the small community of Vista with distinction. Located in the town of Lewisboro in Westchester County, New York, we are bordered by South Salem to the north, Pound Ridge to the west, Ridgefield Connecticut and Wilton Connecticut to the east, and New Canaan, Connecticut to the south.)

Vista occupies a rectangle extending from Residential Lake Kitchawan and just South of Route 35 to the Connecticut border. The firehouse is located on Route 123 (377 Smith Ridge Road).

Vista fire district No.1 covers about seven square miles and 1400 households. We are mainly single-family residential with some small businesses, condominiums, and a supermarket. The district includes several houses over 100 years old, a few horse farms, and several antique barns. We are also home to Meadow Pond Elementary School, part of the Katonah-Lewisboro school district. Our elevation ranges between 450 and 750 feet above sea level -- with more than a few hills.

## New Firehouse

After a defeat in August of 2005, a December 2007 referendum was approved by the citizens of the Vista Fire District for a \$3.4 million major renovation and addition to our firehouse that had seen little changes since the addition of two apparatus bays and a meeting room in 1971. Other sections of the building dated back to 1955 when the firehouse moved to this location after a January, 1954 fire destroyed the original fire house further to the south on Smithridge Rd.

The new firehouse includes one additional bay which allows for all apparatus to be able to respond to calls without moving another vehicle. All mechanical systems for the building have been replaced increasing efficiency and an elevator and ramp added for ADA compliance. Above all the new building is much more aesthetically pleasing than the previous 5 bay "garage" with cinder block walled meeting room in the rear.

After 17 months of construction, we were granted our certificate of occupancy on January 6, 2011. During construction we operated from a construction trailer, held meetings at the Jewish Family Center, the Ridge Club and town owned Onatru Farm. During the winter months we ran with just one fire engine and one ambulance in service. Our other apparatus we stored at several fire houses in the north end of Westchester County and a private warehouse.

We would like to thank all the organizations and private citizens that opened their doors to conduct meetings and store our vehicles out of the elements. We would also like to thank William Dingee Jr. and the members of Boy Scout Troop 101 for an Eagle Scout Project that moved all the contents of the old firehouse out and into storage prior to construction and moved those items back into the completed firehouse.

Old Firehouse ( 1971 - 2009)



New Firehouse as of January 2011



## Responses

**Total Calls for 2010: 257**

### **Total Fire Calls 118 ( 46%)**

Automatic Alarms	51	Odors	3
Brush Fires	7	Misc. Investigations	13
Chimney Fires	2	Oil burner Malfunctions	1
Electrical Fires	4	Structure Fires	0
Vehicle Fires	4	Standbys	6
Dumpster Fires	2	Wires Down	21
Other	6		

### **Total EMS Calls 139 (54%)**

Abdominal Pain	9	Back Pain	14
Bleeding	10	Chest Pain	11
Fracture/ Disloc.	13	Head Injury	7
Multiple Trauma	3	Unresponsive	3
Seizure	11	Stroke	3
Misc.	45		

## Response Times

- Our average response time was 8 minutes and 16 seconds.
- Quickest average response hour was between 2 - 3 AM (6 min, 28 sec)
- Second quickest was between 3 – 4 PM (6 min, 43 sec.)
- Slowest average response hour was between 1 – 2 AM (10 min, 33 sec)
- Second slowest was between 8 – 9 AM (9 min, 59 sec)

## **Strategic Planning**

The Vista Fire Department met in March 2010 for the purposes for developing our first strategic plan. A committee was chosen to reflect a cross section of the membership from new to more senior members, firefighters, and EMT's. The committee was given a briefing on the process of Strategic Planning and then started with a clean white sheet of paper.

Areas of concern were identified for improvement during the Strategic Planning Process. These areas will be further defined by the entire membership in results compiled from several surveys we will ask our members to take. From your feedback we will develop plans of action to improve how we communicate, respond to emergencies, motivate our members, increase our membership, serve the community, and prepare for the future.

As a part of the process, we performed a "SWOT analysis" to identify our department's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. We will identified what our members' core values were and published them to let everyone know why we exist and what is important to our organization.

The end result of the committee's work has produced a direction for our department for the next 5 years and beyond. While the committee did the lion's share of the work, we relied on all of our members for input into the future development of our department.

The goal of the plan was to adapt to our changing environment and continue in our pursuit of excellence. Our existence as a volunteer fire department serving our neighbors with professionalism, honesty and high moral standards depends it.

## **Mission Statement**

We, the volunteer members of the Vista Fire Department, Incorporated, make it our mission to protect the lives, property and the environment in the community in which we serve: Vista Fire District #1.

The Department will provide trained professionals in the areas of fire protection, emergency medical services and all hazards emergency first response. We promote volunteerism in fulfilling our mission without prejudice.

Our members are committed to discharging their duties with professionalism, honesty and high moral standards.

## Core Values

- **Protection** – Our primary mission is to provide the highest possible level of protection.
- **Professionalism** – As “volunteer” professionals, we honor the trust and responsibility expected of us.
- **Responsibility** – We will further fulfill our responsibility to the community through involvement, life safety education and delivery of non-traditional services.
- **Empowerment** – Our members are at the core of our organization. We are dedicated to empowering and including them in the decision making process.
- **Resources** – We will use all available resources to solve an emergency situation.
- **Integrity** – We embrace integrity, accountability, selflessness, loyalty, and compassion while continually promoting these values in all of our members.
- **Knowledge** – We increase our knowledge and abilities through training and pursuing technology to work better, safer and smarter.
- **Development** – Our leadership encourages member development and strives to create an atmosphere of goal oriented achievement.
- **Succession** – We believe that officer development and ongoing succession planning are critical to the success of our organization.
- **Family**- We value our family and friends. It is our commitment to consider the community as members of our extended family.

### I. Strategic Issues Identified:

#### 1) ATTENDANCE AT CALLS/TRAINING

Low attendance due to work, family issues, and other “life” obligations identified as major reasons for the inability to fulfill obligations to calls/training and community events.

#### 2) RECRUITMENT/RETENTION

The need to recruit from a more broad pool of candidates; both young and old

### **3) OFFICER DEVELOPMENT**

The need to train all line officers in the disciplines of management, team building, communication, etc.

### **4) MENTORING**

The need for a program which allows for personal goal tracking and progress of each member, whether fire or EMS.

### **5) POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT VS. NEGATIVE PUNISHMENT**

The need to AWARD those who deserve to be recognized instead of chastising the one's who can't fully participate.

### **6) FEEDBACK / CUSTOMER SERVICE**

Develop a customer survey to send to all occupancies we respond to in district.  
Use this information to improve service  
Use feedback to advise members how public feels about the services we provide

### **7) HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Appoint a department Health and Safety Officer

### **8) NEW FIREHOUSE**

Move into new firehouse and adapt our operation to larger more functional building. Include public in more firehouse events to regain the "center of the community" status the fire department once had.

### **9) FIRE PREPLANS, KNOX BOX SYSTEM**

Update existing preplans of commercial structures in the district. Perform preplans on those occupancies that have not been surveyed to date. Identify Water Supply Sources in District and in neighboring towns. Knox Box system to be requested for all commercial buildings with automatic fire detection.

### **10) STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES**

Update and add to department standard operating guidelines. Existing SOG's are 5 yrs old.

Thanks to all the dedicated men and women of the Vista Fire Department for all of your efforts over the past year.

As always, Stay Safe.

*William R. Dungee*, Chief of Department

## **Applying for Membership**

If you are 16 or older and reside in Vista Fire District or an adjacent New York State or Connecticut fire district, you may be eligible for membership in the Vista Fire Department. (Fire districts that are adjacent to Vista Fire District No.1 include South Salem, Pound Ridge, New Canaan, Wilton, and Ridgefield.)

Our application process is fairly simple. You must complete an application form and return it to our firehouse at the address below along with your \$5 application fee. (Cash or a check is fine).

**Vista Fire Department  
377 Smith Ridge Rd.  
So. Salem, NY 10590**

The application for membership may be downloaded in PDF format from our department website [www.vidtafd.org](http://www.vidtafd.org)

If you want more information, please feel free to drop by the Vista firehouse any time to talk with our members. Our district manager, Tom Ritchey, is at the firehouse 8:30 am - 4:30 pm on weekdays and there is always someone there on Monday nights.

Or you may call us at: **(914) 533-2727**.



Vista and South Salem Firefighters training together on Search & Rescue



Vista Firefighters at Firefighter II Class at Westchester Fire Training Center in Valhalla, NY



Car Fire Rte 123 10/31/2010



Trailer Truck Rollover 12/20/2010 Rte 123



Tanker Shuttle Drill South Salem FD 4/24/2010



Firefighter I Graduates 11/17/10



January 1, 2010 Motor Vehicle Accident with Fire East Street



February 23, 2010 Motor Vehicle Accident with Injuries Rte 123



Motor Vehicle Accident with Injuries September 13, 2010 Rte 123 and East St.