

## **1897 – 1950 The Early Bartlett Fire Years**

On Wednesday, December 22, 1897, a group of Bartlett citizens gathered together for the purpose of forming a volunteer fire department. Twenty-six men, all over sixteen years of age, signed the by-laws and the constitution of the new fire department which was drawn up by George Struckman. Mr. A.C. Schick was elected the first fire chief of the department at the first meeting held on January 10, 1898. From that time on, the department functioned well according to records, even though the chief was known to report at meetings, "that the engine was in working order, but leaks worse than ever."

The department continued its operations until the middle of 1901, when it apparently disbanded. It was reorganized on July 11, 1910 with many of the same men as members. This organization appeared to have continued until sometime in 1915, although there are no records documenting this after November 7, 1911. A third and final reorganization of the department came on November 16, 1925. At this time twenty-nine men became members of the department.

H.C. Thurnau was elected fire chief of the new department. This group not only functioned as a fire fighting unit, but soon became the center of social activity in the community. Dances and picnics, along with grand and glorious 4th of July celebrations were held. The 4th of July celebration in 1926 had a parade that contained thirty-one floats; there were fireworks, dancing, and games of chance. It was so successful that they quickly planned another picnic in August. This was the forerunner of the former firemen's picnic.

Sometime in 1930, the firemen became movie stars. The Atlas Educational Film Company wanted some shots of the volunteer department in action, so the men gave a demonstration of how it should be done. Unfortunately this film is no longer available. Throughout its existence, the department has always had cordial relations with the village board, realizing that cooperation and understanding were essential to a smooth operating partnership. The department held a special meeting on December 6, 1936. The minutes of this meeting read as follows:

"Meeting called to order by President H.E. Schnadt. Roll call showed twelve members present, none absent, and all members of the village board present. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss with the board members the activities of the Bartlett Volunteer Fire Department. The chief addressed the members present and also the board about the duties, requirements, and services necessary to maintain an efficient operation of the Bartlett Volunteer Fire Department. The president of the village board gave a short talk expressing the board's appreciation for the manner in which the fire department has maintained an efficient operation and service, and assured the board's cooperation was welcomed at any time. After adjournment, a social evening was had at the Village Hall, refreshments were served, and a good time was had by all."

As a fire department, this group did their usual fine work during this period, and they also played a large part in building the community. The department, along with other civic groups in town, was largely responsible for the formation of present town parks and field house. On April 12, 1948, a special meeting for the fire department was called by Chief Bull. The order of business for this meeting was to discuss purchasing six lots from Mr. H.W. Schnadt to complete the park. Motion was made to buy this land and turn the property over to the village. Mayor Thurnau, who was village president at the time, thanked the fire department for their action and said he was sure the village board and the rest of the people in town would be very thankful for what the department had done.

Much time, work, and money went into building the present field house. At their meeting on July 13, 1948, the department voted to donate their share of the annual firemen's picnic for the purpose of building the field house. At this time, the Rural League also donated their share of the picnic to this worthy cause.

## **1950 – Today**

Positive changes and development took place rapidly over the next 60 years. The following items are short summaries of many of these important milestones.

October, 1950 - The first fire department trustees were Art Holtz, Bill Rees, and Tony Whitmer.

August, 1952 - New fire station was dedicated at 218 S. Main Street.

August, 1956 - The department and the village formally joined the Hanover-Wayne Fire Protection District, and a new siren was installed in order to improve the alerting system.

October, 1960 - A complete mobile radio system was installed.

April, 1965 - A rural fire numbering system was established.

July, 1968 - Elmer Hecht was appointed the first full-time employee and fire chief of the Hanover-Wayne Fire Protection District.

January, 1969 - The Village of Streamwood de-annexed from the Fire District to become a municipal fire department.

January, 1971 - The name of the Fire District was officially changed to "Bartlett and Countryside Fire Protection District."

October, 1973 - Moved into the completed Fire Station #1 at 234 North Oak Avenue.

July, 1974 – Cadet program for firefighters was established.

March, 1976 - An agreement was drawn up to participate in multi-agency dispatching provided by Du Page County Communications (Du-Comm).

November, 1977 - A fire station site on Struckman Blvd. was acquired as a donation from Roy Gottlieb.

April, 1980 - An Ambulance Tax Referendum was held and passed by 447 votes.

May, 1980 – An agreement was signed to participate in the Greater Elgin Area Mobile Intensive Care Program and Advanced Life Support Ambulance Service.

November, 1980 – First contract with Paramedic Services of Illinois was signed to provide the paramedics to staff the advanced life support ambulance.

August, 1986 – New station at 501 Struckman Blvd. was completed.

April, 1990 – Trustees adopted an ordinance to establish a fire commission.

September, 1990 – Notice published in newspaper that the Fire District would be accepting applications for full-time firefighter position. 246 applied.

December, 1991 – First firefighter eligibility list was established for full-time personnel.

January, 1992 – Seven firefighter candidates started full-time employment.

January, 1994 - Fire Chief Elmer Hecht retired as chief officer of the Fire District. His retirement culminated 42 years of service to the community.

1994 - Fire Chief Steve Figved replaced Chief Hecht and led the department until March of 2002.

January, 1995 - The Fire District Trustees voted to increase the size of the board of trustees to five.

July, 1996 - The name of the department changed to "Bartlett Fire Protection District".

February, 1998 – One lieutenant was promoted to captain, and three firefighters were promoted to lieutenant.

May, 2001 - The department launched its first web site.

December, 2001 - Kevin Heine was sworn in as assistant fire chief.

November, 2002 - William O'Boyle was appointed fire chief of the District and served until 2005.

November, 2003 - Lt. William Anderson was promoted to the rank of assistant chief of administration and a firefighter was promoted to the rank of lieutenant.

2004 - Twelve Bartlett residents completed a very successful Citizens Fire Academy.

February, 2006 - Kevin Heine was appointed chief of the Bartlett Fire Protection District.

April, 2006 – Lieutenant David Misner is promoted to assistant chief of operations and a firefighter is promoted to lieutenant.

November, 2006 – Passed referendum which provided funding for a 3<sup>rd</sup> fire station and personnel.

February, 2007 - The Fire District received a communications grant in the amount of \$219,000.

April, 2007 - The first six additional firefighters were hired as a result of the successful 2006 referendum.

May, 2007 – Lieutenants Mike Clarke, Ralph DeFreece and David Misner were promoted to the rank of battalion chief and two firefighters were promoted to lieutenant.

July, 2007 – An Intergovernmental Agreement between the District and the Village of Bartlett was signed for the construction of a new fire station.

September, 2007 - Michael Falese was appointed to the position of assistant chief of operations.

December, 2007 – Three firefighters were promoted to lieutenants.

February, 2008 - Two additional firefighters were hired.

June, 2008 - The Bartlett Fire Protection District was awarded a \$948,825.00 SAFER grant for the hiring of nine additional firefighters.

October 2008 - Fire Station 3, located at 1575 West Bartlett Road, was dedicated and opened for service. Three additional firefighters were hired and three firefighters were promoted to the rank of lieutenant bringing the total number of lieutenants to nine.

September, 2009 - The Fire District hosts the “Pink Heals Tour” and with combined efforts of area residents and local community schools, helped raise \$11,000.00 that was donated to the Alexian Brothers Foundation, to offset costs to local cancer patients.

March, 2010 - Fire Chief Kevin Heine retired after 30 years of service to the Bartlett Fire Protection District.

June, 2010 - Assistant Chief Michael Falese was appointed to the position of fire chief.

November, 2010 - Michael Figolah was appointed to the position of assistant fire chief.

January, 2012 - The District honored the first five full-time 20 year employees; Assistant Chief William Anderson, BC Michael Clarke, BC Ralph DeFreece, BC David Misner, LT Brian Corn

February, 2012 - Assistant Chief William Anderson retired

April, 2012 - Michael Kelly was appointed to the position of assistant fire chief

#### PREVIOUS FIRE DISTRICT TRUSTEES

Auble, Glenn	Salter, Hal
Brandes, John	Sheeny, William
Buckner, Donald	Smith, Kenneth
Faber, Gerald	Straub, William
Holtz, Art	Taylor, William
Jackson, William	Tiknis, William
Lichthardt, Theodore	Weaver, Norman
McGuire, John	Wehle, Peter
Meyers, Lawrence	Wetherton, Norm
Pierscioneck, Art	Whitmer, Tony
Rees, Bill	Wrobel, Richard

#### PREVIOUS FIRE DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS

Busto, Lisa	McCarthy, James
Faber, Gerald	Regal, Arthur
Genslak, Thomas	Tiknis, William
Heneghan, Martin	Weaver, Norman
Mategrano, Albert	Whitmer, John

Previous Trustees and Commissioners information is still being researched and updated at this time.