

MOVIN' ON UP!



Bourbonnais Fire Protection District

The Bourbonnais Rural Fire Protection District was first created in January 1948 to answer calls in the unincorporated areas of Bourbonnais Township and a small portion of Ganeer Township, located in Kankakee County. It was in 1987 a merger with the Village of Bourbonnais Fire Department was completed to establish Bourbonnais Fire Protection District. The merger was necessitated to combine personnel and avoid duplication on apparatus purchases.

Bourbonnais' main station is located approximately 60 miles south of Chicago along the I-57 corridors. Its one station covers approximately 35 square miles with a population 36,000 and protects an assessed property value of \$379 million. In 2006, Bourbonnais responded to 2,395 calls and will likely exceed this total number in 2007.

The current makeup consists of three command officers (fire chief, deputy chief and Lieutenant), assisted by three line officers who are assigned 24-hour shifts and oversee a combination of 15 part-time and 30 paid-on-call personnel.

The District's personnel utilize and operate a one tower ladder, one pumper tanker, one pumper rescue, one engine, three ALS ambulances, a rescue boat, a technical rescue trailer and four support vehicles. The services include fire suppression, emergency medical services, fire prevention and educational programs, inspection services, fire investigation, water rescue, technical rescue and hazardous materials incidents.

While the growing pains are inevitable, many have stepped up to the plate to continue to bring excellent service to the patrons of Bourbonnais Fire Protection District.

THEN VS. NOW

The Bourbonnais Fire Protection District has been a 'District in Transition'. The Trustees saw the increased volume of calls since the merger and the Village rapid growth in residents and commercial development. With this increased call volume coverage for the daytime, evening and overnight shifts, a full-time Captain, EMS personnel Engineer and Firefighters were gradually added by the District. After an analysis by the Illinois Fire Chiefs' Association fulltime personnel at the management level, a Deputy Chief, two Lieutenants and an Administrative Lieutenant were hired. The District staffs three ALS ambulances and an engine with POC members and part-time employees. The ambulances and an Engineer's position are staffed 24/7, and a Firefighter is in-house for 16 hours during the day. The POC members also have a six-day rotation of responding to calls to ensure staffing. While the current staffing produces many

calendars, it works. It gives the District the benefit in having qualified personnel staff their vehicles while providing experience to the POC and part-time employees.

The District maintains a balance of a combination department with an efficient and effective operation. Changes have brought many new policies and procedures. Health insurance and pension plans had to be established. While all of these 'paper' items have brought many challenges, the 'people' side has resulted in the need for 'tenderness'. Organizational charts had to be redone. While no person has lost their title, some have found themselves with a different supervisor.

While the growing pains are inevitable, many have stepped up to the plate to continue to bring excellent service to the patrons of Bourbonnais Fire Protection District. It is through open communication and thinking 'outside of the box' that this structure works for the District.

Editor's Note: If you would like to have your district featured in the "Movin' on Up!" column of *The Fire Call*, please contact us at 800-524-6620 for more information.