

MOVIN' ON UP



York Center Fire Protection District

Location:

- 1517 S. Meyers Rd.
Lombard, IL 60148-4728

Trustees:

- Frank Vosicky, President
- Jim Williams, Secretary
- Tom Otake, Treasurer
- Ric Hildreth
- Al Sarno

Fire Chief:

- Richard Sanborn Jr.

Deputy Chief:

- Bret Mowery

Accomplishments:

- I.S.O. Rating Class 2

Apparatus:

- 2 1,500 gallon per minute first class pumpers (750 gallon water tank).
- 1 3,500 gallon tender with capability to pump 1500 gallons per minute.
- 1 First Class Heavy Rescue Squad
- 2 Advanced Life Support Ambulances
- 1 Special Operations Rescue Vehicle
- 2 Fire Prevention Vehicles
- 2 Command Chief Vehicles

Personnel:

- 2 Full-Time Chief Officers
- 56 Part-Time Firefighters, Paramedics, and EMT's
- 1 Part-Time Administrative Assistant

District Facts:

- The York Center FPD is approximately 5 square miles.



The daytime district population is approximately 100,000 people. Annual call volume is just short of 2000.

The York Center Fire Protection District was established in 1948 with basic equipment that was housed in private barns. An old milk truck was initially one of the vehicles that was used as it was converted into a water tanker.

In a few short years, a fire station was built at the property where the fire station currently sits, but the original station was positioned on the northwest corner and near Meyers Rd. Additional apparatus was purchased, including a box truck, squad, FWD pumper (No. 2), and second FWD (No. 3) pumper was purchased. This fleet stood as the primary protection for the York Center Fire Protection District until 1973.

The new bays were filled quickly as in 1974 a Dodge wide-body ambulance, a 1-ton Dodge rescue pumper and a new

Seagrave pumper were purchased. These units remained until the current fire station was built in 1975.

The property to the east was purchased and the Fire District now owned the property from Meyers Rd. to Church Ave. At that point, the new fire station was designed and built over the year in 1975 – 1976.

In 1984 paramedic staffing was added to the services the Fire District provided to its citizens. The Fire District administration implemented staffing 24 hours per day for paramedic service. 2 paramedics and 1 EMT were added with part-time staff every day, and a second ambulance was purchased.

In 1986, 4 staff members were added during weekdays. One daytime supervisor, two part-time paramedics, and one EMT/Driver.

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In 1987 the last remaining FWD fire engines were sold to a private buyer to make room in the maintenance garage. The antique engine was now gone from the York Center F.P.D. rolls, and it is unknown where it ended up.

In 1988 Assistant Chief Bonomo was promoted to Chief and Lieutenant Ron Rakosnik was promoted to Assistant Chief. In 1988 a new single-role squad was designed and purchased. In 1989 Squad 77 arrived to the fleet to replace and upgrade what the brush truck squad provided.

In 1990 a 4-man crew was added not only during the day but also during the evenings and weekend shifts

In 1991 Hazardous Materials and Ford F350 equipment trailer was purchased, as well as trench rescue, collapse, confined spaces, and rope rescue equipment. Assistant Chief Rakosnik was heavily involved in the EMS equipment and put a plan in place to have ambulances replaced every 8 years, with new ambulances arriving every four years.

In 1991 two Assistant Chiefs were promoted Lt. Richard Sanborn became the Assistant Chief of Operations and Training-Safety Officer Tim Leidig became Assistant Chief of Operations. With these operational changes, the Fire District became more efficient.

In 1995 the Fire District had a basic remodel to provide better allocation of living space in the building. Additional

offices were added in the basement as well as a fitness area with modern fitness equipment. 1995 would see the first full-time staff - Lt. Ken Kovarik and Chief Engineer David Rainey. Lt. Kovark would continue his full-time service for 26 years until 2022.

In 1999, the first medium-duty ambulance would be ordered from Road Rescue on a Freightliner chassis. This would be the last ambulance painted with the white and lime green paint scheme.

A referendum was passed in 2004 which allowed several including the largest addition to the fire station adding living and office space and increasing apparatus floor space.

In 2005, the Fire Chief became full-time on July 1. This first ambulance painted with a white and red paint scheme. Later the Freightliner ambulance would be painted with a similar scheme where the yellow was painted red. During this time frame the utility vehicle was also restriped with a red stripe to cover the yellow. The Fire District was transitioning to a traditional red apparatus color.

In August of 2008, the new Pierce Arrow pumper went into service, the first red fire engine to arrive at York Center since the 1970s.

In 2010 another medium-duty ambulance to match 72 was ordered from Med Tech Ambulance and this would replace the Freightliner unit 74.

In 2012 a sister engine to the Pierce Arrow was purchased and put in service to replace the 1993 Hush pumper.

In 2016 a replacement ambulance for the older of the Med Tech units was approved.

In 2019 a sister to the 2016 ambulance was ordered to replace the last of the medium-duty ambulances. These Horton ambulances are still in service providing transport of the sick and injured for the York Center Fire Protection District at the time of this writing.

In 2021 a Ford F650 with a cargo box was purchased from Marion Apparatus to replace the Technical Rescue trailer under coordinator Eng. Jack Shafer.

2021 was a very busy and significant year. After years of succession planning, and hard work, the Fire Chief – Andrew Bonomo had decided to retire after serving for 49 years. Chief Bonomo had such an impact on the organization of the York Center Fire Protection District over the years, that his name was almost synonymous with it. Chief Richard Sanborn Jr. would take the reins as of September 1, 2021, and would name Bret Mowery as his Deputy Fire Chief.

In 2022 the replacement rescue squad for the 2005 Pierce arrived.

On September 6, 2023, York Center held a celebration of 75 years of service. This celebration included a special station dedication and celebration, first responder members were recognized for their years of service to the district. Those included: Frank Vosicky, Trustee 20 years, Shawn Flaherty, Attorney 20 years, Brother Thomas Harding, Chaplin 30 years; and Tom Bauer, Accountant 48 years. ■

