

NONPROFIT SPOTLIGHT:

Delaware Volunteer Firefighters' Association

BY WARREN JONES

» It was 2:32 am, a volunteer fire company was responding to a motor vehicle collision with reported subjects trapped. In route, the dispatch center notifies the incoming units the vehicle is now on fire. It is a very dark and muggy July night on a winding, narrow road. As the first fire apparatus arrives, there is a female victim laying in the middle of the road with EMS personnel working on her. On the right was a car embedded in a tree. The flames were coming out of the engine compartment and impinging on the passenger compartment. The driver was trapped behind the steering wheel and was screaming, "Get me out, get me out!" The crew, went to work, quickly extinguishing the fire and then extricating the driver. Both victims were transported to the hospital and recovered.

It was 7:45 pm, a volunteer fire company ambulance crew was responding to a report of a subject choking. It was a cold, rainy, November night. In route to the address the ambulance crew was notified there were no paramedic units immediately available. When the two volunteer EMT's entered the apartment, there was man kneeling on the floor holding his wife in his arms. He looked up at the EMT's, with tears rolling down his cheeks, and said, "She is not breathing." The EMTs went to work. She was in respiratory arrest because of the blockage. They removed the blockage and administered oxygen. By the time the paramedics arrived, she was alert and talking.



These incidents, and many more like them, happen every day in this state. The sixty volunteer fire companies in Delaware are overwhelmingly the public safety providers for fire, rescue and EMS services. They respond to 175,000 calls for help every year and make a difference in people's lives every day. They will more than likely provide emergency services to you, your family and your business.

What would happen if you had an emergency and no one came? Today, the volunteer fire service needs your help. The number of available volunteers has dramatically decreased. According to the State Auditor, it would cost \$212 million to replace the volunteer system.

What can the business community do? The State currently has a legislative task force looking into the problem. They are seeking insight and strategies on:

- How to best recruit and retain
- Promotional and marketing campaigns/materials

The volunteer firefighter has been a part of the fabric of our great nation since before the Declaration of Independence. The spirit of volunteerism built this country. We are not asking you to put on a set of fire gear and ride a fire truck – even though we would welcome you. We are asking for your help to continue this time-honored tradition and help your community. What do you say?

For more information or to learn how you can help, contact Warren Jones, Executive Manager at the Delaware Volunteer Firefighters Association. He can be reached at wjones@dvfassn.com or (302) 734-9390.