

Brenham Fire Department

2011 Annual Report



Serving Proudly Since 1867



Brenham Fire Department Annual Report 2011

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Services Provided

- First responder fire suppression services within the city limits of Brenham and an unincorporated area roughly twice that size lying outside of the city limits.
- Automatic mutual aid assistance to the 6 adjacent rural Fire Departments on all structure fire calls.
- Mutual aid fire suppression services are provided county-wide upon request.
- First responder rescue services county-wide.
- Hazardous materials mitigation services county-wide.
- Smoke detector and carbon monoxide service checks.
- Pre-fire planning surveys of buildings within the City.
- Fire prevention & safety programs.
- Flood water removal services.
- Fire inspection services, Fire Code enforcement and construction plan reviews.
- Juvenile fire setter intervention services to the community.
- Investigations of criminal activity related to fires & explosions; enforcement of state and local statutes on arson, criminal mischief, fireworks and other fire related violations (Fire Marshal's Office).
- The members of the Brenham Fire Department own and operate the Fireman's Training Center. This popular facility provides an important service to the community and is utilized year-round for social and business events.

Staffing

The Brenham Fire Department operates under the direction of 23 year veteran Fire Chief Ricky Boeker. Staffing for 2011 numbered 15 full time employees and 45 volunteer members. Volunteer membership varies, but usually runs between 40 and 50 members.

Chief Boeker also serves as the Emergency Management Coordinator for the City. [See Emergency Management Report below]

Deputy Fire Chief/Fire Marshal Alan E. Finke performs a combination of administrative and operations-related duties under the direction of the Fire Chief, as well as the duties of City Fire Marshal. These include fire code enforcement, construction plan reviews, public fire education, fire prevention inspections, and fire & arson investigations. The Fire Marshal's Office is a law enforcement agency as defined by Texas statutes and has three (3) licensed Texas peace officers who are commissioned as arson investigators, including the Fire Marshal, one shift Captain and one volunteer firefighter.

There are 12 full-time uniformed staff members who are assigned to shift duty at the fire station. One Captain and three Apparatus Operators are assigned to each of the three shifts. Shifts work a 48 hour on/96 hour off duty schedule. Shifts are fully staffed (4 on duty) approximately 65% of the time. The minimum staffing level is three (3) paid staff members on duty.

The number of on-duty paid staff members increased in 2010 when 3 additional Apparatus Operators were hired under the FEMA "Staffing for Adequate Fire & Emergency Response ("SAFER") grant program. The staffing level remained the same for 2011 and the city continues to receive grant funds under the 5 year SAFER schedule.

The Fire Department Administrative Assistant works normal business hours in the Fire Department administrative office and handles a variety of duties, under the direction of the Fire Chief.

Within the volunteer ranks, members are elected annually to various officer positions. These include the 1st Assistant Chief, 2nd Assistant Chief, two District Chiefs, as well as Secretary-Treasurer, Assistant Secretary-Treasurer, Chaplain and Mascot.

Funding

- General Fund budget appropriation for FY2011: \$1.4 million.
- Washington County contribution: \$20,500.
- Grant funding from Texas Forest Service and FEMA (SAFER).
- Fund-raisers including the Fireman's Fiesta and Fish Fry.
- Revenue from rental fees for the Fireman's Training Center.
- Donations from the BFD Ladies Auxilliary.

Texas Forest Service Rural Volunteer F.D. Assistance Program

This program was created by the 77th Texas Legislature (HB 2604). The Rural VFD Assistance Program provides grants for equipment and training. The Texas Rural Volunteer Fire Department Assistance Program is a cost-share program funded by the Texas State Legislature. It provides funding to rural volunteer fire departments for the acquisition of firefighting vehicles, fire and rescue equipment, protective clothing, county fire radio system components, dry-hydrants, computer systems and firefighter training. Any chartered, non-profit volunteer fire department operated by its members is eligible. Any part-paid/part-volunteer fire department is also eligible provided the number of paid members is 20 or less.

In 2011 the largest grant that we applied for was to replace our Brush truck (B1). We received a grant for \$78,000 which paid for a majority of the new truck (\$103,940.31) but not all. The remaining cost will come from the sale of the old truck and proceeds from the Fiesta. The Department also received \$4,950 towards the Workers Compensation Coverage for the Volunteers. The Department also received \$2,670 in tuition reimbursement from the Texas Forest Service. The total we received from the Texas Forest Service in 2011 was \$85,620.

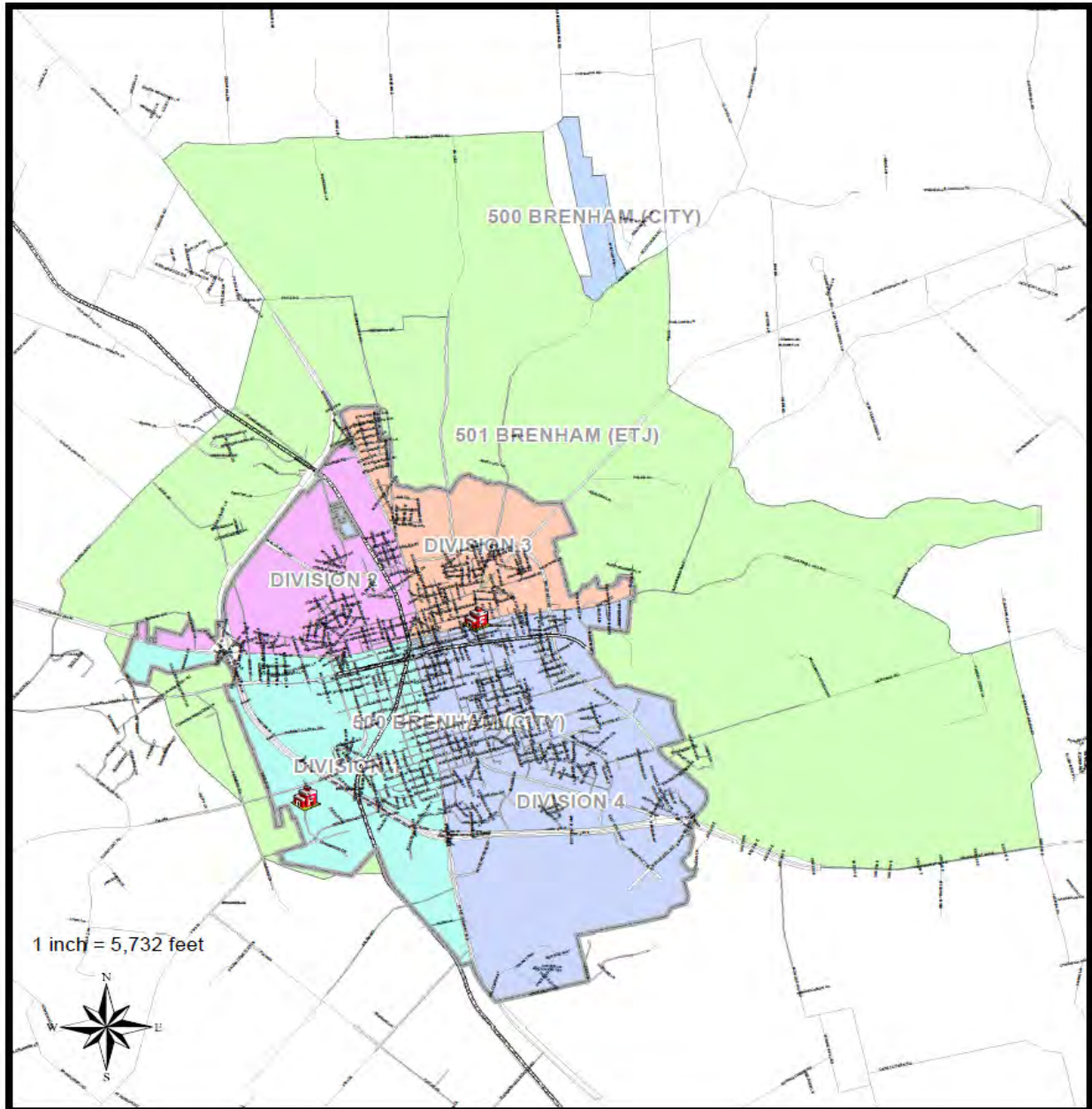
The Fire Department continually looks for ways to supplement the annual budget. While the additional revenue sources mentioned above are not huge when viewed in comparison to the overall BFD budget, they demonstrate how the Brenham Fire Department tries to reduce operating costs to our citizens.

S.A.F.E.R. Grant Continues To Fund Additional Shift Personnel

In 2009, Brenham was awarded a 5 year grant in the amount of \$325,140 from the "Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response" (S.A.F.E.R.) Grant Program of the Department of Homeland Security. The grant allowed the addition 3 full time employees to the BFD staff. These additional positions brought the normal duty crew at the fire station up from 3 per shift to 4. This was the first increase in on-duty staff since 1978

Area Served by the Brenham Fire Department

The Brenham Fire Department's **primary response area** covers **36.42** square miles, including 12.02 sq. mi. inside of the City limits and 24.4 sq. mi. of unincorporated Washington County. Divisions 1-4 are inside of the City limits. Division 5 and Division 6 are in unincorporated Washington County. Division 7 is outside of the County. **Brenham F.D. is the designated first responding fire department for Divisions 1 through 5.**



Legend

■ DIVISION 1
 ■ DIVISION 2
 ■ DIVISION 3
 ■ DIVISION 4
 ■ ESN 501 (ETJ)
 ■ ESN 500 (CITY)

Brenham
 Square Miles: 12.02
 Acres: 7,688.068

Brenham Fire Primary Coverage Washington Co.
 Square Miles: 24.4
 Acres: 15,627.06

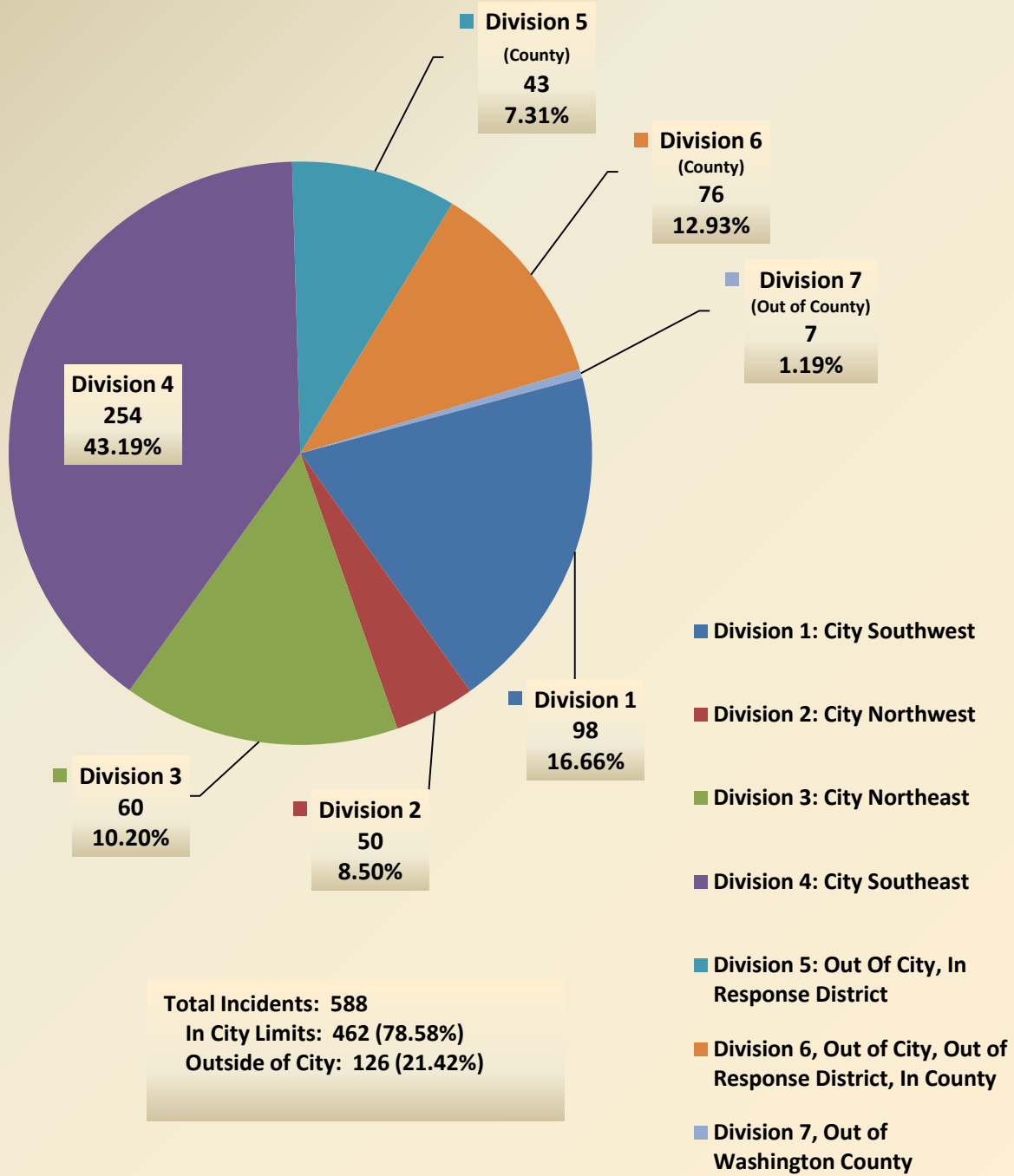
Airport
 Square Miles 0.27
 Acres: 173.08



Brenham Fire Department 2011

588 Total Incidents

By Response Division



County Responses

The Brenham Fire Department responded to **119** incidents in the unincorporated areas of Washington County during 2011, up from 84 incidents in 2010. This represents a **42% increase** in County responses over the previous year. This significant increase is due in most part to the drought conditions in the area during 2011.

As in previous years, the amount of time spent on County calls averaged at least 2 hours per call, often more. This estimate includes time spent at the scene, travel time to and from the scene, plus time spent to fuel and restore trucks to service and complete reports. On the conservative side, it is estimated that the Brenham Fire Department spent approximately 238 hours on calls the County.

Out-of-County Wildfire Responses

Not included in the numerous County calls mentioned above are the two major wildfire events that occurred in neighboring counties to the East of Washington County. During the height of the wildfire season in the summer of 2011, Brenham FD responded to 7 requests for mutual aid outside of Washington County. Brenham FD, along with several other Washington County departments, spent many hours on the scene of the two major fire incidents that occurred in the Grimes, Waller, and Montgomery County areas.

During the Dyer Mill fire in June, Brenham FD had personnel and trucks on the scene for 153 hours. The personnel were rotated out in crews of 2 to 4 during that incident.

In September, during the Tri-County/Riley Road fire, BFD personnel and trucks were on the scene for 119 hours and rotated 9 firefighters in shifts of 2 to 3, spending roughly 12 hours per shift on the scene.

Application has been made to the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) for reimbursement of all eligible expenses (salaries of our paid staff only) for the Dyer Mill and Tri-County/Riley Road fires, but as of January 2012, no payment has been received.

Responses by Incident Type for 2011

Dispatched & cancelled en-route	133
Smoke removal	6
Water removal	2
Hazardous materials	28
Alarm system activation – legitimate	68
False alarms, malfunctions, honest mistakes	58
Smoke scares	40
Medical assists to EMS (other than vehicle crashes)	1
Trash, grass, brush, dumpster fires	51
Vehicle fires	10
Building fires	18
Vehicle crash rescue calls	18
Unauthorized burning	4
Miscellaneous	<u>151</u>
Total	588

Dollar Loss In City (5-Year Comparison)

Fire Loss – City	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
	\$119,150	\$1,061,600	\$450,200	\$300,687	\$532,000

NOTE: Arriving at accurate fire loss value is difficult. When possible, loss figures obtained from insurance carriers (adjusters) are used, and these are considered the most accurate. At other times, loss figures are based on the knowledge and experience of fire investigators. All fire loss figures shown are approximate.

Fire Related Injuries and Fatalities

There were no fire related deaths or injuries reported in the City during 2011.

Two Brenham firefighters reported minor injuries in separate incidents during the year. No firefighter fatalities occurred.

Pre-incident Planning Program

Pre-fire planning (“pre-planning”) is a pro-active information oriented activity in which on-duty members of the Fire Department visit commercial and industrial occupancies within the City for the purpose of gathering information regarding the nature of the property and identifying significant hazards at the site. This information is recorded for later use during fires or other emergencies at the location.

The pre-planning program also plays a very important role in helping to maintain the City of Brenham’s very good **Class 3** rating by Insurance Services Offices, Inc.. A low ISO classification has a positive effect on insurance rates for property located within the City limits.

During the ISO study commissioned by the Fire Department in 2005, the consulting fire protection engineer detailed the value of an active pre-fire planning program and indicated that a significant gain in points on the ISO Fire Suppression Rating Schedule could be achieved by such a program. **In 2011, Brenham Fire Department personnel gathered and processed pre-plan information on 335 businesses and commercial buildings within the City of Brenham.**

Fire Prevention, Code Enforcement, Investigations

The following is a summary of fire prevention, public fire education, code enforcement, and fire/arson investigation activity for the year 2011.

Public Fire Prevention Education Programs

The combination of public fire education presentations by the Fire Marshal and other BFD staff members, fire station tours, County Fair presentations, National Night Out visits, fire prevention programs in the schools, requests for employee training from businesses and industries, and other such programs, resulted in approximately 7,000 public contacts in 2011.

Inspection & Enforcement Activities

Fire prevention & construction inspections	179
Requests for code research or ruling	47
Construction plans reviewed	52

Arson Investigations

There were was one signification arson case reported in 2011. The incident occurred in September and involved a homicide as well as the intentional burning of a dwelling. The incident remains under investigation by the Brenham Fire Marshal’s Office, State Fire Marshal’s Office, Brenham Police Department and other agencies.

Emergency Vehicle Technician Certification Program

For the past 11 years, the Fire Department has invested in specialized training and certification of key personnel in the field of emergency vehicle service and repair. This on-going training initiative has yielded substantial cost savings when repairs are needed to our fleet of emergency vehicles. This program has saved the City many thousands of dollars in repair and maintenance costs by allowing our certified personnel to make most needed repairs in Brenham. Having to drive or tow fire apparatus to Houston for repair has proven to be extremely costly in the past, as well as involving extended down time, personnel costs for delivery and pick up, and the inherent risk of damage when towing large vehicles in traffic.

Brazos Valley Wide Area Communications System (BVWACS)

In January of 2011, the BVWACS radio system became operational for Brenham and Washington County emergency services along with other public sector service providers such as road & bridge, utilities, etc. (see Emergency Management below).

Fire Sub-station Project Status

In 2006, after considering the recommendations of staff and the findings of the 2005 ISO study, the City Council authorized a capital improvement project which included a fire sub-station, a new police station and an additional water tower. The police station and water tower projects both moved to completion. Funds for the proposed sub-station were diverted to the other projects.

In 2009 an architectural firm was selected and a project budget in the amount of \$2,020,818 was developed. Design work and construction plans were completed for a 7,820 sq. ft. facility, and a site was secured next door to the new police building.

Brenham's ISO "Public Protection Classification"

Brenham's "Public Protection Classification" remained at "3" during 2011 but this **rating is to be officially reviewed in 2012**. Insurance Services Office, Inc. (ISO) provides information to the insurance industry concerning a community's ability to deal with structure fires. ISO establishes this rating by means of their proprietary "Fire Suppression Rating Schedule" in order to establish a "public protection classification" number on a scale from 1 to 10, with "1" being the best and "10" indicating no fire protection at all.

Lower ISO classification leads to reduced fire and homeowner's insurance premiums for the rated area. Chief Boeker was informed in June of 2011 that ISO will conduct a rating survey of the City in March of 2012.

(Public Protection Classification continued...)

Numerous aspects of the City's fire suppression capability are reviewed during an ISO rating survey, including:

- Number and type of fire apparatus, age and pump capacity
- Equipment carried on fire apparatus such as hose, ladders and tools
- Dispersal of fire apparatus throughout the city (fire stations & travel distance)
- Fire department on-duty staffing and personnel response to structure fires
- Fire Department training programs and certification levels
- Fire and arson investigation capability
- Public fire education programs
- Adopted construction codes and ordinances
- Code enforcement and construction plan review programs
- Water production and distribution capability
- Fire hydrants, location, inspection and maintenance
- Fire alarm receiving and fire dispatching capabilities

Brenham has not been officially surveyed by ISO in over ten years. A mock grading performed by a fire protection consultant during the ISO review project in 2005 indicated that without the addition of a fire sub-station on the City's southwest side, the next ISO survey would in all likelihood result in a higher Public Protection Classification rating and subsequent increases in insurance premiums paid in the community.

To date, the City of Brenham has implemented nearly all of the recommendations made in the 2005 study, with the exception of a staffed sub-station on the Southwest side of town and the addition of another Fire Inspector to the staff.

Response Time and Travel Distance

It is a major goal of the Brenham Fire Department to have fire engines and sufficient personnel on the scene and ready to commence rescue and fire attack operations within 4 to 9 minutes of being dispatched. This performance goal is consistent with the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1710 and 1720 standards on staffing and deployment of fire suppression forces.

Response time is defined by NPFA as the time interval between completion of the dispatching process and the arrival of the first fire apparatus on scene, AND the arrival of sufficient personnel to begin rescue or fire attack operations (a minimum of 1 engine and 4 personnel arriving within 4 minutes).

The recommended staffing level for a first alarm assignment to a structure fire is no less than 2 engines and 16 personnel, all arriving on the scene within 9 minutes, 90% of the time. In 2010, the Fire Department was able to achieve 4-minute response times about 50% of the time, which is consistent with figures from the past several years. The response time averages for 2011 did not change significantly from previous years.

As in previous years, **in 2011 over 75% (76.2%) of in-city responses were to Divisions 1 and 4**, which lie in the southern portion of the City (see map on page 5 above). This area of sustained growth and development has long been the acknowledged target area for construction of a fire sub-station which would serve to reduce the travel distance required to reach the busiest fire response areas in town, thereby reducing the response time to those locations.

Under ISO guidelines, the maximum credit for fire apparatus dispersal (location of fire stations) in the community is achieved when travel distances are no more than 1.5 miles for engine companies and 2.5 miles for ladder companies. In Brenham's case, the 1.5 mile travel distance standard is exceeded for a substantial portion of Divisions 1 and 4.

It should be noted that as residential development such as houses, apartments and hotels continues to increase in the southern part of the city, the challenge of maintaining effective response times from the existing fire station will become more and more difficult. Long response time reduces our ability to perform rapid and effective rescues of trapped occupants and increases the likelihood of encountering well developed fires upon arrival.

Rapid intervention is the key to successful rescue and effective fire suppression; the key to rapid intervention is to have fire suppression resources dispersed throughout the community rather than housed in a single fire station. In Brenham's case, the need for a fire sub-station has been well documented since the 1970's.

2011 Training Report

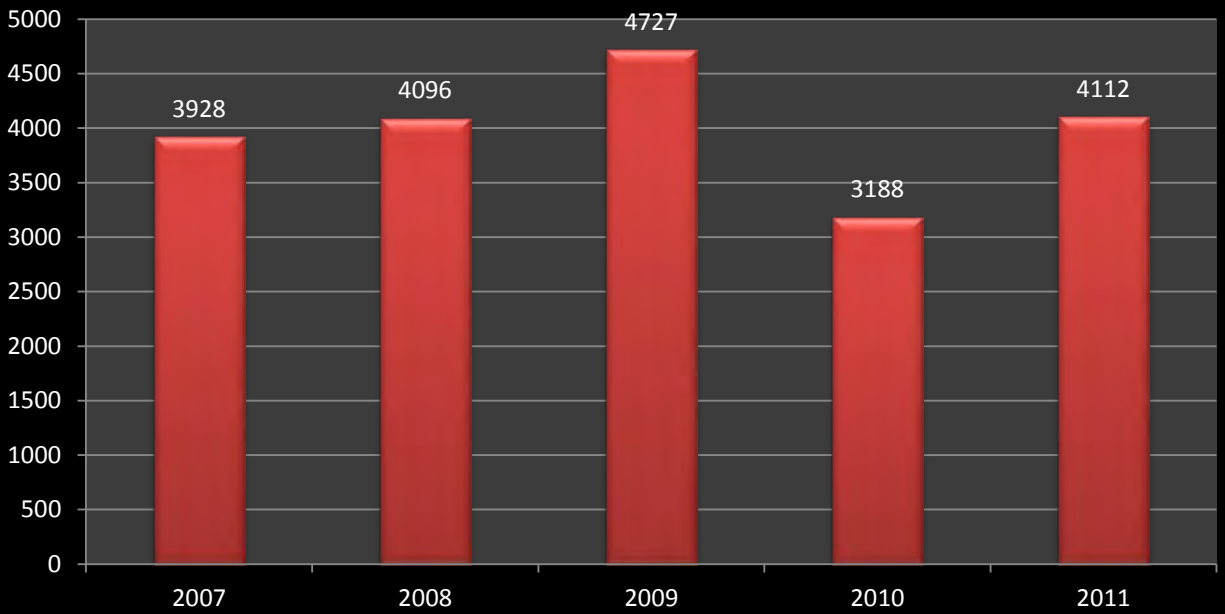
3188 Total Training Hours for the Department

- **5 Members had 100 hours or more of Training**
- **2134 hours trained by Volunteers**
- **1054 hours trained by the Career staff.**
- **12 Drills held here in Brenham**

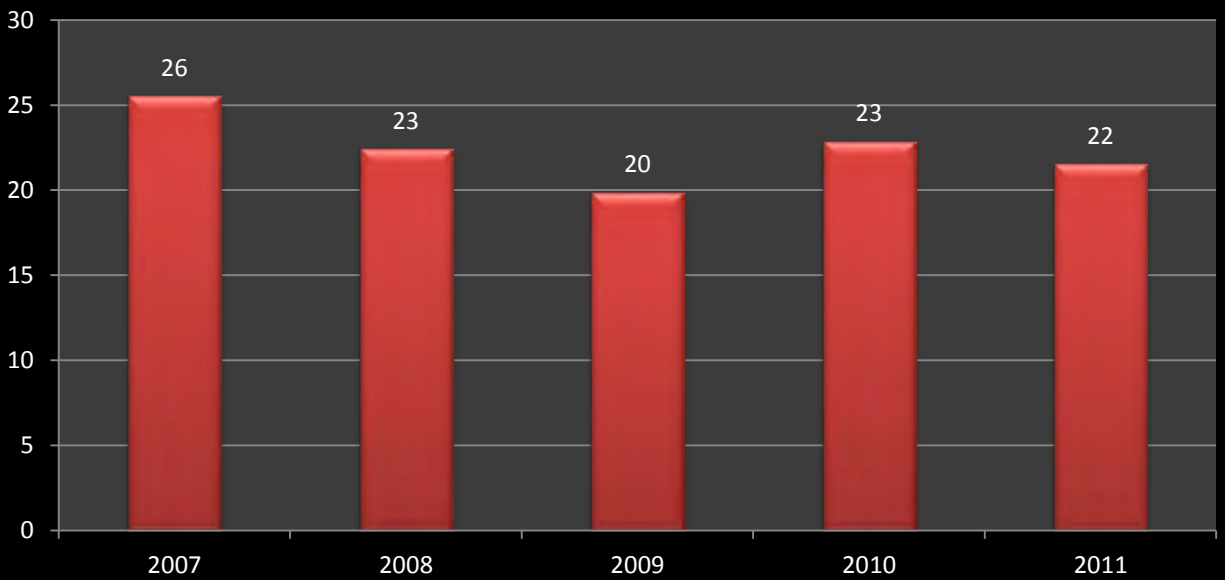
- **Outside Schools attended by BFD members**
 - Texas Emergency Vehicle Technician Conference – Ft Worth Texas, TX
 - Texas Fire & Arson Investigators Seminar – Austin, TX
 - Southwest Fire & Rescue Conference – Galveston, TX
 - Texas Fireman’s Spring Training School – College Station, TX
 - Texas Fireman’s Summer Training School – College Station, TX
 - Fayette County Firefighters Association Training Day – La Grange, TX
 - SFFMA Training Conference & Convention – Corpus Christie, TX
 - Swift Water Rescue Technician Training – New Braunfels, TX
 - State Fire Marshal’s Conference – Austin, TX
 - Katy Extrication School – Katy, TX
 - Online Training: EMT, Fire Officer I, Fire Office II, Instructor I, Driver Operator

- **BFD Hosted Schools**
 - NIMS Compliance Classes for City, County, & Private Industry
 - Washington County Junior Leadership
 - Brenham Police Department Citizens Police Academy
 - Fire Extinguisher classes for local businesses
 - National Fire Academy Report Writing Class
 - New World Training
 - Washington County Leadership
 - CPR Classes
 - Hurrevac Software Training
 - Emergency Management Group Training
 - City of Brenham Hazard Assessment for Water & Waste Water Treatment Plants
 - Scott & White Emergency Management Training Drill

Brenham Fire Department Training Hours



Brenham Fire Department Average Drill Attendance





Emergency Management Report

The Emergency Management Division provides protection for the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of Brenham, particularly in times of disaster. This is accomplished through:

- Effective contingency planning.
- Coordination of local agencies
- Education of the public
- Provision of emergency information services
- Renovating of Emergency Operation Center
- Training of staff in disaster preparedness

The City's Emergency Management Division is responsible for coordinating all components of the emergency management system in the city. These include fire, police, public works, public utilities, volunteers and other groups contributing to the management of major emergencies or disasters. The EMC also works closely with county agencies and organizations, Emergency Medical Services, the Washington County Sheriff's Office and state agencies to coordinate emergency management services and to ensure the safety of all residents within the city and county.



Weather was once again on the forefront for Emergency Management in 2011. While the city didn't see some of the natural disasters it has dealt with in the past few years, extremely dry conditions again threatened the area, with Washington County being included in a statewide disaster declaration. Wildland fires were the talk of the state as well as our area. Emergency Management helped coordinate the response from our County to two large Wildland fires one county over, the Riley Road Fire and the Tri-County Fire. These two fires burned more than 24,760 acres and destroyed almost 100 homes.

The emergency management plan is always being looked at and updated to make sure it is the most current.

The new BVWACS radio system again proved itself to be a valuable asset to the Public Safety First Responders Community. This was the first time that when our firefighters were called to an adjacent County we were able to monitor their radio traffic at the Communications Center. The Brenham Police Department also was able to take advantage of the new radio system; the Fusion Unit was able to communicate with outside agencies which helped with officer safety during the execution of serving warrants.



And while the Emergency Operations Center was not called upon to be used for its primary function, it still saw action this past year. There were several meetings held with the freezing weather that the City and County got together to coordinate our plan of action but we did not officially activate the EOC. A total of 69 events were held in the EOC, from emergency management meetings to city and fire department training classes. In addition, the Fire Department's conference room was used 17 times for general meetings.

The Cost to Outfit a Single Firefighter with Proper Firefighting Gear



2011

F I R E S



Above:
House fire on Alamo Street
Right:
House fire on Pecan Mill Road
Below:
House fire on Pecan Mill Road

Above:
Alamo Street House Fire
Bedroom
Below:
House fire on Pecan Mill Road



HEB Fire



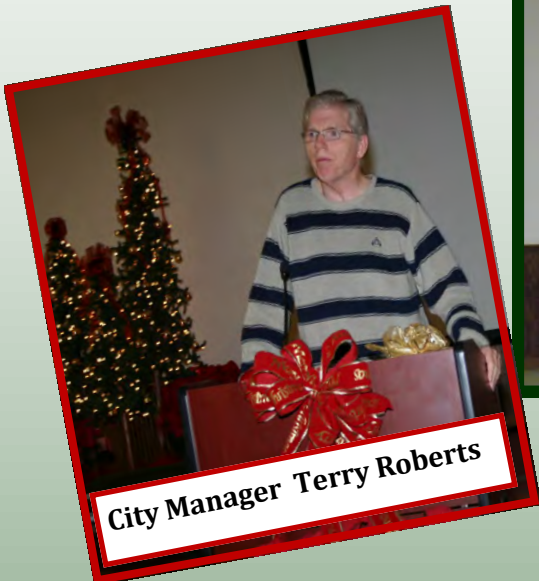
Extinguishing the fire out of the HEB produce section



Alan Finke—35 Yrs. of Service



Greg "Tank" Nienstedt Fireman of the Year



City Manager Terry Roberts



Christmas Party



FD kids having fun!



Honoring Years of Service to our FD Members



Our hardworking and devoted Ladie's Auxiliary

2011 Maifest & Christmas Lighted Parade



Future Fireman

Families enjoying the Musuem



MERRY CHRISTMAS





Fire Prevention Month



*Educating
Children*

*Safety
comes 1st!*



Honoring James Fathauer
Born 7-25-34
Passed 12-12-11



**Served 39 Years
of Service as a
Full-Time
Fire Fighter.**

Joined the BFD 10-12-54
Retired 4-30-93

