

Ripton Volunteer Fire and First Response

Activity Report	Volunteer Hours
Total emergency or assistance calls: 47	
Medical calls: 22	256.25
Fire calls: 25 (including 9 motor vehicle incidents)	766.25
Medical training	419.5
Fire training	716
Meetings	189.25
Community Service Events:	176.25
Total hours (administrative activities such as paperwork, purchasing, not included)	2,524.5
Total dollar value of volunteer hours (as average for VT)	\$44,279.73

ROSTER: 21 total. F = firefighter, FR = first responder, EMT= emergency medical technician

Officers: Chief, Erik Eriksen; Assistant Chief, Roland McGlashan (F); Captains: Ross Elliott (F), Ceredwyn Alexander (EMT)

Members: Christine Carone (F), John Fontanilles (F), Erica Goodin (F, EMT), Jay Harrington (F, FR), Marty Kulczyk (F), Brad Mathews (F), Will Mathis (F), Ed Sullivan (EMT), Eric Warren (F), Kevin Mulholland (MD), Alison Joseph (Dept. Assistant), Dorothy Gelinis and William Cole (Dispatch), Gwynneth Alexander and Sarah Miller (cadets), Justin Allen (F/Salisbury), Reid Peck (F/Weybridge)

REPORT: We gained six members: Brad Mathews, Christine Carone, John Fontanilles, cadet Sarah Miller; and from the now defunct Goshen fire department Will Mathis, and Erica Goodin. Both Will and Erica have completed firefighter I training and Erica is also an EMT. Christine and John began an EMT class in January. These additions make a big difference in dealing with everyday response and major ones such as Irene (see following report).

In January 2012 we made a major upgrade by purchasing one of the former Goshen Department's pumpers. For \$15,000 we have a second fully equipped, ready to roll pumper, with a top of the line Hale pump.

We have full chains for all vehicles except the rescue rig, which will be getting six studded snow tires.

At the Addison County Firefighters Association annual meeting our firefighters received a third place Paul Turpin Training Award for most hours of recorded training in the county. This is quite an accomplishment for a small department.

Our 2012 budget request from the town is \$500 greater than 2011. In addition to purchasing snow tires, we wish to train more, which increases vehicle fuel and supply costs, as well as the budget for classes, but keeps us prepared and better able to serve.

A few reminders: clean chimneys at least yearly, burn only dry wood, have a chimney or pipe cap, have a temperature gauge on woodstoves and pipes, and come to our annual open house in July. Also, 911 numbers should be reflective and able to be viewed from either direction.

Erik Eriksen, Chief

Ripton Volunteer Fire and First Response (continued)

2011 Vehicle & Major Equipment Inventory	
Pumper. 1986. KME/International	Ladders. 1-roof, 2-24', 1-8', 1-attic
Tanker. 2005. Freightliner	Chainsaw. Jonsered
Pumper. 1989. FMC with Hale pump	Fan, positive pressure. SuperVac
First-Response ambulance. 1998. Ford	Fan, ventilation. GE
Pump, portable. Hale HPX400	Thermal Imaging Camera. Cairns Viper
Pump, portable. Hale HP300	Multi-gas Detector & calibration kit. Orion
Portable pond. 1,000 gallon	Air pump. Porter Cable
Portable pond. 2,000 gallon	Defibrillator. Medtronic Lifepak 500 (2)
Generator & light, portable. Honda	Defibrillator. Medtronic Lifepak 1000 (2)
Generator, station. Honda	Defibrillator. Laerdal Heartstart
Generator, portable. Generac	

Assets December 31, 2011	
Vehicle Replacement Fund	30,020.93
Checking	(605.84)
Savings	10,418.27
	Total Assets: \$39,833.36

RVFD Expenditures 2011 & Proposed Budget 2012				
EXPENSES	Budget 2011	Actual 2011	Variance	Budget 2012
Community Service	200.00	56.52	(143.48)	200.00
Gear/Tools/Equipment	6,000.00	4,102.82	(1,897.18)	5,000.00
Vehicle Repair/Maintenance/Fuel	2,000.00	4,556.42	2,556.42	6,000.00
Administration/Insurance/Dues	6,000.00	4,919.00	(1,081.00)	6,000.00
Training	1,800.00	2,690.26	890.26	3,000.00
Dispatch/Phone/Computer	2,400.00	2,460.88	60.88	2,500.00
Electricity	1,100.00	1,248.66	148.66	1,300.00
Heat	3,200.00	3,078.19	(121.81)	3,100.00
Furnishing & Equipment	2,000.00	64.19	(1,935.81)	100.00
Maintenance & Supplies	500.00	320.49	(179.51)	350.00
Hydrant Plowing	750.00	750.00	0.00	750.00
Vehicle Replacement Fund	5,500.00	5,500.00	0.00	5,500.00
TOTAL	31,450.00	29,747.43	(1,702.57)	33,800.00
INCOME				
Carryover from previous year	6.62	6.62	0.00	1,702.57
Donations	338.00	728.20	390.20	482.00
Interest	5.38	15.39	10.01	15.43
Town Payment	31,100.00	31,100.00	0.00	31,600.00
TOTAL	31,450.00	31,850.21	400.21	33,800.00

Ripton Volunteer Fire and First Response (continued)

Hurricane Irene: Lessons Learned

On Sunday, August 28, 2011, Hurricane Irene brought a disaster of unprecedented scale to the state of Vermont. Fortunately Ripton was spared much of the damage that our neighbors sustained. It's useful after every disaster to analyze the event in order to be better prepared for the next crisis.

Although we were cut off for several hours there were no medical emergencies or accidents. Much of the credit for this can go to Riptonites' preparedness for this weather event. It appeared that most people took the various weather warnings seriously and prepared as if for a blizzard--including staying indoors and off the roads.

From about two o'clock in the afternoon on Sunday, August 28, the fire station was staffed when reports started coming in regarding parts of Route 125 that were undermined or under water, as well as part of Lincoln Road north of Lucky Spring being under water.

Several members of the fire department surveyed the roads, closing them as needed and removing hazards such as broken trees. By five o'clock in the evening, Hancock was reporting that their end of 125 was closed and 100 was rapidly becoming impassable. At six o'clock we received a report that Valley Rescue was unable to leave their station due to the flood waters surrounding them.

We reported to the state and Middlebury Ambulance that Route 125 was closed and that North Branch should be used as an alternate route. Shortly thereafter, MVAA informed us that they would be unable to provide ambulance coverage as East Middlebury was flooding. We were advised that road access through Goshen was gone and road access through Lincoln was uncertain, although we did alert Bristol Rescue that we might have to call on them as mutual aid.

At this point, like many of our neighboring communities, we were cut off from ground transportation. Given that this situation would continue for an indeterminate amount of time, we had a discussion to inventory our assets. We had Ripton's two EMTs on the mountain who can take care of most minor complaints. We listed the medical practitioners who might be in town, calling to alert Kevin Mulholland and Anza Armstrong that they might be needed if a severe illness or injury happened.

At about seven PM we closed up the fire station.

At ten o'clock that evening we were called to pump water out of a basement on Route 125. Several firefighters stayed overnight to keep an eye on the pump as well as the rising river water. Approximately fifteen minutes later we were toned out to check on a downed power line that had caught fire.

At seven thirty the next morning, we were again toned out, this time to pump out two other basements next to the first one.

At this point, phone service was lost in much of the town, as well as power. In light of this, we decided that the fire station should remain staffed during the day, to serve as an information center.

Fortunately, the flooding in East Middlebury had receded and road access was restored via North Branch Road.

Part of our ongoing work that day was keeping an eye on the roads for further hazards, as some of the creeks had not yet crested.

Power was restored to most of the town that day as well as phone service. This was largely because CVPS repair crews were able to get to the downed lines.

Ripton Volunteer Fire and First Response (continued)

Hurricane Irene: Lessons Learned

Of course, we all know that neighboring communities did not fare so well, losing power, communication and road access for days, if not weeks.

In the many discussions with emergency personnel around the state since Irene, it becomes clear that our experience was typical of experiences. Town disaster plans were most reliable in the initial disaster response. State disaster management was overstretched due to the widespread nature of this disaster and was unable to provide aid to the most hard hit towns for several days.

This is very much an example of possible future disasters. As we have seen from watching disasters in other states, especially in those cases where the disaster is widespread, state and federal aid is secondary to local response. It can be expected that in a large event like Irene, it will take several days to several weeks for outside help to arrive in a town.

In Vermont's experience with Irene, those towns with strong disaster plans have coped much better than towns without, even taking into account severity of damage.

Although a department, a town or a family cannot plan for the specifics of an emergency, general planning can and should be done in advance to address the general needs during an event such as Irene.

The vital point to take into account is that Ripton is vulnerable to being cut off from ground transportation. We are accustomed, of course, to this possibility as being snowed in is a fairly typical wintertime event. In 2008, both Route 125 and North Branch were damaged by flooding.

Most residents are prepared for storms by keeping enough food in the house for several days during winter, and in most cases this is adequate. However, in an emergency that cuts us off, it's likely that residents will run out of food, as was seen in towns such as Hancock and Rochester.

In discussion at various meetings of county and state disaster managers, it was presented that towns should have a knowledge of where food stocks may be supplied internally. Suggestions, such as local farms needing to get rid of crops before they spoiled, or local schools who would have large stocks of food on hand, were mentioned. This should be incorporated into town disaster planning, as should water and fuel needs. Distribution plans should be discussed as the town will be responsible for any initial response.

In Ripton, the elementary school is designated as a possible temporary shelter for town residents that may lose use of their homes due to damage or inaccessibility.

The community house could be used as another shelter, or a food distribution point. Food can be delivered from outside via helicopter or truck, but it is left up to localities to actually deliver it.

One of the most important services to provide is communication. Before a disaster, the town should have a plan for managing information. Several central sites should be identified as places where information and response can be coordinated.

Ripton currently has fairly extensive and coherent disaster plans, which made us that much more resilient. The take-aways from Irene are that local resident response will be what is most efficacious in meeting needs after disasters. Needs will vary of course, depending on type of disaster, but local towns would be wise to plan for instances where outside help is days to weeks away.

Contributed by Ceredwyn Alexander