



# BETHEL PARK VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY

## 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

A compilation of the response and accomplishments of some of the finest men and women who serve the Municipality of Bethel Park.

Dave Gerber  
Fire Chief



## BETHEL PARK VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY

5213 BRIGHTWOOD ROAD • BETHEL PARK, PENNSYLVANIA 15102

### Message from the Fire Chief of Bethel Park



It is with great pride and honor that I am able to present to you the Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company 2020 Annual Fire Report. The Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company has had another successful year in keeping the residents of Bethel Park safe. This year was one that none of us had ever experienced and the members of the Fire Company responded admirably to ensure our members, the public, and our friends and families were always protected and safe during the pandemic.

The Fire Company will meet many great challenges in the near future. We will have to address the slowly aging volunteer work force of our Fire Company by recruiting and retaining new firefighters. We are also looking to update our aging radios and self-contained breathing apparatus. These challenges along with keeping up with all of the different aspects of today's emergency services will keep our all volunteer Fire Company very busy.

The Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company is very active and effective. This is possible because of the cooperation we receive from the Mayor, Municipal Council, and Municipal Manager's office, Bethel Park Police, Bethel Park Public Works, other Municipal Departments, Tri-Community South EMS and many other governmental agencies. The accomplishments of the Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company in 2020 were only possible through the ongoing dedication of each and every member and their commitment to our community. It is to each of them that I extend my deepest appreciation.

Sincerely,

*David Gerber*

David Gerber

Fire Chief

Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company

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**BETHEL PARK  
VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY  
MISSION STATEMENT**

Believing it to be our duty to aid in the protection of the lives and property of our fellow citizens from the ravages of fire, and believing that our exertions to that end can be best directed and accomplished by organized and purposeful effort, we therefore accept and subscribe to the organization of the BETHEL PARK VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY, for the purpose of selecting capable leaders, establishing rules, establishing proper training, and establishing a cohesive organization founded upon esprit de corps providing efforts to give our community a successful and efficient organization for fire fighting and any other emergencies. To this end, it is our duty to assist and advance the interests of the Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company.

## OVERVIEW

The Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company is a 100% volunteer fire company providing around the clock services to the community. Since we are volunteer, none of our stations are staffed and we rely on available members to respond to the station when notified.

**Services We Provide:**

- Fire Suppression
- Vehicle Rescue Services
- Specialized Rescue Services
- Hazardous Materials Operations
- Storm Management Services
- Public Education
- Fire Inspections

<b>Area Protected:</b>	12 sq miles
<b>Population Protected:</b>	33,500
<b>Number of Stations:</b>	3
<b>ISO Classification:</b>	4

**Apparatus**

Engines	3
Aerial Trucks	2
Rescue Pumpers	1
Utility Vehicles	3
Equipment Trailers	1
Command Vehicles	2

**How we Respond:**

1. A call is placed to either 911 or 412-833-2000 which is the BP Police Emergency Dispatch center. Even if you call 911, you will be transferred to the BP Police dispatch so it is much more efficient to call them directly at 412-833-2000 if you need emergency services in BP.
  
2. Once the BP Police dispatcher determines you need our fire company to respond, they activate our pagers and provide a voice message telling us the location and nature of the emergency. They also send out a notification to our phones via an application called Active 911. Active 911 allows responders to indicate to what station they are responding to so our officers know if we have enough responders or if we need to call for more assistance. This program also provides us with a map of the address and the hydrants nearby.
  
3. After we receive notification, any available volunteers will begin to respond. Our Chief Officers may respond to the scene while other Line Officers and firefighters will respond to the station. Depending on the severity of the emergency, some volunteers may use blue courtesy lights in their vehicles to ask other cars to move to the side so they can pass and get to the station quicker.
  
4. Once at the station, our firefighters will put on their gear, get in the trucks, and respond to the scene. We won't always use the lights and sirens, it just depends on the severity of the emergency.

## PERSONNEL

### OPERATIONS BRANCH

#### Fire Chief

David Gerber

#### Deputy Chief

Russ Beeson

#### Assistant Chief

Rob Uselman

#### Captains

Thomas Kelton – Captain-1

Jon Mark – Captain-2

#### Lieutenants

Mike Innocenti – Lieutenant-1

Brian Allsopp – Lieutenant-2

Joe Witkowski – Lieutenant-3

#### Fire Police Officers

#### Lieutenants

Al Wright

Brian Wright

### EXECUTIVE BRANCH

#### President

Stephen McGough

#### Vice President

Bob Clark

#### Treasurer

William Wiles

#### Financial Secretary

Jeff Ferencic

#### Recording Secretary

Ed Schmidt

#### Board of Directors

Adam Betzler

Joe Hartung

David Henney

Dean Huwe

Brent Kimberland

James Thomas

**Fire Fighters**

Joseph Aubele  
Steven Aubele  
Mark Breier  
Joseph Campion  
Henry Capozzi  
David DeLallo  
Ryan DeLuca

David Fair  
Matt Hirlehey  
Braden Karolak  
John Kuchma  
AJ Mastascusa  
CJ Meixner  
Christopher O’Sullivan

Eva Parker  
Mike Pauline  
Joshua Pohodich  
Mark Stabryla  
Brady Stallings  
Luke Valecko  
Lee Zamborsky

**Life Members**

William Allsopp  
David Aubele  
Dante Bongiorno  
David Britton  
Robert Brown  
Joseph Certo  
Robert Clark  
Michael Dvorsky

Edwin Galambas  
Robert Galambas  
Jeffrey Gothe  
Joseph Heyl  
Kevin Kubala  
Roger McCuean  
Robert McFeathers  
Ronald McKenna

Daniel Moore  
Gregory Pohodich  
Jeffrey Pritchard  
James Sell Sr.  
Phillip Steigner  
Bruce Tracy  
Guerrino Virgili

**Fire Police**

Barry DeLuca



## 2020 DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

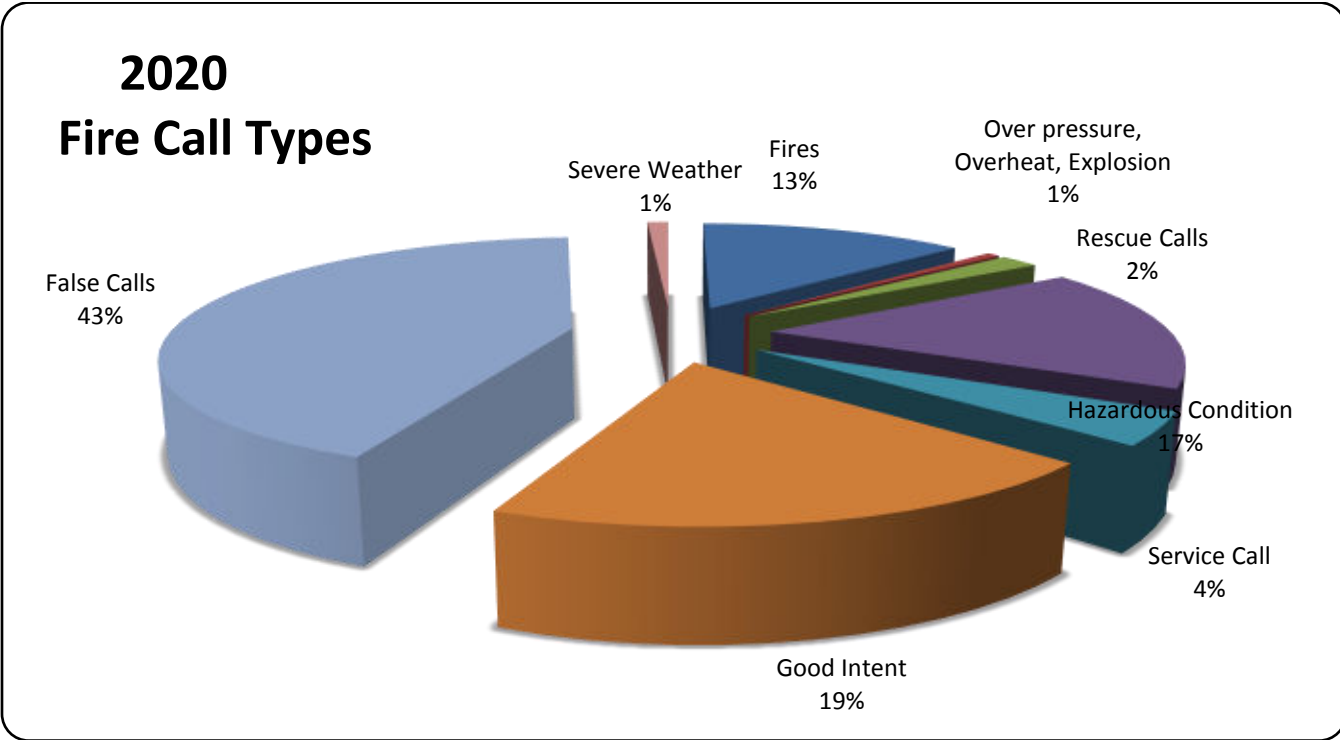
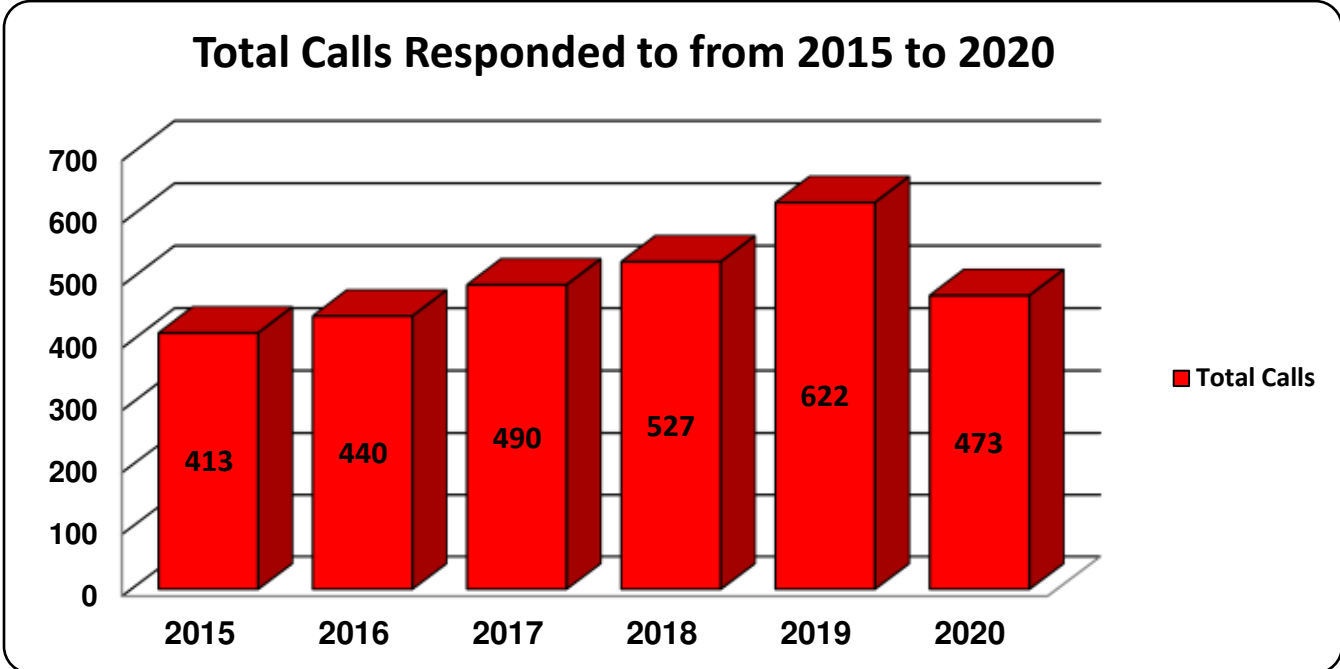
- The Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company experienced no fire fatalities in 2020.
- We received a federal grant from the Fire Fighters Assistance Program through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for \$31,500 to purchase supplies for cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting of equipment and property or other expenses incurred to prevent the spread of communicable illnesses. This allowed us to purchase several different levels of masks and provide each firefighter their own. We were also able to purchase much needed equipment to sanitize and disinfect our stations, apparatus, and equipment.
- While we couldn't host our usual community and fire prevention events, we did participate in dozens of community parades to celebrate holidays and birthdays.
- We researched and trialed several different portable radios for the planned replacement in 2021. Currently our portable radios have had limited range and communication issues when we are operating in certain areas within the municipality as well as within certain structures.

## 2021 DEPARTMENT GOALS

- Replace the portable radios department wide to ensure consistent and reliable communications within all structures in Bethel Park.
- Replace 2 obsolete Thermal Imaging Cameras (TIC). These cameras allow us to search for heat signatures through smoke and darkness. Two of our TIC's have come to the end of their life and are unable to be repaired.
- Research new improvements in Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) for the planned replacement in 2022. Our current SCBA are going to be 15 years old and have reached the end of their anticipated life.
- Focus on recruitment and retention to help increase our membership of active firefighters to a healthier level.

### 2020 STATISTICS

The Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company responded to 473 calls in 2020.





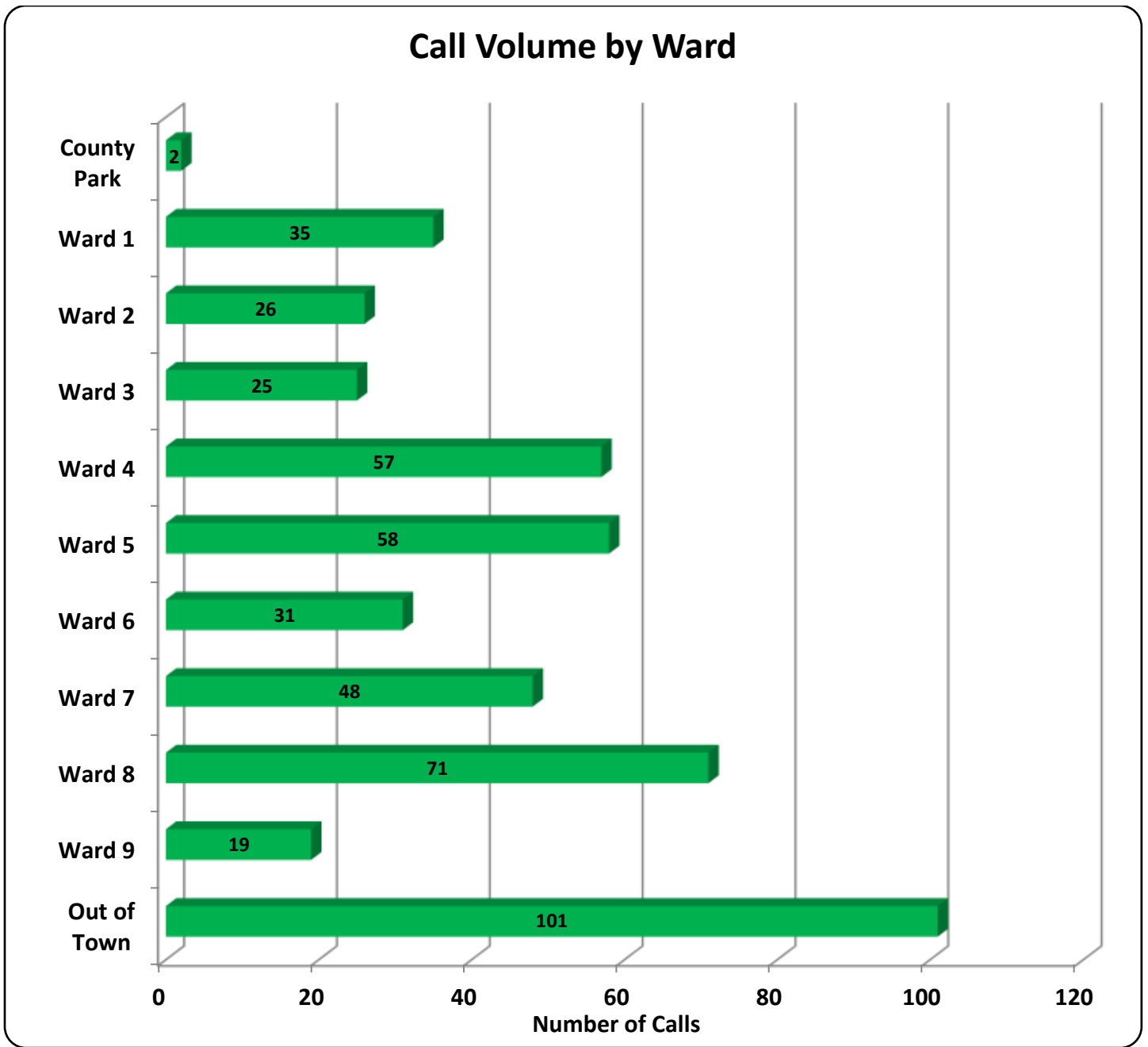
### Calls by Nature of Incident for 2020

<b>100 - Fires</b>		<b>63 Total</b>
Building Fire		40
Cooking fire, confined to container		6
Trash or rubbish fire, contained		1
Forest, woods or wildland fire		2
Brush or brush-and-grass mixture fire		8
Grass fire		1
Outside rubbish, trash or waste fire		1
Construction or demolition landfill fire		1
Dumpster or other outside trash receptacle fire		3
<b>200 – Overpressure, Rupture, Explosion, Overheat (No Fire)</b>		<b>3 Total</b>
Overpressure rupture, explosion, overheat, other		0
Overpressure rupture from steam (no ensuing fire)		0
Overpressure rupture from air or gas (no ensuing fire). Excludes steam or water vapor.		0
Overpressure rupture from chemical reaction (no ensuing fire)		0
Explosion (no fire)		0
Excessive heat, scorch burns with no ignition		3
<b>300 - Rescue / Medical Call</b>		<b>9 Total</b>
Rescue, emergency medical service (EMS) incident, other		0
Medical assist, assist EMS crew		1
Motor vehicle accident with no injuries		1
Lock-In		0
Search for lost person		1
Extrication, rescue		5
Water and ice-related rescue		0
Trench/below-grade rescue		1
Rescue or EMS standby		0
<b>400 - Hazardous Condition</b>		<b>79 Total</b>
Hazardous condition, other		1
Combustible/flammable spills and leaks		1
Gas leak (natural gas or LPG)		29
Chemical spill or leak		2
Electrical wiring/equipment problem		4
Carbon monoxide incident		6
Overheated motor		3
Breakdown of light ballast		1
Arcing, shorted electrical equipment		8
Building or structure weakened or collapsed		3
Vehicle accident, general cleanup		9
Power line down		12

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### Calls by Nature of Incident for 2020

<b>500 - Service Calls</b>		<b>20 Total</b>
	Service call, other	0
	Lock-out	1
	Water problem	1
	Water evacuation	2
	Water or steam leak	3
	Smoke, odor problem	3
	Public service assistance	2
	Assist police or other governmental agency	8
<b>600 - Good Intent Calls</b>		<b>92 Total</b>
	Good intent call, other	2
	Dispatched and canceled en route	67
	Wrong location, no emergency found	5
	Smoke scare, odor of smoke	10
	Steam, vapor, fog, or dust thought to be smoke	1
	Smoke from barbecue, tar kettle	1
	Haz-Mat release investigation w/no Haz-Mat found	6
<b>700 - False Calls</b>		<b>202 Total</b>
	False alarm and false call, other	3
	Malicious, mischievous false alarm	2
	Municipal alarm system, malicious false alarm	2
	Central station, malicious false alarm	2
	System or detector malfunction. Includes improper performance of fire alarm system that is not a result of a proper system response to environmental stimuli such as smoke or high heat conditions.	82
	Unintentional system or detector operation (no fire). Includes tripping an interior device accidentally.	105
	Carbon monoxide detector activation, no CO	6
<b>800 - Severe Weather &amp; Natural Disasters</b>		<b>5 Total</b>
	Flood assessment	1
	Wind storm, tornado/hurricane assessment	3
	Lightning strike (no fire)	1
<b>900 - Special Incident Type</b>		<b>0 Total</b>
	Special Type of Incident	0
	Citizen Complaint	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>473</b>



## RESPONSE STATISTICS

- **Calls:** In 2020 the Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company responded to 473 incidents ranging from false alarms to structure fires.
- **Response Times:** In 2020 the Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company's average response time for the first unit on scene in Bethel Park was 7:42. This average includes non-emergency responses which take longer. The Fire Company spent an average of 37:45 on scene.
- **Personnel:** In 2020 the Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company had an average of 14 personnel respond per call.
- **Structure Fires:** The Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company responded to 40 structure fires in 2020. A structure fire is an incident where there is actually some type of fire at that address.
- **Response Area:** The Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company has many mutual aid agreements with local departments. When necessary, we will respond into other communities to provide additional manpower and support for larger incidents. These same departments will often respond into Bethel Park to provide the same level of assistance to us when needed. In 2020 we responded to a total of 101 calls in 9 different communities outside of Bethel Park.



## FIRE PREVENTION & PUBLIC EDUCATION

### Fire Prevention

In 2020 the BPVFC Fire Prevention Committee faced many challenges trying to offer activities. Our station was closed to the public due to the pandemic, and many other locations where we typically offer fire prevention presentations had limitations as well. While local schools, day care centers, businesses and senior living facilities were off limits for most in-person presentations, we were able to offer a few virtual presentations instead.

### Community Outreach

This year we participated in dozens of parades for organizations and individuals. Some of these parades were for holidays, birthdays, and retirements. While we wish we were able to do more events this year, these parades did provide a high level of enjoyment for not only the community but for us as well. We appreciated all of the support and encouragement we received.

### Open House

The Fire Company usually hosts an annual open house in October. This year's event was obviously cancelled due to the pandemic. During the open house we usually have demonstrations, displays, and activities for adults and children. At this point in time we are very optimistic about being able to host an open house in October of 2021.



## TRAINING

The Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company has members that are trained in many different aspects of fire fighting and rescue specialties. The BPVFC has members trained in firefighting, trench rescue, aircraft crash rescue and structural collapse. We have members that are on the County Hazardous Materials Team, members that are certified as EMT's and Paramedics, along with members that are certified Vehicle Rescue Technicians. Many of our members are Pro Board Certified at the Fire Fighter I & II Level.

The Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company holds training drills on Monday evenings. Along with this training the members of the Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company are encouraged to go to state-sponsored training classes at the numerous fire training academies throughout the state and beyond. In 2020 the Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company members participated in classroom and hands-on training totaling 1,775 man hours.



## Administration

The Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company is a large organization and has a lot of behind the scenes work being done every day. In 2020 our volunteers contributed over 2,100 total man hours to running the fire company. These hours are in addition to the hours spent training and responding to fires. Some of these tasks include fundraising, recruitment, fire reports, grant writing, finances, equipment maintenance, and all of the paperwork that comes with any large organization.

## Community Partners

The Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company would like to thank the following organizations for their ongoing support and partnership to ensure the best possible fire protection available for the citizens of Bethel Park

Bethel Park Municipality

Bethel Park Police

Bethel Park Community Foundation

Tri-Community South EMS

Bethel Park Municipal Council

Citizens and Business owners of Bethel Park

Bethel Park Public Works

Bethel Park School District

South Hills Area Council of Governments

The Salvation Army

Mutual Aid Fire Departments

American Red Cross



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