



# BETHEL PARK VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY

## 2021 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 2021 Annual Fire Report. The Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company has had yet another successful year in keeping the residents of Bethel Park safe. As the pandemic comes to an end, 2021 saw our call volume increase and the members of the Fire Company responded admirably to ensure our community and its residents were taken care of.

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 high-rise operation equipment as well as putting into service our new self-contained breathing apparatus. This year we will also be having building improvements made to Station 3 on Clifton Road. These challenges, along with keeping up with all 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, 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 2021 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

**Area Protected:** 12 sq miles

**Population Protected:** 33,500

**Number of Stations:** 3

**ISO Classification:** 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

Adam Betzler – Lieutenant-2

Steve McGough – Lieutenant-3

### Fire Police Officers

#### Captain

Al Wright

#### Lieutenant

Brian Wright

### EXECUTIVE BRANCH

#### President

Brent Kimberland (L)

#### Vice President

Bob Clark (L)

#### Treasurer

William Wiles (L)

#### Financial Secretary

Jeff Ferencic (L)

#### Recording Secretary

Ed Schmidt

#### Board of Directors

Brian Allsopp (L)

Mark Breier

Joe Hartung

David Henney (L)

Dean Huwe

Mark Stabryla

The Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company is a 100% volunteer organization. Every December we have elections for our line officers, executive officers, and board of directors. All line officer positions, president, vice president, and secretary are one-year terms. Our financial positions and board of director positions are longer terms to help with continuity of business. All the line officer positions have some qualification requirements such as ensuring you attended a certain percentage of calls and drills in the previous year. Members can self-nominate if eligible and all regular and life members are able to vote at the election.

(L) indicates Life Member

**Regular Members**

Joseph Aubele  
Joseph Campion  
Henry Capozzi  
Barry DeLuca  
David DeLallo  
David Fair

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

Eva Parker  
Mike Pauline  
Joshua Pohodich  
Luke Valecko  
Joe Witkowski

**Life Members**

William Allsopp  
David Aubele  
Dante Bongiorno  
David Britton  
Robert Brown  
Joseph Certo  
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  
Jim Thomas  
Bruce Tracy  
Guerrino Virgili

**Probationary Members**

Randon Allsopp  
Ashley Hitz

CJ Layne  
Jared Lukens

Brady Stallings  
Eric Yarina



## 2021 DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- The Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company experienced no fire fatalities in 2021.
- While we couldn't host our usual Open House, we did participate in dozens of community and fire prevention events.
- Took delivery, trained on, and put into service new portable radios for all of the department vehicles and officers. These radios ensure consistent and reliable communications within all structures in Bethel Park.
- Installed dash cameras in all department vehicles.
- Replaced 2 obsolete Thermal Imaging Cameras (TIC). These cameras allow us to search for heat signatures through walls, smoke, and darkness.

## 2022 DEPARTMENT GOALS

- Take delivery, provide training on, and put into service new Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA). These will replace our current SCBA which are 15 years old and have reached the end of their anticipated life. This was at a cost of over \$400,000 which was paid for in part by donations from residents in our annual fund drive mailer.
- Research and replace our hose used to fight fires in commercial and high-rise structures.
- Work with the municipality on completing building improvements and renovations to Station 3 on Clifton Road.
- Focus on recruitment and retention to help increase our membership of active firefighters to a healthier level.
- Re-design and development of our website to improve our flow of information to the residents of Bethel Park.
- Begin planning and researching specifications to replace Engine 2 which is at Station 2 on Milford Road. This apparatus is now 25 years old and due to be replaced in lines with NFPA standards and our internal apparatus replacement plan. This will come with an estimated cost of near \$600,000 which will be funded partly by donations from this year's annual fund drive mailer.

## 2021 ISO REVIEW

The Municipality of Bethel Park underwent a review of its Insurance Services Office (ISO) Public Protection Classification System (PPC) in the spring of 2021. The results of this review were received back in July and the results were good. We are pleased to tell the residents of Bethel Park that the Municipality's ISO PPC rating has been stayed at a PPC-Class 4 but is nearing closer to changing to a PPC-Class 3.

ISO is an advisory organization that provides statistical and informational data to insurance companies nationwide. They rate fire districts across the United States on a scale from one to ten in terms of fire safety. Your insurance company uses this information to determine your homeowner's insurance premium. The lower the rating the rating is, typically the lower the insurance premium will be for the house.

ISO's rating scale is based on three factors. Fire alarm and communications systems accounts for 10% of the rating. The Fire Department accounts for 50% of the rating and Water Supply accounts for 40% of the rating.

In 1994 when the Municipality underwent a review, the Municipality's PPC rating was a PPC-Class 5 with a total credit score of 53.41%. A review for 2012 resulted in a total credit score of 61.68%, changing the Municipality's rating to a PPC-Class 4. In 2021 we resulted in a total credit score of 68.59%.

The Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company has worked hard over the past several years to prepare for this ISO Review in hopes that we could improve the Community's PPC rating. The Members of the Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company are 100% all Volunteer and are already looking to for ways to improve our rating to possibly achieve a PPC-Class 3 rating at our next review. This will not only take the work of the Fire Company, but also the Bethel Park Police Dispatch Center, and the Municipality's water systems.

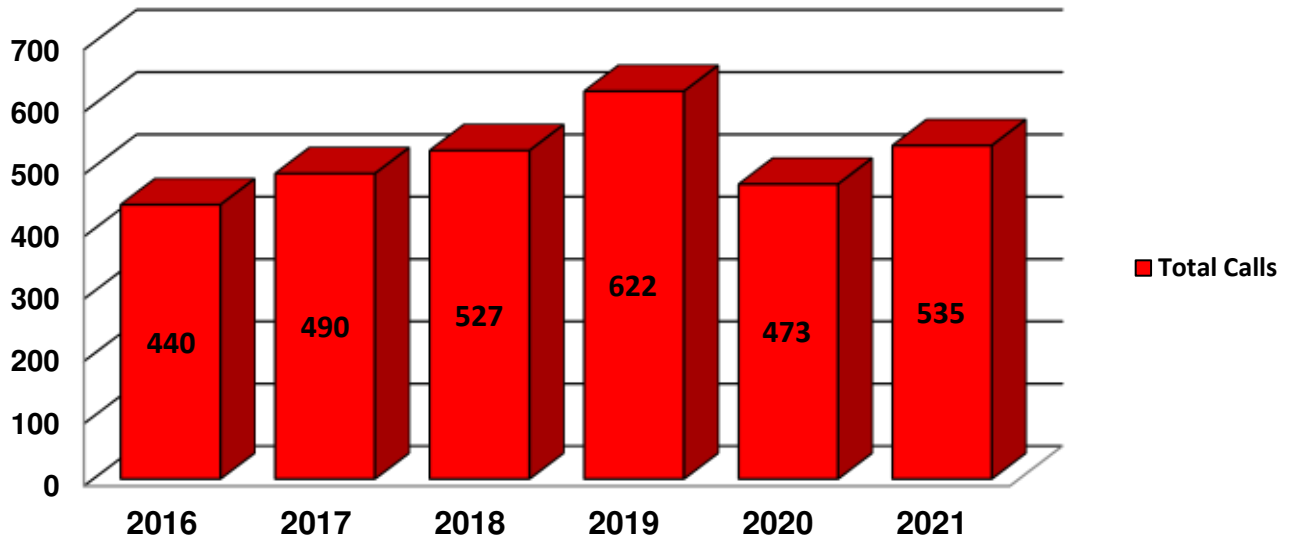




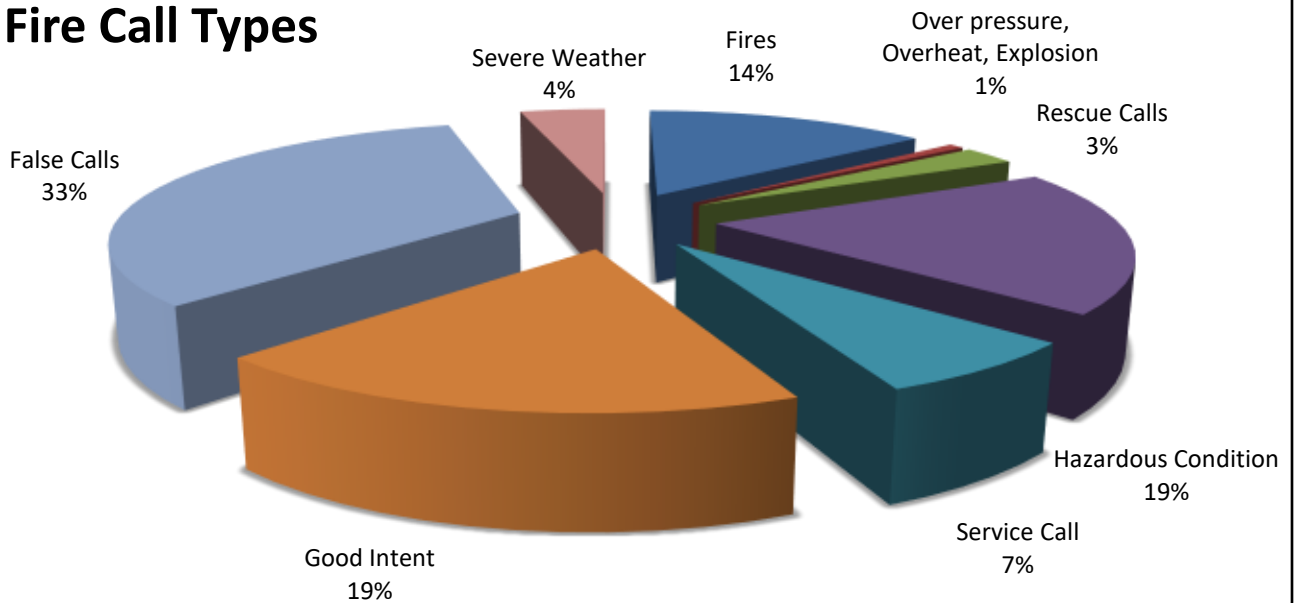
### 2021 STATISTICS

The Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company responded to 535 calls in 2021.

#### Total Calls Responded to from 2016 to 2021



#### 2021 Fire Call Types



### Calls by Nature of Incident for 2021

<b>Fires</b>		<b>76 Total</b>
	Fire, other type	2
	Building Fire	42
	Fires in structure other than in a building	3
	Cooking fire, confined to container	6
	Chimney or flue fire, confined to chimney or flue	3
	Trash or rubbish fire, contained	1
	Vehicle Fire	4
	Rail vehicle fire	1
	Forest, woods or wildland fire	4
	Brush or brush-and-grass mixture fire	5
	Special outside fire	2
	Outside equipment fire	3
<b>Overpressure, Rupture, Explosion, Overheat (No Fire)</b>		<b>4 Total</b>
	Overpressure rupture, explosion, overheat, other	1
	Air or gas rupture of pressure or process vessel	1
	Excessive heat, scorch burns with no ignition	2
<b>Rescue / Medical Call</b>		<b>14 Total</b>
	Motor vehicle accident with injuries	2
	Motor vehicle accident with no injuries	4
	Search for person	1
	Extrication, rescue	4
	Removal of victim from stalled elevator	3
<b>Hazardous Condition</b>		<b>103 Total</b>
	Hazardous condition, other	2
	Combustible/flammable spills and leaks	5
	Gas leak (natural gas or LPG)	30
	Chemical spill or leak	3
	Electrical wiring/equipment problem	12
	Carbon monoxide incident	7
	Overheated motor	2
	Arcing, shorted electrical equipment	19
	Vehicle accident, general cleanup	5
	Power line down	18

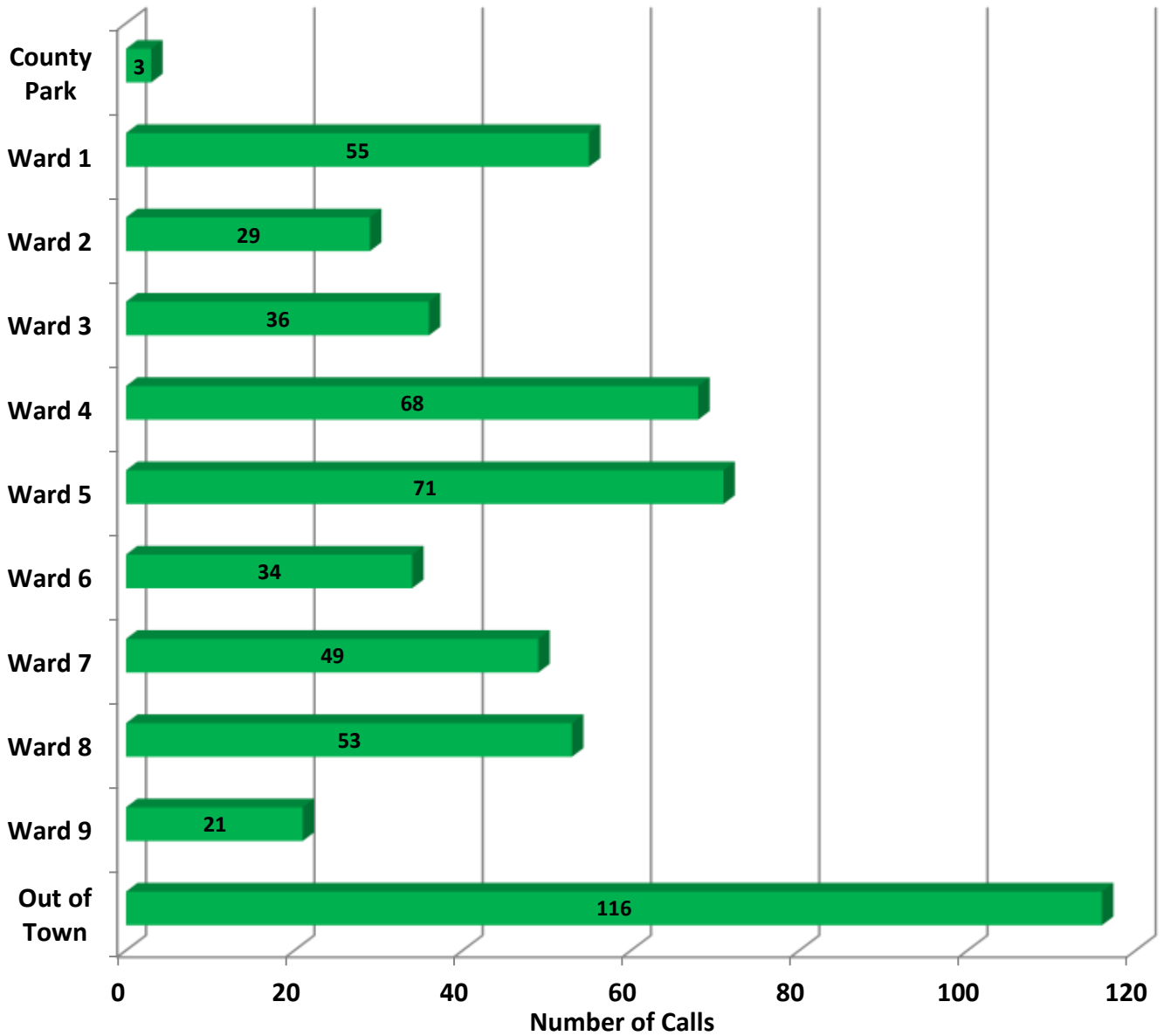
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## Calls by Nature of Incident for 2020

<b>Service Calls</b>		<b>37 Total</b>
Lock-out		1
Water problem		3
Water evacuation		1
Water or steam leak		2
Smoke, odor problem		8
Public service assistance		4
Assist police or other governmental agency		18
<b>Good Intent Calls</b>		<b>99 Total</b>
Good intent call, other		7
Dispatched and canceled en route		70
Wrong location, no emergency found		3
Smoke scare, odor of smoke		16
Steam, vapor, fog, or dust thought to be smoke		2
Haz-Mat release investigation w/no Haz-Mat found		1
<b>False Calls</b>		<b>179 Total</b>
False alarm and false call, other		5
Malicious, mischievous false alarm		1
Municipal alarm system, malicious false alarm		1
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.		89
Unintentional system or detector operation (no fire). Includes tripping an interior device accidentally.		74
Carbon monoxide detector activation, no CO		7
<b>Severe Weather &amp; Natural Disasters</b>		<b>23 Total</b>
Severe weather or natural disaster, other		3
Flood assessment		15
Wind storm, tornado/hurricane assessment		3
Lightning strike (no fire)		2
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>535</b>



### Call Volume by Ward



## RESPONSE STATISTICS

- **Calls:** In 2021 the Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company responded to 535 incidents ranging from false alarms to structure fires.
- **Response Times:** In 2021 the Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company's average response time for the first unit on scene in Bethel Park was 7 minutes and 8 seconds. This average includes non-emergency responses which take longer. The Fire Company spent an average of 39 minutes on scene.
- **Personnel:** In 2021 the Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company had an average of 11 personnel respond per call. This is down from the average of 14 personnel responding during 2020. During the daytime hours this number is drastically lower as the majority of our members are working.
- **Structure Fires:** The Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company responded to 45 structure fires in 2021. 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 2021 we responded to a total of 116 calls in 9 different communities outside of Bethel Park.



## FIRE PREVENTION & PUBLIC EDUCATION

### Fire Prevention

In 2021 the BPVFC Fire Prevention Committee faced many challenges trying to offer activities. For part of the year, 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 many locations were unable to open their doors for in person presentations, we were able to participate in some limited capacities and look forward to providing many more fire prevention activities during 2022.

### Community Outreach

This year we participated in dozens of parades and visits to several outdoor events at different organizations. One of the highlights this year were participating in the 9/11 South Park Stair Climb, National Night Out, and BP Community Day. We are always looking for opportunities to educate the public on what our organization does and what some of our needs are. We also 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 unfortunately cancelled due to the pandemic and staffing concerns. 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 2022.



## TRAINING

The Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company has members that are trained in many different aspects of firefighting 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, 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 2021 the Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company members participated in classroom and hands-on training totaling over 2,000 combined 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 2021 our volunteers contributed over 2,500 combined 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.

## FINANCES and FUNDRAISING

We are grateful for the stability the municipal fire levy provides, which pays for the upkeep of our three stations. However, it is your donations that help pay for the operating expenses of providing emergency services to Bethel Park. Donations pay for everything inside of these stations: the purchase and maintenance of vehicles, protective gear, masks and air cylinders, firefighting and rescue tools, plus the training and classes needed to use all of these items. Simply put, without your support we could not afford the tools and equipment needed to deliver the quality of fire protection you have grown to expect. Running any large organization such as ours, also has the usual expenses such as IT equipment, administrative supplies, and insurance.

The Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company would like to acknowledge that this past year has been incredibly difficult and challenging. With that thought in mind, the members of the Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company would like to extend our sincere appreciation for your support over this past year. As your neighbors, we know that many of you have been greatly affected by the pandemic, some more than others. The fact that you have given financially to support your 100% volunteer fire company in spite of your personal challenges makes us appreciate you even more!





## 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 Municipal Council

Tri-Community South EMS

Bethel Park Public Works

Citizens and Business owners of Bethel Park

Bethel Park Community Foundation

Bethel Park School District

South Hills Area Council of Governments

The Salvation Army

Mutual Aid Fire Departments

American Red Cross



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