

Lemont Fire Protection District Annual Report 2024

LEMONT FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT INTEGRITY HONOR DEDICATION

2024



Mission Statement

The mission of the Lemont Fire Protection District is to provide the highest level of professional service to all within our community.



Integrity through Professionalism

Honor with Compassion

Dedication to Community

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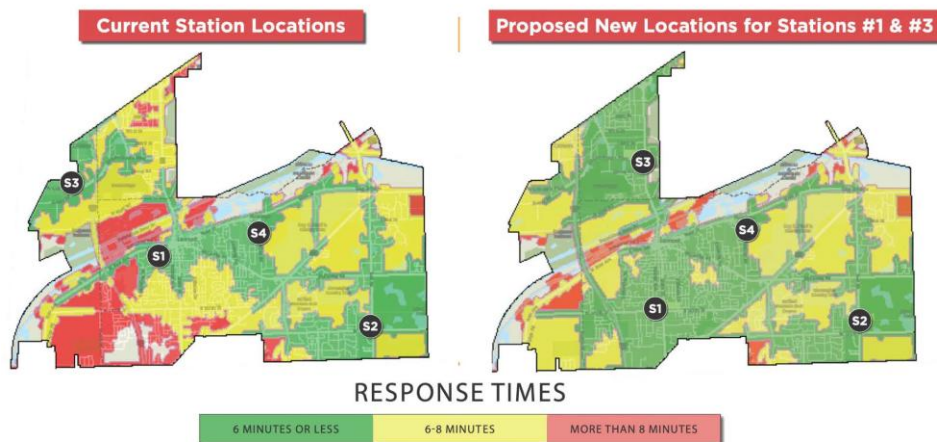
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Message from the Fire Chief

2024 was a very exciting year for the Lemont Fire Protection District. The Board of Trustees approved a community engagement program on December 12, 2023. This program invited community members to identify challenges and opportunities facing the district, with a focus on assessing the potential relocation of fire stations to improve emergency response times and overall operation efficiency.

The community engagement program became known as the Minutes Matter team and met several times in early 2024. They organized several open house events at the fire stations and conducted surveys to seek public input on the issues facing the Lemont Fire Protection District. The Minutes Matter team presented their final report to the Board of Trustees on June 19, 2024. The team recommended that the Board of Trustees provide residents with the opportunity to vote on a \$46,195,000 bond referendum on the November 2024 ballot.

Response Times: Current Vs New



The referendum passed with 61.22% voter support. The bond issue will fund facility improvements for the Lemont Fire Protection District, addressing critical safety, response, and operational needs throughout the district.

We thank the residents for voting on the proposal. Passage of this measure will allow us to continue serving the community with pride by improving response times and ensuring our facilities are equipped to meet the district's growing safety needs.

Daniel J. Tasso

Fire Chief – Administrator

Lemont Fire Protection District

District overview

Protecting Our Community Since 1886

For over a century, the Lemont Fire Protection District has been at the forefront of safety and service. Originally founded as the Volunteer Fire Department of the Village of Lemont on February 10, 1886, our mission has remained unwavering: to provide the highest level of professional service to all within our community with integrity, honor, and dedication. Today, our highly trained professionals provide fire suppression, prevention, emergency medical services (EMS), and hazardous materials response to a thriving community of approximately 32,000 residents, employees, and visitors. Covering 26.4 square miles, we proudly serve the Village of Lemont, Lemont Township, and portions of Darien, Palos Park, and Woodridge, along with unincorporated areas across Cook, DuPage, and Will Counties.

With a team of 54 sworn firefighters and officers, we deliver round-the-clock emergency response and operate out of four fire stations. Our crews cross-staff three engines, one ladder truck, and four ambulances, ensuring rapid response to any emergency. Behind the scenes, nine dedicated civilian personnel provide essential administrative and support services, keeping our operations running smoothly.

At the Lemont Fire Protection District, we don't just respond to emergencies. We stand ready, 24/7, committed to protecting and serving the community we call home.



Board of Trustees

As the corporate authority of the Lemont Fire Protection District, the Fire Board of Trustees supervise, control, regulate and manage the district. Such powers are subject to the provisions of the statutes of the State of Illinois and the ordinances of the Lemont Fire Protection District.

The Board of Trustees is comprised of five elected officials who each serve for a six-year term.



President Joseph Falese
Serving Since 2021



Treasurer Raymond Negrete
Serving Since 2021



Secretary Linda Bernacchi
Serving Since 2022



Trustee Daniel Tholotowsky
Serving Since 2022



Trustee Michael Smollen
Serving Since 2023

Board of Commissioners

The Board of Commissioners are responsible for the testing, selection, promotion, and discipline of all sworn firefighters.

Members of the Board of Commissioners are appointed to three-year terms by the Board of Trustees.



Chairman John Bernacchi
Serving Since 2008



Commissioner Jay Nickleski
Serving Since 2021



Secretary Geroge Rimbo
Serving Since 2021

Command Staff

The Fire Chief is appointed by and reports directly to the Board of Trustees. The Fire Chief is responsible for overseeing all activities of the Lemont Fire Protection District.

The Deputy Chief of Operations is appointed by the Board of Trustees and reports to the Fire Chief. This position is responsible for planning, organizing, and directing the programs and emergency operations of the fire district.

The Deputy Chief of Administration is appointed by the Board of Trustees and reports to the Fire Chief. This position is responsible for supervising and coordinating all administrative activities within the fire district.



Fire Chief - Administrator
Daniel Tasso
Serving Since 2022



Deputy Chief of Operations
Matt Peksa
Serving Since 1997



Deputy Chief of Administration
John Truffa
Serving Since 2002

Battalion Chiefs

Under the general direction of the Deputy Chief of Operations, Battalion Chiefs oversee the day-to-day operations of the four fire stations and sworn personnel for their assigned 24-hour shift.



**Battalion Chief
Richard Moses**
Serving Since 2000



**Battalion Chief
David Bettenhausen**
Serving Since 1994



**Battalion Chief
David Evers**
Serving Since 1997

Administrative and Support Staff



IT Manager
Fernando Alfonso
Serving Since 2012



B&G Manager
Steve Bacho
Serving Since 2023



Public Educator
Samantha Cole
Serving Since 2024



Mechanic
Stacey Devitt
Serving Since 2023



Admin. Assistant
Sandy Dominik
Serving Since 2010



Public Educator
Jeff Hawthorne
Serving Since 2001



Fire Inspector
Brian Madden
Serving Since 2018



Fire Marshal
Jennifer Murray
Serving Since 2020



EMS Coordinator
Tyler Yost
Serving Since 2021

Fire Stations



Station 1

- 15900 New Avenue, Lemont
- Built in 1976



Station 2

- 12940 S. Bell Road, Lemont
- Built in 1992



Station 3

- 10801 S. Marmon Drive, Woodridge
- Built in 1994



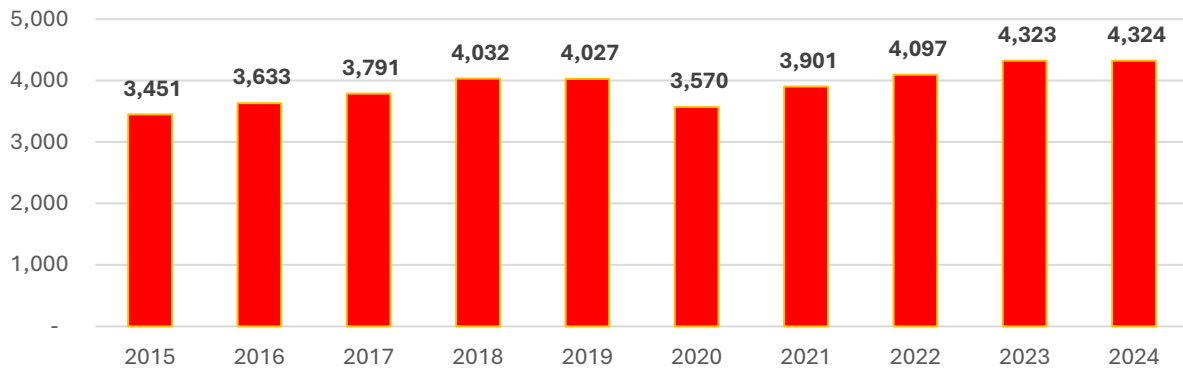
Station 4

- 11520 S. Walker Road, Lemont
- Built in 2004

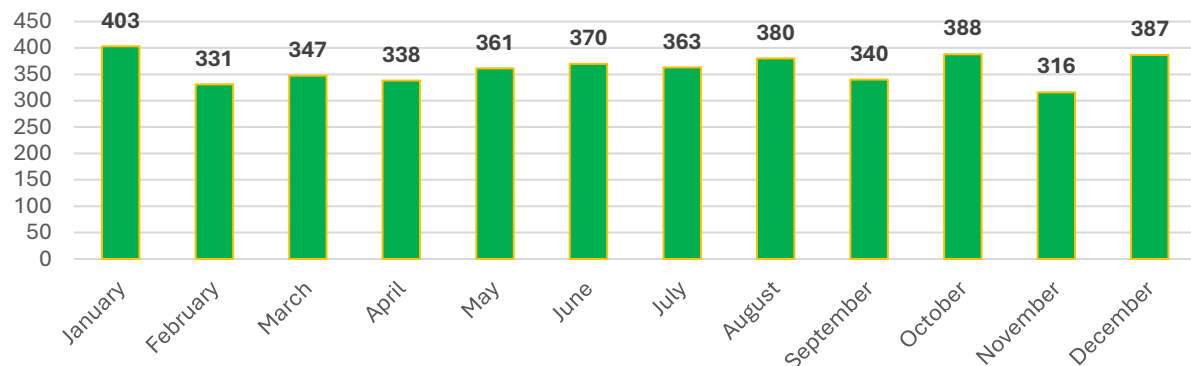
2024 Response Summary

The Lemont Fire Protection District responded to 4,324 calls for service in 2024. While this was only one call more than 2023, it represents a 25.3% increase over the last ten years.

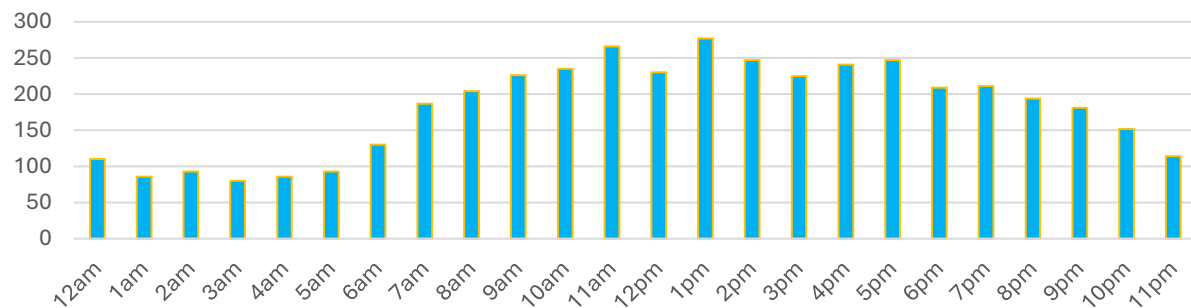
10-Year Incident History



2024 Incidents Per Month

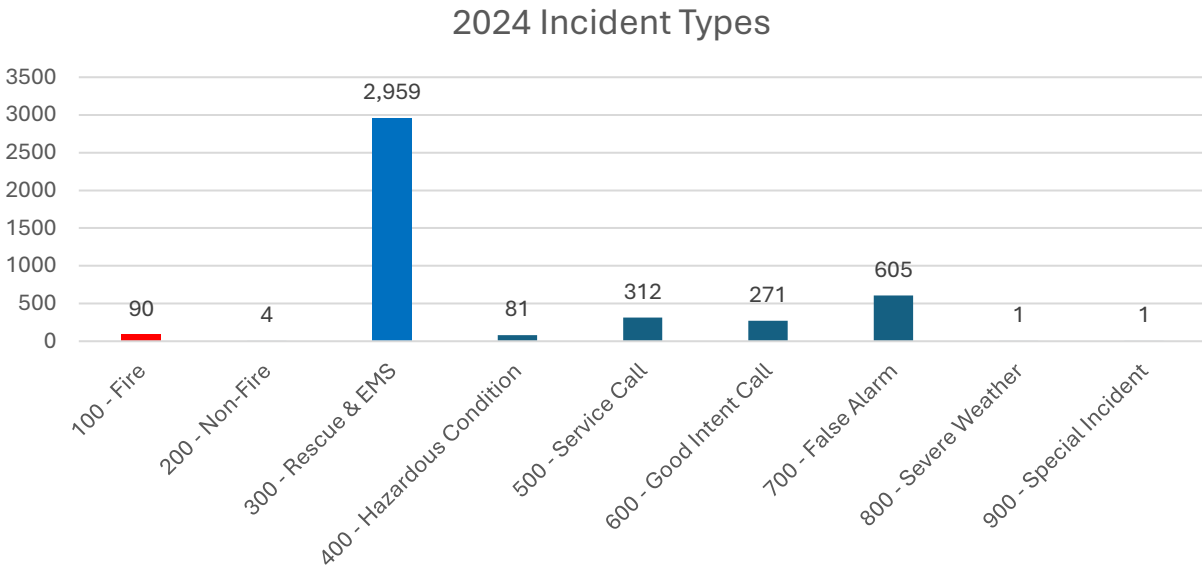


2024 Incidents Per Hour of Day

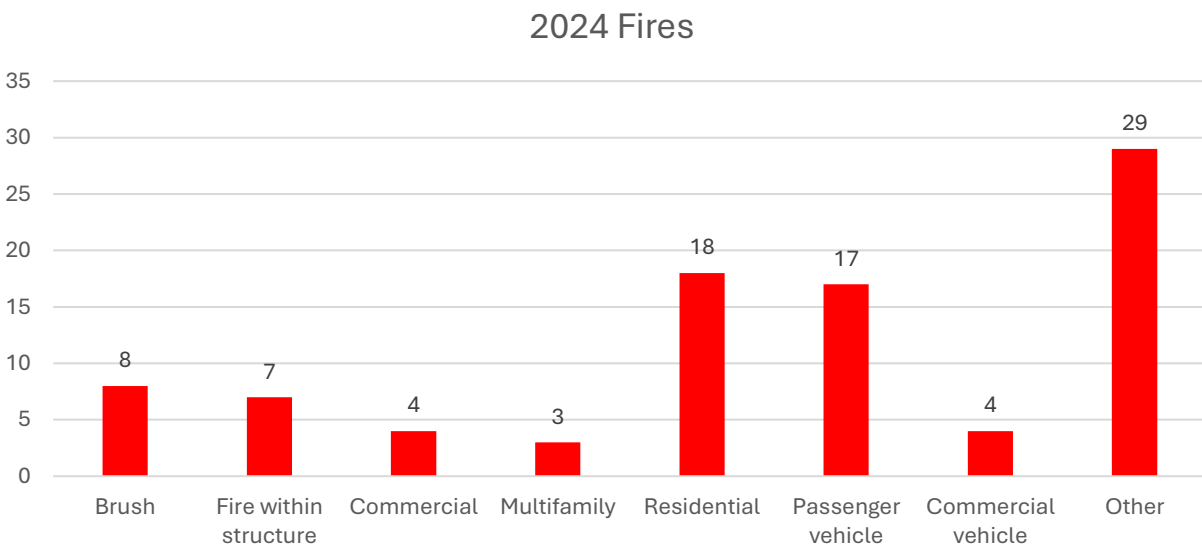


2024 Incident Types

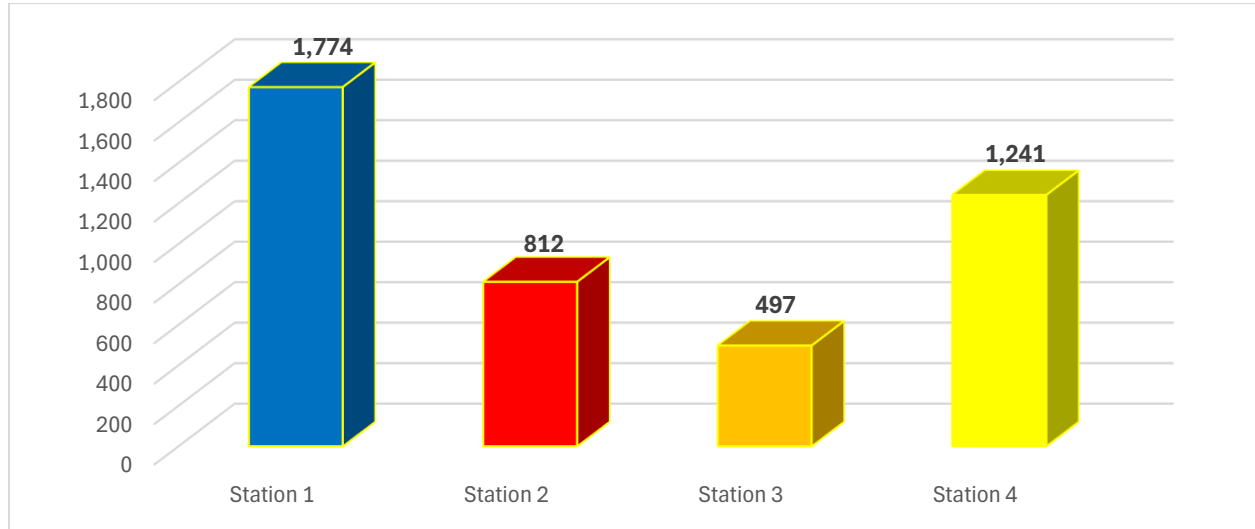
The Lemont Fire Protection District responds to a variety of emergency and non-emergency incident types. All reports are categorized and reported through the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS).



The Lemont Fire Protection District responded to 90 fires in 2024. These fires resulted in an estimated fire loss of \$1,184,150 within our community.



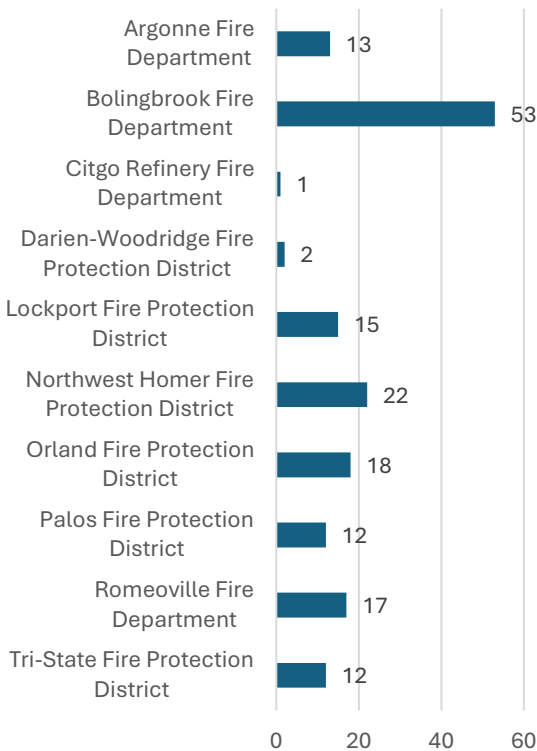
2024 Incidents Per Station



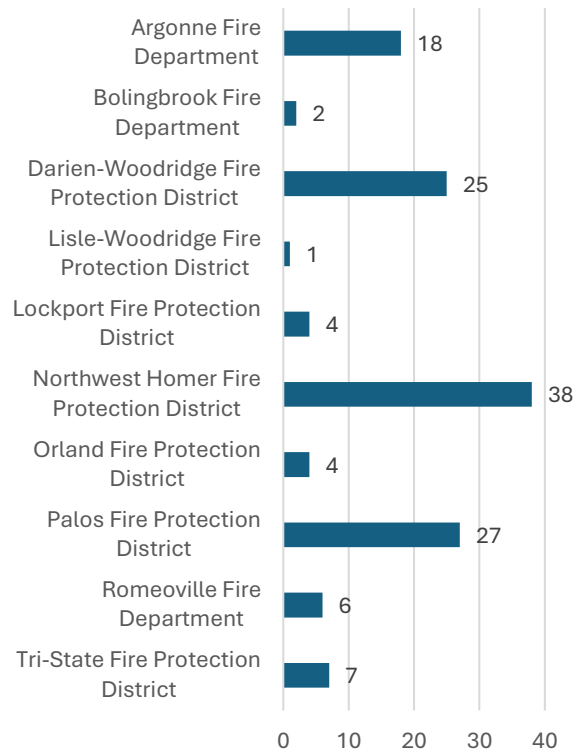
Mutual Aid

The Lemont Fire Protection District participates in the Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS) and is a participating member of MABAS Division 19. The MABAS system allows additional resources to be requested from neighboring fire departments when needed.

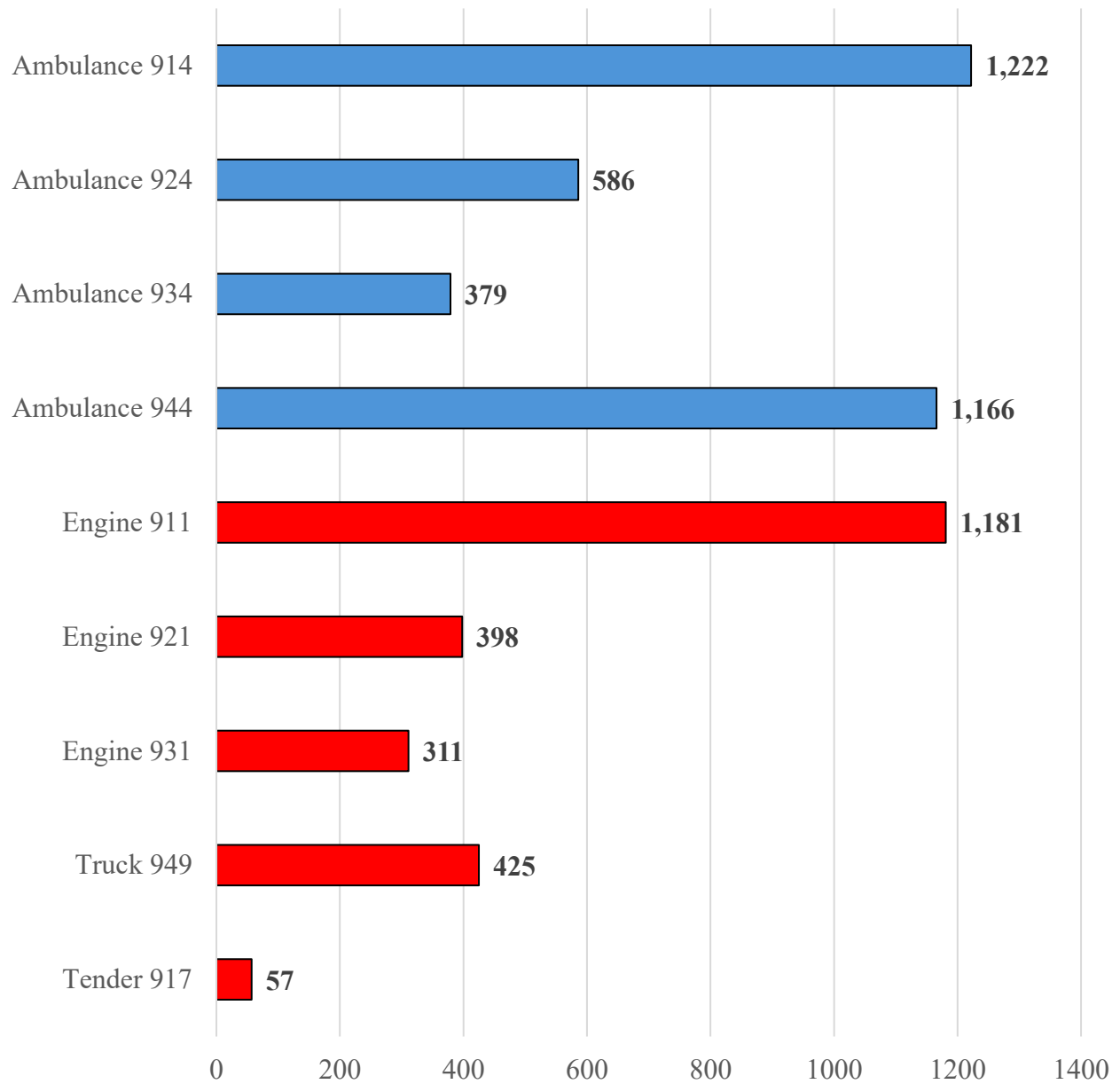
2024 Mutual Aid - Given



2024 Mutual Aid - Received



2024 Unit Responses



Insurance Services Office (ISO)

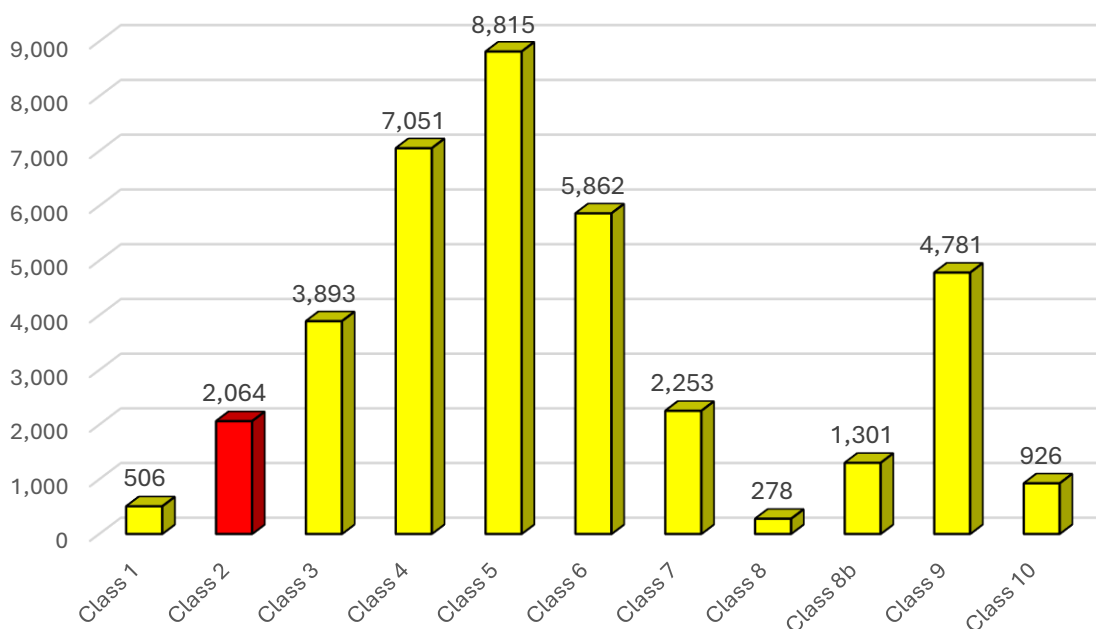
The Insurance Services Office, Inc. (ISO) is an independent organization that assesses and rates fire suppression capabilities in communities across the United States. Using its Fire Suppression Rating Schedule, ISO evaluates key factors such as fire department resources, emergency communication systems, and water supply infrastructure to assign a Public Protection Classification (PPC) grade to each community.



This PPC rating plays a crucial role in the insurance industry, as many companies use it to assess risk, determine coverage options, and establish fair premiums for both homeowners and commercial fire insurance policies. A strong ISO rating not only reflects a community's commitment to fire protection but can also lead to lower insurance costs for residents and businesses.

The Lemont Fire Protection District was re-evaluated by ISO in 2021. Because of improvements made in the areas of training, water supply, equipment, and a continuing commitment to excellence by all personnel, the district's previous PPC grade of 4 was improved to a 2 and became effective January 1, 2022. This places the LFPD in the top 6% of rated fire departments across the country.

Distribution of PPC Grades - Nationwide



Emergency Medical Services

At the Lemont Fire Protection District, all 48 firefighters and lieutenants are licensed paramedics, ensuring a high level of emergency medical expertise across our operations. Our personnel cross-staff a fleet of Advanced Life Support (ALS) vehicles, including four ambulances, three fire engines, one ladder truck, and one Polaris UTV, allowing us to deliver rapid, lifesaving care whenever and wherever it's needed.



When responding to an emergency, the closest appropriate unit is dispatched to provide immediate assistance. In 2024, nearly 70% of our emergency responses were EMS-related, highlighting the vital role our paramedics play in the community. If a fire engine arrives before an ambulance, our crews are fully trained and equipped to begin EMS treatment.



Our paramedics and firefighters continuously refine their skills through hands-on, scenario-based training sessions, ensuring they remain proficient in both routine and high-risk EMS procedures. Their dedication and pride in providing top-tier medical care is evident in their commitment to excellence and drive to improve patient outcomes.

In 2024 we resumed CPR and First Aid training for the public, transitioning to a hybrid model that allows individuals to complete an online portion at their convenience, followed by an in-person skills session with one of our certified instructors. This updated approach provides greater flexibility while ensuring high-quality, hands-on training.

Training

In 2024, members of the Lemont Fire Protection District dedicated nearly 22,000 hours to training in fire suppression, rescue operations, hazardous materials response, emergency medical care, and annual compliance requirements. This extensive training ensures our personnel are well-prepared for any emergency and are continuously enhancing their knowledge, skills, and abilities.

We remain actively involved in the MABAS Division 19 training program, providing our personnel with valuable classroom instruction and hands-on training scenarios. Additionally, we conducted multiple joint training sessions with neighboring agencies throughout the year, strengthening interdepartmental coordination and enhancing our ability to work seamlessly in large-scale emergencies.

This year marked our second year utilizing a training committee to help develop, plan, and coordinate our training program. Meeting monthly, the committee ensures our training aligns with the goals outlined in the 2022 five-year strategic plan, with a target of completing all objectives by 2027.



Specialty Teams

Beyond responding to traditional fire and EMS emergencies, the Lemont Fire Protection District is also trained and equipped to handle low-frequency, high-risk incidents that require specialized expertise. Every firefighter is certified as a Basic Operations Firefighter, meeting the rigorous standards set by the Office of the Illinois State Fire Marshal (OSFM) and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA).

As part of our 'all-hazards' approach, many of our firefighters have pursued advanced training at the Operations and Technician levels, enabling them to serve on the district's Specialty Teams. These highly trained professionals are prepared to tackle complex emergencies, ensuring our community receives the highest level of protection and response, no matter the situation.

Technical Rescue Team

The Lemont Technical Rescue Team is a team of dedicated members who specialize in rope, trench, confined space, and structural collapse rescue. Each member must complete a total of 320 hours of specialized training from the State of Illinois along with monthly team training involving additional area departments. The Lemont FPD currently has 9 members on the team consisting of one chief officer, four lieutenants and four firefighters.

Team members completed 137 hours of specialized training in 2024.

On January 11, 2024, Lemont technical rescue team members responded to Frankfort and assisted with their high angle rescue.



Cause and Origin Team

Every fire within the Lemont Fire Protection District is thoroughly investigated to determine its cause and origin, ensuring accurate reporting, prevention, and safety improvements. Leading these efforts is Lieutenant Todd Fischer, who oversees a team of four highly trained investigators dedicated to uncovering the root causes of fires within our district.

The Cause and Origin Team collaborates with key agencies, including MABAS Division 19, the Will-Cook-Grundy County Task Force, and the Illinois State Fire Marshal, ensuring a comprehensive and coordinated approach to fire investigations. In November 2024, the team received a new, dedicated investigation vehicle, fully equipped with specialized tools and equipment, enhancing their ability to conduct on-scene investigations and provide mutual aid to neighboring communities when needed.

Fire investigators undergo over 120 hours of initial training, followed by a minimum of 30 hours of continuing education annually to maintain their certifications. This training includes a combination of live and online coursework, ensuring team members stay proficient in fire scene analysis, evidence collection, and investigative techniques.

In 2024, Lemont Fire Investigators exceeded standard training requirements, completing an additional 45 hours of continuing education. The team conducted 12 fire investigations within the district and assisted in 13 investigations in neighboring jurisdictions, reinforcing our commitment to fire safety, prevention, and interagency support.



Hazardous Materials Team

The Lemont Fire Protection District Hazardous Materials Team, led by Lieutenant Mike Holtz, is a specialized unit trained to handle complex and potentially dangerous hazardous material incidents. With four active members, the team operates as part of MABAS Division 19, working closely with federal, state, and local agencies such as the Illinois EPA, Illinois EMA, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District, and local Lemont agencies to effectively mitigate hazardous material responses.



The team is equipped with a fully stocked response vehicle, designed to handle a wide range of hazardous situations. This vehicle carries specialized tools and equipment to stop leaks, perform chemical analysis, decontaminate personnel and equipment, monitor weather conditions, predict chemical expansion, and coordinate with various agencies involved in a response.

In 2024, the department replaced its aging hazmat squad, originally built in 1986, with a state-of-the-art 20-foot box truck. Outfitted for efficiency and ease of operation, the new vehicle has been customized with department lettering, emergency lighting, and all required hazmat equipment to enhance response capabilities.

One of the most significant upgrades includes an advanced decontamination system, currently used in military applications. This innovative technology allows for the decontamination of fire department personnel and citizens in just five minutes, a dramatic improvement over the traditional 20-minute process.



Through continuous upgrades, specialized training, and interagency collaboration, the Lemont Fire Protection District Hazardous Materials Team remains committed to protecting the community from hazardous threats with the highest level of preparedness and efficiency.

Water Rescue/ Search and Recovery Team

The Lemont Water Rescue Team, headed by Firefighter David Gubbins, has six full-time members that are part of the MABAS Division 19 Water Rescue and Recovery Team. Three additional members have joined the team and will spend the next year completing their mandatory training before becoming fully certified rescue divers.

The Lemont Water Rescue Team is certified and continually trains bi-monthly with MABAS 19 in sub surface, swift water, boat operations, surface ice and ice rescue/recovery scenarios. The Lemont Water rescue team is also in the process of building its new dive squad. This will assist Lemont with its growing team and efficiently managing the members' equipment and needs for all water rescue calls and training.

Currently, the team responds to calls and training in a fully equipped van. The equipment is ready to go in any type of water response. Our apparatus consists of two sub surface dive setups, 200' communication lines, six swift water suits and gear, a Rapid Deployment Craft (rescue boat), etc. All members have measured, updated drysuits, that keep them streamlined and able to dive in difficult situations in a moment's notice. All divers are trained and prepared for a sub-surface dive in any weather including ice dives which we train annually.

The dive team instructs all of the water related training that is done in the district. The team collaborates with The Lemont Park District using the pool facilities for water related scenarios, annual pool swimming test, and the annual underwater skills assessments for all members. The dive team utilizes the Lemont quarries for training, which increases the effectiveness, efficiency and the professionalism that the Lemont community can count on for a water rescue team.



Fire Prevention Bureau

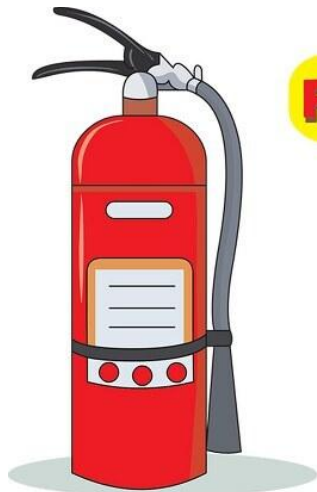
The Lemont Fire Protection District Fire Prevention Bureau is dedicated to reducing the risk of fire-related loss of life and property through proactive inspections, education, and enforcement. By implementing fire safety measures and promoting awareness, the bureau plays a critical role in maintaining the safety of both residents and emergency responders.



The Fire Prevention Bureau oversees a range of responsibilities, including annual fire safety inspections, fire system acceptance testing, plan reviews, public education, and code enforcement throughout the district. Ensuring compliance with fire codes not only protects the lives of those who occupy buildings within the district but also enhances the safety of firefighters responding to emergencies.

In 2024, the Fire Prevention Bureau worked in coordination with the Village of Woodridge and Lemont to adopt the 2021 International Fire Code and update local ordinances, reinforcing the district's commitment to fire safety standards.

The Fire Prevention Bureau completed 1,336 inspections in 2024.



FIRE SAFETY



classroom.com
<http://classroom.com>



Public Education

Educating and informing the public in a meaningful and memorable way remains a top priority for all members of the Lemont Fire Protection District. Every class, station tour, and community event are an opportunity to showcase the dedication and professionalism of district members while reinforcing critical safety messages.

Public education has expanded beyond traditional fire safety lessons and continues to evolve into a year-round initiative, ensuring that important safety information reaches the community in engaging and interactive ways, not just during Fire Safety Month in October.



These programs go beyond fire prevention; they create valuable opportunities for direct engagement between district personnel and the community in a welcoming and fun environment. Whether through station tours, safety classes, public events, parades, ambulance standbys, or even trick-or-treating, these interactions build lasting connections while promoting a culture of safety and awareness.



By making fire safety education both informative and engaging, the Lemont Fire Protection District continues to strengthen its bond with the community while ensuring that important life-saving information is both understood and remembered.

Fleet Maintenance

The Lemont Fire Protection District remains committed to maintaining a modern, reliable fleet that meets NFPA recommendations and industry standards. In 2024, several key additions were made to improve emergency response capabilities, including:

- **New ambulance**
- **New Emergency Vehicle Technician (EVT) service truck**
- **New hazardous materials response vehicle**

A full-time Emergency Vehicle Technician is responsible for maintaining a fleet of over 25 vehicles and apparatus, ensuring they remain in peak operating condition. The fleet includes fire suppression vehicles, emergency medical units, staff and utility vehicles, a breathing air trailer, a water-rescue response unit, a fire investigation vehicle, a hazardous materials response unit, a small boat, and a utility terrain vehicle.

This past year, the district added a new service truck, assigned to the Emergency Vehicle Technician for mobile repairs. Outfitted with specialized tools, a torch, a welder, a generator, and an air compressor, this vehicle allows for immediate, on-site maintenance, minimizing downtime and keeping the fleet operational during critical situations.

By continuously investing in fleet upgrades, preventative maintenance, and emergency repair capabilities, the Lemont Fire Protection District ensures that its first responders have the reliable equipment they need to protect the community efficiently and effectively.



Information Technology (IT)

The IT department has been actively implementing critical technology updates and infrastructure improvements to enhance efficiency, reliability, and communication capabilities across the district. Key advancements in 2024 included network and firmware updates, as well as significant radio communication upgrades, ensuring seamless operations for emergency responders.

Key projects completed this year:

- Replacement of MDT mobile data terminals in all ambulance vehicles, improving efficiency and reliability in emergency response.
- Updated laptops for Board meetings, replacing outdated hardware to ensure smooth operations.
- Continuous firmware and network system updates, keeping infrastructure secure and up to date.
- Major progress in radio communication projects, reinforcing the district's ability to maintain effective emergency coordination.

Radio Communication & Infrastructure Upgrades, a critical focus in 2024 was enhancing radio communication systems across the district. Six end-of-life MTR2000 radio bases, which currently manage 100% of Orland Fire's radio dispatch, are set to be replaced. The new hardware is scheduled for delivery, with deployment beginning in 2025.

Additional improvements included:

1. Installation of a new microwave system, successfully linking Toll Plaza 93 to Station 3, enabling dispatch communications from this site.
2. Elimination of outdated copper lines, reducing operational costs and improving efficiency. Toll Plaza 93 will now serve as the primary dispatch communication site.
3. Successful fiber connection between Orland Central and Lemont Station 1, completed through a collaboration between the IT department, Chicago Communications, and Midwest Public Safety Communications. This project required extensive planning and design modifications but now ensures a more stable and redundant communication network.

By continuously upgrading technology, communications, and infrastructure, the Lemont Fire Protection District remains committed to improving operational efficiency, enhancing emergency response, and ensuring seamless coordination across all emergency services.

Project Fire Buddies

The Lemont chapter of [Project Fire Buddies](#) is dedicated to supporting families in our community with children facing critical illnesses. Through meaningful connections and heartfelt outreach, our members provide comfort, encouragement, and moments of joy to children and their families during challenging times.

Firefighters build strong relationships with their fire buddies by organizing station visits, home visits, and special events, creating unforgettable experiences for these courageous children. Additionally, Project Fire Buddies collaborates with local charitable organizations to provide assistance and bring much-needed support to families when they need it most.



2024 Retirements

Firefighter/Paramedic Patti Myren retired from the LFPD after serving for over 21 years.



Firefighter Patti Myren

Badge # 63

Served from 2002 to 2024

We wish you all the best in the next chapter of your lives and thank you for all you have given to the Lemont Fire Protection District.



2024 New Hires



FF/PM Kevin Atwood joined the LFPD on September 18, 2023, and completed his probationary period one year later. Kevin has earned badge #110.



Smantha Cole joined our team as the new Public Education Coordinator on June 26, 2024.

2024 Recognitions

Firefighter of the Year

FF/PM Mark Armor was nominated by his peers and recognized as Firefighter of the Year at the Best of Lemont banquet in 2024. Mark has served with the LFPD for over 24 years and has earned the respect of everyone within the department.



Certificate of Achievement in Financial Reporting

Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) awarded a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting to the Lemont Fire Protection District for its annual comprehensive financial report for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2023. This was the fifth consecutive year that the Fire District has achieved this prestigious award. In order to be awarded a Certificate of Achievement, a government must publish an easily readable and efficiently organized annual comprehensive financial report. This report must satisfy both generally accepted accounting principles and applicable legal requirements.



The ACFER can be found on the district's website at www.lemontfire.com.

Daniel J. Bower Commitment to Excellence Award

Lt Michael Holtz was awarded the “Daniel J. Bower Commitment to Excellence Award” by the Associated Firefighters of Illinois Honor Guard at their annual convention. This award is presented to an individual who demonstrates “commitment and dedication above and beyond.”



Sean Kivlehan MD MPH Stand and Deliver award

EMS Director Tyler Yost was awarded the Sean Kivlehan MD MPH “Stand and Deliver” award at the 2024 EMS World Expo in Las Vegas. Tyler presentation titled “Bridging the Gap: Building Tomorrow’s EMS Professionals out of Today’s Generation” was chosen as this years winner after several rounds of peer reviews.



Years of Service

The following members celebrated milestones with the district during 2024. We thank you all for your dedication and service to the community.

5 years

FF/PM Scott Kastner

FF/PM Matt Hipke

FF/PM Dale Staska

10 years

FF/PM Matt Baetz

FF/PM Ed Theres

Administrative Assistant Cassandra Dominik

15 years

FF/PM David Gubbins

FF/PM Mike Kingman

20 years

LT Andy Pucket

25 years

LT Chris Flood

30 years

BC David Bettenhausen

In Memoriam

Reverend Glenn Bergmark

May 15, 1935 – March 13, 2024

Reverend Bergmark was born and reared in Chicago, IL but spent the majority of his life in Lemont, IL. He became an ordained Minister for the Augustana Lutheran Church Synod in 1961, and devotedly served 40 years as the Pastor at Bethany Lutheran Church in Lemont. He was often referred to as Lemont's "go-to guy for getting things done in the community." He co-founded and served as the president of the Lemont Clergy Association; stepping up to aid the community in times of need, especially at the time of the 1976 tornado in Lemont. He was a founding member and chairman of the Lemont Environmental Advisory Commission for the village of Lemont; assisting in the effort of decreasing environmental impact on the community. He was a long time member of the Lemont Lions Club, and onetime president of the Lemont Parent Teacher Association. He served on the Board of the PLOWS Council on Aging (now Pathlights), which lends aid to aging citizens of Lemont and neighboring townships. He served the Lemont Fire Protection District for 56 years as a firefighter, chaplain, commissioner and trustee. He established the Lemont Open Food Pantry, alongside Pastor Don Leo, in 1975, which has since grown and continues to provide food assistance for those in need. In his retirement, he continued to serve the Lutheran Church as a substitute Preacher for congregations in need. Outside of his official titles, he ministered to the Lemont community, both parishioners and non-parishioners, for decades. He served countless families; baptizing, marrying and burying them regardless of religious affiliation.



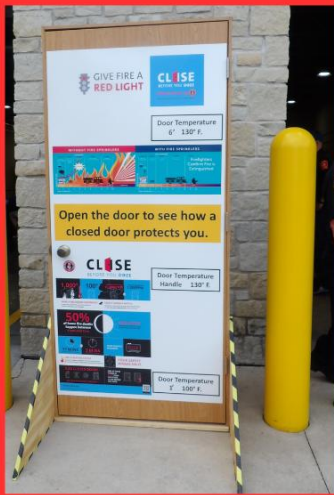
Firefighter Joe Rymkey

October 22, 1954 – October 3, 2024

Joe's boyhood dream of becoming a firefighter was realized when he began volunteering at Northwest Homer Fire Department. In 1994, Joe began working for the Lemont Fire Protection District as a firefighter/EMT and later, as fire inspector. Joe dedicated almost 30 years of his life to fire service. He was also a charter member of Lemont Firefighter's Local 3966 and a member of the Iron Workers Local Union #1. He was an avid gardener, to his family's great joy and anticipation and a skilled handyman around the house. He enjoyed watching football, especially "da Bears" and afternoon naps. Most of all he loved family gatherings for holidays and family picnics on their sprawling 3-acre backyard.







Lemont Fire Protection District
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