



President's Corner  
July/August 2019

This August marks the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Western Springs Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services (WSFD). "Neighbors protecting neighbors...." has been the cornerstone of their commitment to community service and fire safety that has extended for more than a century.

Founded in 1894, the department had humble beginnings in a rented barn, staffed by volunteers led by Fire Marshal Elmore Patterson, and a mere \$155 worth of equipment. As the community grew, so did the WSFD. Today, our WSFD is staffed by 53 career and on-call firefighters/paramedics led by Chief Pat Kenny, operates out of two fire stations, and houses two engines, one ladder truck, and two ambulances, among other apparatus.

The department has a long, proud history of achievement and recognition:

- In 1937, a national firefighter tournament was held at Soldier Field. The six WS firefighters competed in several challenging events including: wall scaling, raising ladders, life line rescue, alarm response, and hose layout. The WSFD won the national championship in the volunteer division, defeating Colorado Springs, CO.
- In 1948, the department became the first in the area to provide emergency ambulance service with the acquisition of a new Cadillac ambulance, made possible by a successful fund raising campaign.
- In 1972, the department adopted the State Emergency Medical Technician program and began training personnel as EMTs.
- In 1979, the first paramedic program in the area began in Western Springs, and continues to demonstrate a standard of care that is modeled throughout the country.
- In 2018, after a rigorous evaluation process, the department was rated ISO Class 2 – a designation awarded to less than 4% of the over 43,000 departments rated across the nation.

The WSFD began with volunteers, then moved to a paid-on-call model. WSFD is currently staffed mostly by paid-on-call personnel, along with full-time contracted paramedics and firefighters, augmented by on-call EMS, providing services 24/7. Our paid-on-call firefighters/paramedics are local residents who have completed a rigorous 6-month fire academy training program that includes practical skills training, classroom curriculum requirements, rigorous physical fitness training, and live fire training. This year's program wrapped up in early June, and celebrated the graduation of 11 recruits, nine of whom have joined the ranks of the WSFD.

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In addition to providing fire and EMS services to our residents and businesses, the WSFD provides other valuable services such as: hazardous materials response, fire prevention, technical/dive rescue, emergency management, and public education. Public education includes comprehensive fire safety training for children in Western Springs schools and preschools, the annual Fire Prevention Week Open House in October, fire extinguisher training, fire and life safety education for seniors, CPR and AED training, fire station tours, summer block parties, in-station birthday parties, and the ever-popular pancake breakfast. For a complete list of public education programs and activities, please visit the fire department's webpage at <https://www.wsprings.com/315/Public-Education>.

As you can see, there is much to celebrate in the exceptional service and proud traditions of the WSFD. Please join the Western Springs Fire Department for a parade and festivities on Saturday, August 24th. The parade begins at 1pm, and will showcase fire apparatus through the Old Town North neighborhood, ending at the Tower Green, where there will be cake and celebration at 2pm. Please see the attached flyer for more information.

The tradition of neighbors protecting neighbors is alive and well after 125 years of community fire and emergency medical services in Western Springs.

Alice Gallagher,  
Village President

(Please note: there will be no Presidents Corner issue in August. Enjoy the rest of your summer!)



# **WESTERN SPRINGS FIRE DEPARTMENT**

## **CELEBRATES 125 YEARS**

*Neighbors Protecting Neighbors*

**JOIN US FOR A PARADE AND PICNIC AT THE TOWER GREEN**

**AUGUST 24, 2019**  
**PARADE: 1:00 PM**  
**PICNIC: 2:00 PM**

**COME CELEBRATE THE WESTERN SPRINGS FIRE DEPARTMENT'S 125TH ANNIVERSARY BY WATCHING LOCAL FIRE APPARATUS PARADE THROUGH OLD TOWN NORTH, ENDING AT THE TOWER GREEN. IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE PARADE, EVERYONE IS INVITED TO SING HAPPY BIRTHDAY AND ENJOY BIRTHDAY CAKE WITH THE FIREFIGHTERS.**