

Berwick Fire Department Annual Town Report for 2011



P.O. Box 696
10 School Street
Berwick, Maine 03901

Phone: 207.698.1174
Fax: 207.698.4592
BerwickFire@BerwickFire.org

During 2011 the Berwick Fire Department responded to thirty two fire related calls involving uncontrolled and destructive or potentially destructive fires. Six of these calls were to neighboring departments as part of our area mutual aid agreement. For seven of the remaining calls, we received mutual aid from area departments.

We responded to one hundred and thirteen emergency calls that were not fire related. These include calls such as motor vehicle accidents, hazardous materials or flammable liquids spills, carbon monoxide incidents, technical rescue incidents, etc. Four of which were mutual aid calls to other communities.

We responded to two hundred and six medical aid or medical related calls. For these calls we are able to provide Emergency Medical Technicians in almost half the time of the ambulance on average. Due to the training and equipment required as a fire department we are able to provide this potentially life saving service at minimal cost to the tax payer.

We also responded to one hundred and seventy one non-emergency calls including false alarms, unpermitted burns, flooded basements, public assists, etc. Eighteen of these calls were mutual aid to other communities. We received mutual aid for three of these calls.

Two hundred and thirty three of these calls were during weekdays, one hundred and forty five calls were on week nights, one hundred and fifty two calls were during weekends.

Our department consists of thirty one trained and dedicated on-call members. We also have four fulltime members that make response to daytime calls possible while the majority of our on call firefighters are out of town.

Although the primary function of our members is to provide emergency response, the down time between calls as well as the excellent working relationship between our paid and on call staff has made it possible to increase our fire prevention efforts to an all-time high.

During the month of May, Department staff visited the Hussey School with the annual smoke trailer education program. More than five hundred children participated in a simulation giving the experience of locating a safe escape route in a smoke-filled environment. In October, we presented students and school staff with a fire prevention program entitled "Protecting your family from Fire" which was a classroom delivery program.

The Department staff visited ten preschool and daycare facilities providing general fire safety education to over one hundred and fifty children during the months of September, October, and December.

The Department is a member of the York County Juvenile Fire Setter Intervention Collaborative. We currently have four "Intervention Specialist-1" level certified personnel to

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assist the community with Juvenile fire setting issues. In 2011 the department investigated one incident involving juvenile fire setting issues.

We also provide fire and life safety inspections and wood stove inspections that are required by many insurance companies.

The town was reassessed by the Insurance Services Office, Inc. in 2011. As a result of our current staffing, training, and equipment levels along with a large amount of credit going to the water department for water distribution improvements, our classification has improved to a 3/8B. What this means to the Citizens of Berwick is an estimated potential cost savings town wide of \$96,000 to \$192,000 per year on property insurance premiums.

Our department over the last several years has been very successful with obtaining federal grant funding that has saved the taxpayers of Berwick several hundred thousand dollars on the replacement of worn out and outdated equipment. 2011 was no exception. We received notice that we had been awarded funding for a new forestry vehicle to replace our current twenty five year old forestry unit that now requires large amounts of time involved in maintenance and is nearing the end of its service life. The acceptance of this grant by the town will save the taxpayers of Berwick \$118,750 in vehicle replacement cost. This money does not have to be repaid.

I encourage residents to stop by the station for a tour, to look at the trucks, talk about the services we provide, or ask any questions you have. There is someone on duty from 08:30am to 04:30pm Monday - Friday or 09:30am to 10:30am Saturday and Sunday. You can also visit us on the web at ww.BerwickMaine.org and click on the fire department section or visit us on Facebook at www.Facebook.com/BerwickFireDepartment.

As always, I would like to thank our dedicated staff who put in 8,000 man hours during 2011 as well as their families who support them even when that call for service interrupts so many family events and nights of sleep.

I would also like to thank the citizens of Berwick. Without your continued support and funding to maintain our staffing and equipment, we would not be able to provide the services that you expect and deserve.

Respectfully,

Dennis Plante, Chief
Berwick